Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical Conflicts in South Sudan

Almamo Ceesay[1*], Sulikah Asmorowati[2], Foday Yarbou[3]
[1]Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga
[2]Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga
[3]Consulate General of Nigeria, New York, United States of America
[*]Corresponding Author: Email: almamo.ceesay-2022@fisip.unair.ac.id

Abstract

This research purpose in an effort to understand how inclusive governance could address the on going socio political conflict in South Sudan, this paper draws parallels from the Aceh peace process in Indonesia. Utilizing document review as the research method, the study analyzes peace agreements, government reports, and academic literature to identify key governance strategies that contributed to the stability and reconciliation in Aceh. Framed within the theoretical framework of inclusive governance, the paper highlights the role of power-sharing, local autonomy, and the participation of diverse stakeholders. This study contributes to the literature by offering a contextualized application of inclusive governance to South Sudan's complex political landscape, providing recommendations for sustainable peace building efforts.
Keywords: *Sociopolitical conflict, Inclusive governance, Power-sharing, Aceh, South Sudan*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan dalam upaya memahami bagaimana tata kelola inklusif dapat mengatasi konflik sosial-politik yang sedang berlangsung di Sudan Selatan, makalah ini mengambil contoh dari proses perdamaian Aceh di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan tinjauan dokumen sebagai metode penelitian, studi ini menganalisis perjanjian perdamaian, laporan pemerintah, dan literatur akademis untuk mengidentifikasi strategi tata kelola utama yang berkontribusi pada stabilitas dan rekonsiliasi di Aceh. Dibingkai dalam kerangka teoritis tata kelola inklusif, makalah ini menyoroti peran pembagian kekuasaan, otonomi daerah, dan partisipasi beragam pemangku kepentingan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur dengan menawarkan penerapan tata kelola inklusif yang kontekstual pada lanskap politik Sudan Selatan yang kompleks, memberikan rekomendasi untuk upaya pembangunan perdamaian yang berkelanjutan.
Kata Kunci: Konflik sosial-politik, Tata kelola inklusif, Pembagian kekuasaan, Aceh, Sudan Selatan

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

INTRODUCTION

Sociopolitical conflicts in post-colonial and deeply divided states often result in long-lasting instability, dysfunctional governance, and sustained violence. This is because political and social divisions in many of these circumstances result from regional, ethnic, or religious differences, thus making the establishment of a single system of administration a major obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. The origins of South Sudan's conflict can be traced back to 2013 and are largely attributed to the prevailing political discord between the central government, military factions, and ethnic groups (Omer, 2016). Despite numerous endeavors to establish political stability, including the 2013 peace deal and the revitalized peace negotiations in 2018, the nation continues to grapple with recurring acts of violence, inadequate governance, and economic hardship.

The paper sets out a hypothesis that the adoption of inclusive governance mechanisms may offer a potential pathway to resolving the persistent issues under discussion. These mechanisms are posited to foster greater political cohesion and address the underlying causes of conflict. The Aceh conflict in Indonesia, which lasted for decades before a peace agreement was reached in 2005, is offered as a notable case study of inclusive governance's role in conflict resolution. The Helsinki Peace Agreement, which was established between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), incorporated provisions for decentralization, power-sharing, and inclusive political participation (Nazaruddin et al., 2017). This framework for peacebuilding is centered around the inclusion of all stakeholders, including former combatants, civil society groups, and marginalized populations such as women and minorities.

By drawing parallels between Aceh's post-conflict governance reforms and South Sudan's ongoing peacebuilding efforts, this paper explores how the principles of inclusive governance might be tailored to the South Sudanese context. It demonstrates how inclusive political processes, such as ensuring broad participation in governance, alongside decentralized power-sharing arrangements, can foster long-term political stability and reconciliation. However, it is important to note that the application of these

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

principles to South Sudan must be meticulously adapted to account for the country's distinctive ethnic, cultural, and historical context, to ensure a successful and sustainable outcome. While there is a growing body of literature on inclusive governance and its role in post-conflict peacebuilding, few studies directly compare the Aceh peace process with the situation in South Sudan. There is also limited research on how inclusive governance mechanisms from one conflict setting might be adapted and applied to another, especially in the context of South Sudan's unique challenges. The objective of this research is to address these existing lacunae by employing a detailed comparison of Aceh's post-conflict governance and South Sudan's ongoing challenges. The study will demonstrate the potential for inclusive governance to contribute to a more stable, peaceful, and democratic South Sudan. Although Aceh is a region within Indonesia and South Sudan is a sovereign state, selecting Aceh as a comparative example of South Sudan's governance challenges is both relevant and justifiable for several key reasons: shared experiences of prolonged conflict and political fragmentation, post-conflict governance and power-sharing models, decentralization and local autonomy, gender inclusion and civil society in the peace process, international mediation and support, and contextual adaptability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework: Inclusive Governance Theory

Inclusive Governance Theory is an important paradigm within democratic theory and political science. It emphasizes the need to include diverse social groups in governance structures. The theory's origins can be traced to the broader discourse on democratic inclusion and participatory governance, which emphasizes that effective governance requires the representation and active participation of all segments of society, especially marginalized and minority groups. Inclusive governance involves involving all sectors of society in decision-making processes, particularly marginalized groups, to ensure equality, representation, and recognition of diverse interests (Onah & Ayogu, 2018). Inclusive governance theory offers a critical perspective for analyzing and improving ethnic representation in governance structures. Its emphasis on

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

representation, participation, and equity provides a valuable framework for addressing the complexities of governance in multi-ethnic societies such as South Sudan. This representation is crucial for maintaining legitimacy, promoting social cohesion, and addressing the needs of different ethnic groups. In South Sudan for example, the theory is relevant in evaluating the effectiveness of peace agreements and transitional governance arrangements.
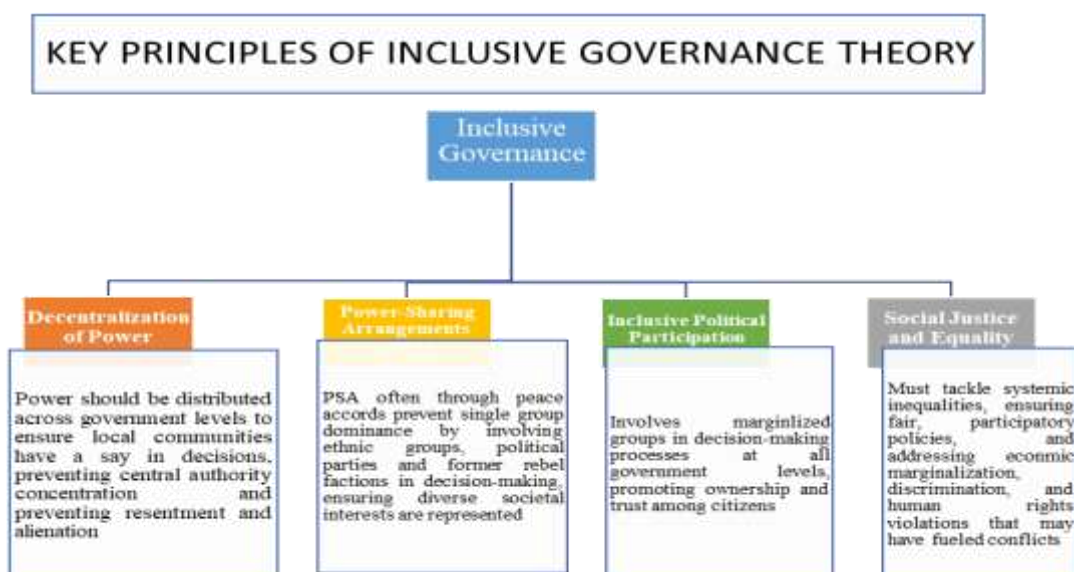
Despite the conflicting findings of much research on inclusive governance, at least one thing is certain: it validates the active participation of people who have been historically marginalized in the overall governance process. This active participation must be seen as a significant influence rather than a mere presence. Public institutions therefore need to do more than provide rigid mechanisms for participation; they need to support the potential for participation of marginalized people at the individual and community levels (see Lupien, 2018). A broader democratic awareness is developed through meaningful engagement. As a result, public policies and their successful implementation will yield better results, enabling all levels of society, including the most marginalized, to have equitable access to national resources and active participation in the governance process. Although not exclusive, inclusive governance is closely linked to concepts such as democratic governance, good governance, and a human rights-based approach to legitimacy and development. As a key component of the good governance agenda (Annahar et al., 2023), inclusive governance is an inherent value of governance that aims to create more equitable, transparent, accountable, and inclusive political systems and decision-making processes in public institutions. Inclusive governance is determined by the extent to which marginalized groups, such as ethnic and racial groups, religious groups, etc., can more effectively participate in political processes and hold elected officials accountable (OECD, 2020).

Bhandari, (2016) stress that even though inclusive governance essentially entails mainstreaming marginalized groups into the larger framework of governance policies, systems, and practices, it represents an integrated strategy that successfully enhances both the effective provision of services and the ability of marginalized groups to demand services. Beyond policy and institutional reform, inclusive governance also

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

encompasses the behavior and interpersonal interactions of the various actors involved in government. Since the traditional notion of governance has begun to be questioned for its failure to provide equitable access and services to all members and groups of the community, inclusive governance studies have gained momentum. Particularly in countries with greater racial, ethnic, and religious diversity, inclusive governance has become increasingly relevant. Annahar, et al., (2023) argue that one component of inclusive governance involves bottom-up decision-making engaging all stakeholders at all governance levels. For everyone to have a voice in decisions that impact them, including the underprivileged, and ethnic minorities, they must have equal rights to guarantee that decision-makers can safeguard, communicate, represent, and enhance the experiences of marginalized communities. Inclusive governance has the potential to enable inclusive development. To empower the excluded, and marginalized and help them overcome their deprivation and poverty, both the process and the government structure must be inclusive. Inclusive policies should promote equal opportunity, social justice, and socioeconomic development for all communities. This entails encouraging inclusive institutions and governance, strengthening the ability and objectivity of the legal system, and making sure that the right channels are in place for public engagement and participation (Asmorowati & Schubert, 2018; Enos & Buba, 2023).

Figure 1: Key Principles of Inclusive Governance Theory

Source: Authors

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative document review methodology to examine the role of inclusive governance in resolving sociopolitical conflicts, focusing on the Aceh conflict and its potential application in South Sudan. The method provides in-depth insights into complex issues by examining various secondary data sources, such as government reports, policy documents, and peace agreements. It helps identify key themes, patterns, and differences in governance approaches across different contexts, such as Aceh and South Sudan. The paper discusses the application of inclusive governance in resolving sociopolitical conflicts in South Sudan, drawing parallels from the Aceh peace process. Key themes include decentralization, local autonomy, power-sharing, civil society participation, gender inclusion, and social justice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aceh Conflict: Historical And Political Perspective

Aceh, a 16th-century sultanate, was a sovereign state in Sumatra, Indonesia, and the history of Acehnese resistance began in the late 1800s during the Dutch colonial era (Shea, 2016). The Acehnese, who are devout Muslims, were instrumental in the fight for Indonesian independence. Jakarta designated Aceh as a special region before revoking it. The first governor led the separatist movement founded by Darul Islam. In 1957, Aceh's special status was guaranteed, and its Islamic customs and role in Indonesia's war of independence were recognized by the Indonesian government, which reaffirmed Aceh's special status. While recognizing the importance of Islamic authorities in local politics, Law 44/1999 gave Aceh additional autonomy in the areas of education, customs, and religion. However, in the absence of a more robust financial structure, the measure was derided as political lipstick and failed to quell armed resistance and was repealed in 1968, sparking armed opposition and the formation of the Free Aceh Movement in 1976 (Aguswandi & Large, 2008; Lele, 2023). The Aceh conflict between the Indonesian government and Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) has been a topic of peace-building for scholars. Aceh, the westernmost region of Indonesia, saw a protracted battle between the Free Aceh Movement and Indonesia's armed forces

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

between 1976 and 2005, which claimed over 15,000 lives and caused significant economic damage. The peace talks came to an end in 2005. The region had its first-ever gubernatorial election in December 2006, with a former GAM warrior winning. In terms of fostering peace and reintegrating former rebels into Indonesia's democratic system, these elections represented a critical turning point (Hillman, 2013; Lee, 2020).

Indonesia's political system witnessed a dramatic change in 1998 when pre-reform procedures were replaced with direct citizen elections for the office of governor and regent. The Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlines a peace accord that includes Aceh as part of Indonesia's new governmental structure. Aceh's elections were a component of the Helsinki Agreement-based transitional procedures. Elections are a component of conflict settlement in Aceh because they are considered the most impartial political procedural tool for establishing a new government. The success of Aceh's democracy depends on monitoring, development initiatives, and the expansion of democratic politics. However, following the cessation and resolution of the war in Aceh, tensions and competition between local elites and community segments emerged. Though GAM's political entry and additional resources were made possible by the peace treaty, problems with political autonomy and economic opportunity still exist (Barron et al., n.d.; Muzwardi & Zulhilmi, 2016; Zulkarnaen & Suzanna, 2018). To maintain unity in Aceh, an inclusive governance structure is paramount to avert any recurrence of conflict in the region.

South Sudan

Historical Dimension

For virtually all of its modern history, Sudan has been at war. Sudan was split between a predominantly Christian African south and an Arab, Muslim north. Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has only experienced eleven years of peace due to tensions between these two divisive communities. As a result, on July 9, 2011, South Sudan declared its independence from Sudan, becoming the continent's first new nation since Eritrea broke away from Ethiopia in 1993 (Olasupo, 2017). The newly seceded independent country from Sudan, South Sudan is bedeviled with ethnic conflicts and

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

hostility even at the state's administrative level. With a colonial history of Turkish occupation and later Anglo-Egyptian condominium, South Sudan was culturally diversified, economically and politically underdeveloped, and marginalized from the north by the British imperialist colonial policies. By 1946, when the north and south were integrated into a single administrative region, it created an atmosphere of hostility, suspicion, and mistrust between these diverse and unequal regions. As a result of the uneven development culturally, politically, and economically, Sudan was administered differently by the British colonial policies.

Due to decades of civil war between North and South Sudan, the people of Southern Sudan considered themselves a homogeneous society. This collective social, cultural, and political identity became known as "Southern Sudanese. This homogeneity of the various 64 ethnic groups with different cultural variations was seen as a ticking time bomb that would explode during the struggle against the colonial imperialists and the North (Madut, 2015). This struggle for liberation and the preservation of their cultural identities continued after the independence of Sudan in 1956, resulting in a series of civil and political conflicts between North and South Sudan (Madut, 2017; Okeke et al., 2021). The civil war between Sudan and South Sudan ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, which also changed the political climate of the country. With more than 2.5 million deaths, the war was one of the deadliest and longest in Africa. Given the widespread violence it has faced and the need for a strong nation-building model, it is imperative for the Republic of South Sudan to understand the causes and agents of this violence (Zambakari, 2015). Following independence in July 2011, the leadership of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM) party adopted an ethnocentric style of governance that prioritized political appointees and nepotism over the qualifications and experience of potential candidates. This practice has weakened the country's political parties, bureaucratic processes, and governance framework, and led to widespread discontent. In addition to creating a multitude of complex issues and problems, the establishment of ethnic-based practices also contributed to human rights violations, corruption, ethnic exclusion, and inefficient conflict resolution and prevention systems (K. Madut, 2015).

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

The country's persistent interethnic and political problems he further adduced have been attributed, in part, to ethnicity and tribal identity. The ethnic-tribal and cultural identity had an impact on the major ethnic conflicts that have been documented in South Sudan since its independence. Ethnic factors played a role in the nature and mechanisms of conflicts in the Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal regions. These ethnic issues then become political and sociocultural conflicts in the form of civil wars, political marginalization of minority groups, cattle raiding, and land grabbing. For Justin & Verkoren, (2022) the failure of state-building has been attributed to factors such as the emphasis on top-down reforms and the disregard for current power structures and governance practices.

Factors And New Trends of Sociopolitical Conflicts in South Sudan

According to Niyitunga & Wamaibe, (2023), conflict in South Sudan persists despite multiple domestic and international interventions via peace processes and other approaches to conflict resolution. Malish, (2018) argues that whether South Sudan preserves its thirty-two states or splits back into the former three provinces or ten states, the country will continue to have political and governance challenges considering the examination of the various governance models (confederal, federal, and unitary state) suggested in the 2017 pre-HLRF Report. However, without stability and peace in the nation, no meaningful reforms can be implemented. The country's future course is still unknown as peace continues to elude negotiations, despite ongoing national and regional diplomatic efforts to find a negotiated solution.

Discussions about power and resource distribution are common in the corridors of power. Because each party wants to maximize benefits for its allies, permanent ceasefires, accountability, security sector changes, and governance systems are discussed with extreme caution and trepidation. The leaders and political elites of South Sudan have embraced identity politics through the introduction of tribalism, which has negatively impacted society on all fronts politically, socially, and economically. This has permeated the public service sector. Tribalism in South Sudan seeks to recast the nation as consisting of just the Dinka and Nuer tribes. Such misguided policies gave rise to a

contentious social and political climate that made it challenging to advance social cohesiveness and national identity (Madut, 2023)

A further contributing factor to the persistent political unrest was the absence of national and provincial policies that could effectively address poverty, inequality, and social exclusion while avoiding identity politics. For Awolich, (2018), while many circumstances caused the crisis, a large part of it can be explained by poor governance. Many residents, experts, and observers agree that South Sudan is highly unlikely to break out of the instability trap until governance is addressed, and (Mutasa & Virk, 2017) argue that this state of affairs reflects the inability of South Sudan's leadership to constructively address ethnic diversity and inclusive governance approaches after independence, resulting in substantial "Old Sudan"-like economic disparities between states. Echoing our argument for an inclusive governance mechanism to address South Sudan's vicious cycle of socio-political conflict, Mutasa and Virk propose a similar argument: "It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that effective mechanisms are put in place to constructively manage this diversity, based on the principle of equality, to create a sense of belonging for all South Sudanese." (Mutasa and Virk, 2017:11).

Most research about South Sudan's sociopolitical conflicts often identifies ethnic tensions and marginalization as well as economic disparities as the main factors for the country's protracted conflicts and a part of inclusive governance, but according to Kuol, (2018), the conflict in South Sudan has become more complex due to the national interests of neighboring countries who have and are still supporting the warring camps and have shown indifference in the face of deteriorating humanitarian conditions. He further stated that a long-term solution to the conflict requires: "Understanding and navigating these regional dynamics, on both a bilateral and multilateral level, is part and parcel of achieving durable stability in South Sudan" (Koul, 2018:53).

There have been numerous attempts to establish a negotiated peace settlement that have failed since the civil conflict in South Sudan between the government forces of President Salva Kiir and opposition rebels led by former Vice President Riek Machar began in mid-December 2013. The peace negotiations, which took place in Ethiopia first in Addis Ababa and later in Bahir Dar were facilitated by the Intergovernmental

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

Authority on Development (IGA), an eight-nation trading grouping in East Africa. The South Sudanese crisis is fast getting worse, even though peace is still elusive and conflict persists. The inability to put an end to the conflict can be ascribed to many intricate and multifaceted reasons for the violence as well as a seeming lack of political resolve on both sides to stop the hostilities. Many underlying governance features, which contributed to the conflict's emergence, are linked to these factors. These include (1) the 2011 Transitional Constitution's concentration of power in the presidency, which resisted decentralization efforts; (2) the presidential system of government, which frequently leads to constitutional collapse, especially in nations with short histories of democracy; and (3) the brittleness of the new nation's institutions, which were unable to hold individual South Sudanese leaders accountable (Radon & Logan, 2014).

Drawing Parallels from the Aceh Peace Process: A Pathway for an Inclusive Governance and Peace in South Sudan

In this section, the results obtained from the application of inclusive governance as a pathway to resolving sociopolitical conflicts in South Sudan are discussed about the Aceh peace process. The analysis is divided into several subsections that address key themes relevant to the research topic, including decentralization and local autonomy, power-sharing arrangements, civil society participation, gender inclusion, and social justice and economic equity. Each subsection discusses the findings from Aceh and evaluates how similar governance structures and mechanisms might be applied or adapted to South Sudan's context.

Decentralization and Local Autonomy: A Path to Mitigating Regional Disparities

Decentralization in governance is a widely acknowledged principle that plays a crucial role in reducing regional inequalities and promoting peace in cultures that have experienced conflict (Rohdewohld et al., 2022). By giving Aceh considerable authority over its internal affairs, especially in areas such as local administration, education, and natural resource management, the Helsinki Peace Agreement's provisions helped decentralize the Aceh peace process (Fujikawa, 2021; Pribadi & Regif, 2022). Aceh's concept of local autonomy has been demonstrated to facilitate the establishment of local

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

administration structures and increased authority over the region's natural resources, including its oil and gas deposits. In addition to mitigating local resentment, this has enabled the area to focus on economic recovery. A comparable opportunity for alleviating regional disparities and empowering local communities (Ansori & Rostineu, 2018) to exercise greater authority over their resources in South Sudan may be presented by decentralization. This approach has the potential to cultivate a sense of government confidence and ownership.

The political environment of South Sudan is characterized by profound ethnic and regional divisions, which have given rise to a significant concern regarding decentralization. The ongoing conflict has its origins in historical disputes between the central government in Juba and several regional entities. The Greater Equatoria, Greater Bahr el Ghazal, and Greater Upper Nile regions have persistently voiced grievances concerning marginalization, limited access to resources, and insufficient decision-making authority.

A comparable strategy that empowers regional entities with greater authority over local resources, governance, and development could prove advantageous for South Sudan. This could be achieved by establishing regional parliaments that possess the authority to determine matters such as infrastructure development, healthcare, and education, while still operating under the auspices of the federal government. To prevent escalating ethnic tensions or the establishment of rival power centers that would jeopardize national unity, decentralization must be judiciously balanced. The challenge lies in ensuring that local autonomy fosters unity and collaboration rather than exacerbating governmental fragmentation, as evidenced by the case of Aceh.

Power-Sharing Arrangements: Ensuring Political Inclusivity

The Aceh peace process offers a salient example of the pivotal role that power-sharing arrangements play in fostering political stability and inclusivity. A notable feature of the Helsinki Peace Agreement was its establishment of a power-sharing government (Latif et al., 2020), comprising both the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). This initiative was instrumental in addressing the political grievances of the Acehnese people and ensuring their active involvement in

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

national governance. In Aceh, the power-sharing arrangement has been instrumental in integrating former combatants and political rivals into the formal political process, thereby mitigating the risk of recurrence of violence. This integration has also facilitated the conduct of democratic elections in Aceh, resulting in the emergence of new political parties and the augmentation of political pluralism (Manan et al., 2022).

A similar approach was adopted in South Sudan following the 2013-2015 civil war, which culminated in the 2018 signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. This agreement established a unity government, comprising key political factions, including President Salva Kiir's SPLM/A and Riek Machar's SPLM-IO, who were allotted seats in the government and military. South Sudan's power-sharing arrangement in the Revitalized Peace Agreement has facilitated the engagement of former adversaries in the negotiation process. However, the implementation of these provisions has been hindered by ongoing political instability and elite manipulation.

The analysis indicates that South Sudan's current power-sharing model, whilst demonstrating certain aspects of Aceh's success, has been impeded by elite-driven politics and an absence of political will to address structural governance issues. The study posits that for a power-sharing arrangement to succeed in South Sudan, there is a necessity for a genuine commitment to political inclusivity and a focus on long-term reforms. The analysis draws lessons from Aceh, concluding that it is essential for South Sudan to build a genuine power-sharing arrangement that goes beyond symbolic inclusion. This should include the organization of local elections, the fostering of political pluralism, and the representation of marginalized groups (e.g. women and ethnic minorities) at all levels of government.

Civil Society Participation: Strengthening Political Legitimacy

In the context of post-conflict recovery, the promotion of inclusive governance is of paramount importance. Civil society plays a pivotal role in this regard by advocating for the inclusion of marginalized groups, monitoring government actions, and holding political leaders accountable for their actions. In Aceh, civil society groups were deeply involved in the peace process, advocating for gender equality, human rights, and democratic governance (Boonpunth & Saheem, 2022). This resulted in the

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

establishment of a robust framework for ensuring that the voices of everyday citizens were included in post-conflict governance. In Aceh, the involvement of civil society organizations was instrumental in ensuring that the peace process was not merely a top-down endeavor, but also a reflection of the voices of the populace, most notably those of marginalized groups such as women and youth (Lay, 2017).

In South Sudan, however, the capacity of these groups to effect change has been constrained by several factors, including limited space for activism, government repression, and the lack of security for those advocating for change. Despite these challenges, civil society organizations (CSOs) have played a key role in peacebuilding and advocating for political reforms, even in the face of adversity.

Civil society groups have played a pivotal role in advocating for inclusive governance. However, these groups continue to face considerable obstacles, including security concerns, political repression, and funding challenges. The incorporation of civil society into South Sudan's governance processes is imperative for the assurance of political legitimacy. To emulate the success of Aceh, South Sudan must establish secure environments within which civil society organizations (CSOs) can function and engage in policy advocacy. This encompasses the active support of women's groups, youth organizations, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to facilitate the shaping of the political landscape and guarantee that governance decisions are genuinely inclusive.

Furthermore, South Sudan's government must empower civil society by establishing legal frameworks that guarantee freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and political participation, thereby enabling citizens to actively engage in decision-making processes.

The Analytical Framework for Inclusive Governance in South Sudan

The purpose of this framework is to evaluate how the inclusive governance tenets, especially those highlighted in the peace process in Aceh, might be modified to fit the peculiar political, ethnic, and cultural circumstances of South Sudan.

Figure 2: Analytical Framework for Inclusive Governance in South Sudan

THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR
INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Decentralization and Local Autonomy	Power-Sharing and Political Inclusivity	Stakeholder Participation and Civil Society Engagement	Social Justice and Economic Equity	Gender Sensitivity and Social Inclusion
• Decentralization in South Sudan could alleviate tensions between the central government and various ethnic groups. • Decentralization could help manage regional disparities and allow local populations to exercise control over governance and resources.	• This component examines the potential for power-sharing arrangements among South Sudan's diverse ethnic groups, political parties, and military factions, focusing on the integration of GAM into the political process.	• Inclusive governance requires active involvement of civil society organizations, local leaders, and community-based groups in decision-making, particularly in South Sudan, for peacebuilding, human rights advocacy, democracy, and economic reform.	• This component explores inclusive governance in South Sudan to address economic inequality and resource distribution, aiming to ensure equitable distribution and management of oil revenues and natural resources.	• This component explores South Sudan's post-conflict governance structures, focusing on gender equality, women's participation in political decision-making, and the integration of gender-sensitive policies for social cohesion and long-term peace.
• Key considerations include the creation of regional assemblies and local governance structures that ensure local populations have meaningful control over their affairs while contributing to the national policy dialogue.	• Key features would include the creation of mixed government coalitions, as well as policies that guarantee equal representation for ethnic minorities and regional factions.	• The framework emphasizes the empowerment of marginalized groups like women, youth, and displaced populations, aiming to create inclusive political spaces where they can actively influence governance.	• This dimension also involves examining distributive justice policies that address the historical marginalization of specific regions and ethnic communities.	• It emphasizes the importance of inclusive governance in addressing gender-based violence and promoting women's rights, ensuring their voices are not overlooked in governance structures.

Source: Authors

Gender Inclusion: Promoting Social Equity and Political Stability

A critical element of the Aceh peace process was its emphasis on gender inclusion (Saraini et al., 2018), with women's organizations playing an active role in both advocating for peace and ensuring that post-conflict governance included provisions for gender equity. The Helsinki Agreement introduced measures that empowered women, not just in terms of legal rights, but also in political participation and social inclusion. In Aceh, reforms with a gender-sensitive approach have contributed to the empowerment of women in governance, allowing them to participate in both political processes and the reconstruction of society. However, discrimination against women still persist (Afriandi & Abdillah, 2023; Meliza et al., 2024)

In South Sudan, gender inequality remains a pervasive issue, with women and girls facing widespread violence, marginalization, and underrepresentation in political processes. The United Nations and international NGOs have advocated for the inclusion of gender-sensitive policies in the peace process and governance reforms. However,

there has been limited progress in addressing gender-based violence and promoting women's political participation. Despite some gender-related provisions in peace agreements, the country continues to struggle with deeply ingrained cultural norms that restrict women's rights and opportunities.

In the context of South Sudan's post-conflict governance reform, the nation must prioritize gender equity as a fundamental element of its governance framework. Drawing from the experiences of Aceh, South Sudan should implement gender quotas in legislative bodies and local governance structures, thereby ensuring that women have a meaningful voice in decision-making processes. Moreover, addressing gender-based violence (GBV) must be recognized as a national priority, with specific measures to protect women and girls from violence and exploitation. This should include the establishment of legal frameworks that ensure the accountability of perpetrators of GBV.

CONCLUSION

Drawing insight from the peace process in Aceh, this study explores the potential of inclusive governance as a mechanism for addressing sociopolitical conflicts in South Sudan. The findings underscore the pivotal role of inclusive governance practices, encompassing decentralization, power-sharing, civil society participation, and gender inclusivity, in the post-conflict governance reforms and reconstruction of Aceh. It is therefore suggested that South Sudan, a nation that has recently recovered from years of internal strife and civil war, may benefit from the adoption of comparable governance practices to promote long-lasting peace and political stability.

The study's key findings indicate that Aceh's power-sharing agreements promoted political inclusivity and reconciliation, while its decentralisation experience facilitated the equitable distribution of resources and local autonomy. Furthermore, Aceh's commitment to gender inclusivity and active civil society participation provided a robust foundation for social justice and democratic governance, two challenges that South Sudan continues to grapple with. In light of these observations, it is evident that

South Sudan's pursuit of peace should be grounded in inclusive government models that align with its own unique political, social, and cultural context.

Despite the significant insights offered by the Aceh model, it is evident that South Sudan's governance reform process is confronted by distinct challenges, including pronounced ethnic divisions, political fragmentation, gender inequality, and security concerns. These obstacles necessitate nuanced, context-specific adjustments to inclusive governance practices. In addition to political will, it is imperative that local communities, civil society, and foreign actors actively contribute to the promotion of substantial and enduring reforms to ensure the success of inclusive government in South Sudan.

REFERENCES

Afriandi, F., & Abdillah, L. (2023). Pseudo Social Inclusion: The Presence of Women Regional Heads in Aceh. In N. N. Illiyyun, E. Supriadi, R. M. Safitri, & M. Masrohatun (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Democracy and Social Transformation (ICON-DEMOST 2023)* (Vol. 793, pp. 178–182). Atlantis Press SARL. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-174-6_30

Aguswandi, & Large, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Reconfiguring politics: The Indonesia-Aceh peace process*. Conciliation Resources.

Annahar, N., Widianingsih, I., Paskarina, C., & Muhtar, E. A. (2023). A bibliometric review of inclusive governance concept. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *9*(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2168839

Ansori, M. H., & Rostineu, M. (2018). Building Democracy in Post-Conflict Aceh: Dynamics and Challenges. *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Social and Political Sciences (ICSPS 2017)*. Third International Conference on Social and Political Sciences (ICSPS 2017), Ciputat, Indonesia. https://doi.org/10.2991/icsps-17.2018.8

Asmorowati, S., & Schubert, V. (2018). The efficacy of paradigmatic intersections between inclusive development and the feminisation of poverty. *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan Dan Politik*, *31*(2), 119. https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V31I22018.119-127

Awolich, A. A. (2018, December). *Fixing Governance is Key to Stability in South Sudan*. SUDD Institute. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20110

Barron, P., Rahmant, E., & Nugroho, K. (n.d.). *The Case of Aceh, Indonesia* (p. 129). The Asia Foundation. www.asiafoundation.org/conflictstudy

Bhandari, R. (2016). Inclusive Governance in Nepal: Problem and Challenges. *Journal of Government and Development*, *12*(2), 31–51.

Boonpunth, K. C., & Saheem, N. (2022). Roles of civil society in peacebuilding in Southeast Asia: The case studies of Mindanao, Aceh, and Southernmost Thailand. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, *49*(2), 88–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.2022.2089522

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

Enos, M. N., & Buba, K. (2023). Promoting National Integration for Sustainable Peace in Borno, Nigeria. *Journal of African Resilience & Adv. Research*, *2*(2), 97–117.

Fujikawa, K. (2021). Settling with Autonomy after Civil Wars: Lessons from Aceh, Indonesia. *Global Policy*, *12*(2), 204–213. https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12949

Hillman, B. (2013). PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES: LESSONS FROM ACEH, INDONESIA. *Public Administration and Development*, *33*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.1643

Justin, P. H., & Verkoren, W. (2022). Hybrid governance in South Sudan: The negotiated state in practice. *Peacebuilding*, *10*(1), 17–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2021.1917186

Kuol, L. (2018). *Navigating the Competing Interests of Regional Actors in South Sudan*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep19226.11

Latif, I. R., Mutiarin, D., & Nurmandi, A. (2020). The Quality of Peace in Post-Conflict Situation: A Comparative Study Between Armed Conflicts in Aceh and Bangsamoro. *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional*, *22*(2), 221–243. https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v22i2.430

Lay, C. (2017). Political linkages between CSOs and parliament in Indonesia: A case study of political linkages in drafting the Aceh Governance Law. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, *25*(1), 130–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2017.1297243

Lee, T. (2020). Political orders and peace-building: Ending the Aceh conflict. *Conflict, Security & Development*, *20*(1), 115–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2019.1705071

Lele, G. (2023). Asymmetric decentralization, accommodation and separatist conflict: Lessons from Aceh and Papua, Indonesia. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, *11*(5), 972–990. https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1875036

Lupien, P. (2018). Participatory democracy and ethnic minorities: Opening inclusive new spaces or reproducing inequalities? *Democratization*, *25*(7), 1251–1269. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2018.1461841

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

Madut, K. (2015). Institutional Development, Governance, and Ethnic Politics in South Sudan. *Journal of Global Economics*, *03*(02), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.4172/2375-4389.1000147

Madut, K. K. (2017). Spatiality of ethnic identity and construction of sociopolitical interaction in South Sudan. *Human Geographies - Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography*, *11*(2), 181–194. https://doi.org/10.5719/hgeo.2017.112.4

Madut, K. K. (2023). Why did governance and institutional establishments fail in Sudan and South Sudan? *The Journal of North African Studies*, *28*(3), 666–678. https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2022.2042265

Malish, J. P. (2018). Putting into Perspective the Proposed Governance Systems for South Sudan. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3134311

Manan, A., Hadi, A., & Rahmat Saputra, I. (2022). Post-conflict Reconciliation in Aceh, Indonesia: Perspectives from the Victims. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, *25*(2), 162. https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.66177

Meliza, R., Ikhsan Kamil, A., Mujiburrahman, M., Riski, A., Yunanda, R., Nazwa Ramadhani, S. D., & Bayhaqie, G. (2024). The Role of Acehnese Women in Post-Conflict Local Economic Development in North Aceh Regency. *Proceedings of Malikussaleh International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies (MICoMS)*, *4*, 00021. https://doi.org/10.29103/micoms.v4i.904

Mutasa, C., & Virk, K. (2017). *BUILDING PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN: PROGRESS, PROBLEMS, AND PROSPECTS*. Centre for Conflict Resolution. http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep05143.6

Muzwardi, A., & Zulhilmi, Z. (2016). Aceh Conflict Resolution By The Government Of Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan : Kajian Ilmu Pemerintahan Dan Politik Daerah*, *1*(1), 158–167. https://doi.org/10.24905/jip.v1i1.439

Nazaruddin, M., Sukmawati, C., & Nasution, A. A. (2017). Reintegration And Socio-Economic Transformation For Ex Combatants Of The Free Aceh Movement (Gam) Post-Conflict Era In North Aceh-Indonesia. *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social and Political Development (ICOSOP 2016)*.

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

1st International Conference on Social and Political Development (ICOSOP 2016), Medan, Indonesia. https://doi.org/10.2991/icosop-16.2017.73

Niyitunga, E. B., & Wamaibe, E. K. (2023). Key Factors Influencing Conflict Relapse in South Sudan: A Conceptual Analysis. *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, *12*(1), 25–46. https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3665/2023/v12n1a2

OECD. (2020). *What Does 'Inclusive Governance' Mean? Clarifying Theory And Practice Oecd Development Policy Papers*. OECD Publishing. http://rgdoi.net/10.13140/RG.2.2.24809.72806

Okeke, R. C., Idike, A. N., Akwara, A. F., Okorie, C. O., & Ibiam, O. E. (2021). Failure of States, Fragility of States, and the Prospects of Peace in South Sudan. *SAGE Open*, *11*(2), 215824402110204. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211020483

Olasupo, D. M. A. (2017). Oil and Conflict in Polarized State of South Sudan: Lessons for Biafra Agitators in Nigeria. *Research on Humaniities and Social Sciences*, *7*(16), 15–22.

Omer, R. (2016). South Sudan: From Independence to a Detrimental Civil War. *Harvard International Review*, *37*(3), 11–12.

Onah, R. C., & Ayogu, G. I. (2018). Diversity, Inclusive Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The Federal Character Principle in Focus. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, *5*(7), 4873–4880. https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v5i7.07

Pribadi, M. A., & Regif, S. Y. (2022). The Problem of Alleviating the Poor in the Special Autonomy Governance of Aceh Province. *Bestuurskunde: Journal of Governmental Studies*, *2*(2), 131–144. https://doi.org/10.53013/bestuurskunde.2.2.131-144

Radon, J., & Logan, sarah. (2014). SOUTH SUDAN: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS, WAR, AND PEACE. *Journal of International Affairs*, *68*(1), 149–167.

Rohdewohld, R., Carrasco, B., & Rahemtulla, H. A. (2022). *Decentralization, Local Governance, and Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003282297

Jurnal Politico Vol. 25 No. 1 March 2025
Page: 20-41. ISSN: p: 1829-6696, e: 2549-4716
Online journal web: https://ejurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/POLITICO/
Almamo Ceesay, Sulikah Asmorowati, Foday Yarbou
Drawing Parallels from Aceh: Inclusive Governance as a Path to Resolving Sociopolitical
Conflicts in South Sudan

Saraini, M., Wisadirana, D., & Kholifah, S. (2018). The Implementation of Sharia Law as the Gender Equality Manifestation in the Province of Aceh: Analysis of Qanun No. 6 of 2009 Concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Women. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, *8*(14), 66–70.

Shea, N. (2016). Nongovernment organisations as mediators: Making peace in Aceh, Indonesia. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, *28*(2), 177–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781158.2016.1162778

Zambakari, C. (2015). Sudan and South Sudan: Identity, citizenship, and democracy in plural societies. *Citizenship Studies*, *19*(1), 69–82.

Zulkarnaen, I., & Suzanna, E. (2018). Aceh: Conflict Development after the Helsinki Agreement. In *Emerald Reach Proceedings Series* (Vol. 1, pp. 589–593). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78756-793-1-00095