



Political Education and its impact on the Future of Democracy

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the role of political education in shaping the future of democracy in the Land of Papua. Democracy in Papua, as part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, faces unique challenges related to political history, cultural identity, and limited access to education. This research identifies the importance of political education as a tool to increase citizen participation, political awareness, and understanding of democratic rights. Through a qualitative approach with interviews, surveys, and literature analysis, this study analyzes the impact of political education on social and political change in Papua. The research results show that although there are structural and cultural obstacles that influence the implementation of political education in Papua, there is great potential to strengthen democracy if political education is maximized.

INTRODUCTION

Papua, as a province located at the eastern tip of Indonesia, has very distinctive characteristics, both from a cultural, social and political perspective. Since the integration of Papua into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) in 1969, various political and social dynamics have colored Papua's long journey in the context of the Indonesian state. However, even though it has been more than five decades, Papua still faces a number of serious challenges, especially in the aspect of inclusive and sustainable democratic development. The main problems in Papua, such as social inequality, political marginalization, and prolonged conflict, often become major obstacles to achieving just and equitable development goals (Hidayat, 2013). Hidayat (2013) further emphasized that special autonomy in Papua, even though it has existed for more than two decades, has still not fully succeeded in responding to the major challenges faced by the Papuan people, especially in terms of equitable development and social justice.

One aspect that is often overlooked in efforts to strengthen democracy in Papua is political education. Political education plays an important role in creating a critical society, aware of their rights and obligations, and able to participate actively in the democratic process. In Papua, political education is not only about knowledge about the government system or election procedures, but also about how Papuan local wisdom and cultural values can be integrated within the framework of modern democracy. The Papuan people, who are rich in traditions and collective values, really need a political education approach that is more contextual and based on their local needs and characteristics (Muluk, 2015). Furthermore, Muluk (2015) emphasized the important role of community institutions and civil organizations in providing political education based on the local context. Appropriate political education will increase the political awareness of the Papuan people, as well as open up opportunities for active participation in democracy.

Moreover, even though Papua received special autonomy (otsus) as a form of decentralization to improve community welfare, the implementation of this policy still faces various challenges. One of the biggest problems is uneven development, which causes dissatisfaction and feelings of alienation from the existing political system. According to Salim (2023), special autonomy in Papua has not yet had a completely positive impact in improving the socio-economic and political conditions of the Papuan people, who are still marginalized in many aspects. Therefore, there needs to be an effort to build a democracy that is more inclusive and based on local needs, where political education has a very strategic role. Even Salim (2023) criticized that the implementation of democracy in Papua needs to pay deeper attention to inclusiveness, taking into account cultural values and local wisdom in the process of policy formation and development.

Effective political education in Papua can help open space for constructive dialogue between the central government and the Papuan people, as well as reduce existing disparities. This article aims to explore how political education can be a tool to strengthen democracy in Papua, as well as provide an overview of the challenges and potential that exist to realize a more just and sustainable

democratic future in the Land of Papua. Readers are expected to understand the important role of political education in creating a Papuan society that is more active, informed and involved in the process of democratic political development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Education in Papua

To understand political education in Papua, this article discusses the definition of political education, the history of Papuan politics, the challenges faced in developing political education in Papua, and the importance of political education in strengthening democracy in Papua. The sources used in this description include literature discussing political education, Papuan political history, as well as the implementation of special autonomy policies in Papua. The books and articles referred to provide a comprehensive perspective on how political education can be a tool for increasing the political participation of the Papuan people and facing various existing challenges.

Definition of Political Education

Political education can be understood as a learning process that aims to increase the political awareness of individuals and community groups in participating in democratic political life. According to Ardiansyah (2020), political education is an important instrument for educating the public regarding their rights, obligations and responsibilities in the country's political system. Specifically, in Papua, political education must also accommodate various aspects of culture and local wisdom that form the identity of the Papuan people. Political education is not just about teaching political theories, but more about how this process can strengthen community political participation, bridge understanding between the government and the people, and create a more transparent and accountable relationship between the two parties. This education also plays a role in introducing democratic values and reducing social inequality, which is a significant problem in Papua (Karyono, 2021).

History and Political Context of Papua

Since the Dutch colonial period until the integration of Papua with Indonesia in 1969, this region has gone through various political dynamics that have influenced the socio-political life of the Papuan people. In the book *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Kahin (2003) explains that Papua in the early days of independence was one of the regions that was not free from political tensions, especially related to the issue of political integration into the Republic of Indonesia. The process of integrating Papua into Indonesia was carried out through a controversial referendum, which gave rise to distrust of the Indonesian government in the eyes of some Papuan people.

As time goes by, it is hoped that various policies implemented by the central government, such as Special Autonomy (Otsus) in 2001, will provide space for Papua to manage its own internal affairs, while reducing development inequality. However, the implementation of Special Autonomy still shows many shortcomings, such as development gaps that have not been resolved and

dissatisfaction of the majority of Papuans with the central government (Salim, 2023; Wibowo, 2020).

Political Education in Papua: Social and Cultural Context

Papua is known for its rich culture and very strong traditional traditions. Papuan society has a traditional social and political system called "kinship system" which prioritizes deliberation and consensus (Soeprapto, 2020). These values, although very relevant in the context of indigenous people's lives, often clash with modern state political systems which are based on individualism and competition between political parties. As noted by Hidayat (2013), political education approaches in Papua need to be adapted to this local wisdom so that it is more accepted and understood by the community. According to Muluk (2015), political education based on local culture will be more effective in increasing people's political participation, because they feel that the system is relevant to their daily lives. Effective political education in Papua must include efforts to bridge traditional values with existing modern political practices. By integrating local wisdom into political education, Papuan people can more easily understand the Indonesian political system and feel involved in the existing democratic process (Salim, 2023; Wibowo, 2020).

The Importance of Political Education in Strengthening Democracy in Papua

Political education not only functions to provide an understanding of political theories, but also as a tool to strengthen democracy in Papua by increasing political awareness and expanding community participation. Healthy democracy requires active participation from the community, especially in the context of marginal areas such as Papua. As stated by Hidayat (2013), political education can open up space for people to become more involved in the political process, so that they not only become objects of policy, but also active subjects in political decision making.

Political education in Papua is also key to overcoming the gap between the central government and local communities. Papuan people often feel marginalized in many aspects, including in terms of economic development, governance and respect for human rights. Therefore, by improving political education, it is hoped that people can better understand their rights and be more active in fighting for their interests in the political arena (Ardiansyah, 2020; Karyono, 2021).

Challenges in Building Political Education in Papua

Building political education in Papua is certainly not without challenges. Apart from geographical factors that make access to education difficult, there are also problems related to social and economic inequality which is still high. For example, many Papuan people still live in poverty and have not felt the benefits of existing development, even though Indonesia has experienced democratization since the 1998 Reformation (Black, 2015). Apart from that, distrust of the government is also one of the big challenges in developing political education in Papua. Political education that is not sensitive to the local social and cultural context will be difficult to accept, because Papuan people are more likely

to hear voices that speak a language and approach that they understand (Soeprapto, 2020).

Challenges to Democracy in Papua Social and Economic Inequality

One of the biggest challenges in building inclusive democracy in Papua is the significant social and economic inequality. Even though Papua is rich in natural resources, such as oil, gas and other mining products, the majority of Papuan people live in poverty and do not experience significant benefits from this wealth (Karyono, 2021). According to a report from Komnas HAM (2019), the inequality between Papua and other provinces in Indonesia in terms of infrastructure development, health services, education and income is still very striking.

Papua also faces poverty rates that are much higher than the national average. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2020), around 27% of Papua's population lives below the poverty line, much higher than the poverty rate in Indonesia as a whole, which is only around 9%. This social gap contributes to people's distrust of the political system and central government, as well as creating social tensions that hinder the development of healthy democracy in Papua (Hidayat, 2013; Pratiwi, 2020). This striking economic gap causes the majority of Papuan people to feel alienated from development carried out by the central government. For example, even though there is a Special Autonomy (Otsus) policy designed to improve the welfare of the Papuan people, its implementation has not shown significant results in reducing socio-economic inequality (Black, 2015; Wibowo, 2020). Special Autonomy is more often criticized because it is unable to address the basic needs of the Papuan people, such as access to education, health and decent work.

Conflict and Violence in Papuan Politics

Papua has long been a center of conflict and violence rooted in various factors, including political history, issues of separatism, and dissatisfaction with central government policies. Since the integration of Papua into Indonesia in 1969, this region has witnessed a number of violence involving various groups, ranging from armed conflict between the separatist group Free Papua Organization (OPM) and security forces, to violence that occurred due to tensions between local communities and other parties who are involved in the exploitation of natural resources (Black, 2015).

According to the Human Rights Watch report (2018), violence that occurs in Papua is often triggered by existing social injustice and inequality, as well as repressive actions carried out by security forces. The implementation of policies that are more militaristic in nature, such as military operations which are often carried out in conflict-prone areas, worsens the situation and prolongs the distrust of the Papuan people towards the Indonesian state (Heryanto, 2008; Pratiwi, 2020). At the same time, the racial injustice and discrimination experienced by Papuan people in their daily interactions with non-Papuan people in Indonesia also exacerbates tensions. This creates the impression that the Papuan people are marginalized and ignored by the central government,

which further worsens Papua's relationship with the Indonesian state as a whole (Hidayat, 2013; Suryadinata, 2018).

Human Rights and Special Autonomy

The granting of Special Autonomy (Otsus) in 2001 aimed to provide more autonomy for Papua in managing resources and regional development. However, the implementation of Special Autonomy in Papua is still far from expectations. Even though there is a fairly large allocation of funds, the majority of Papuan people feel that these funds are not managed well, and the results are not felt by them directly. Corruption, for example, is the main problem hampering the implementation of Special Autonomy in Papua (Karyono, 2021; Soeprapto, 2020). Apart from that, the biggest challenge in implementing Special Autonomy is recognizing the rights of the indigenous Papuan people. The empowerment of indigenous communities in the political decision-making process is still limited, and they are often not involved in development planning related to their lives. This exacerbates their distrust of the Indonesian political system and government (Salim, 2023; Hidayat, 2013).

Distrust of the Central Government

The Papuan people's distrust of the central government is one of the big challenges in building democracy in Papua. Since the integration of Papua into Indonesia in 1969, many Papuans have felt that the decisions taken by the Indonesian government do not represent their interests. This dissatisfaction was triggered by various policies that were considered detrimental, including the transmigration policy which changed Papua's demographics and ignored the rights of local indigenous communities (Hidayat, 2013; Muluk, 2015).

This is exacerbated by injustice in the distribution of profits from the exploitation of natural resources in Papua, where local communities rarely receive direct benefits from their natural wealth. The granting of Special Autonomy is also considered to have not had a significant impact in improving the welfare of the Papuan people (Salim, 2023; Wibowo, 2020).

Challenges in Building an Inclusive Democracy

Building inclusive democracy in Papua faces serious challenges due to wide social disparities, distrust of the central government, and the Papuan people's long experience with injustice. Democracy in Papua must be able to embrace all parties, including indigenous peoples, women and other marginalized groups, to participate in political decision making related to their lives (Soeprapto, 2020). For example, political education in Papua which is based on local values and traditional wisdom could be one solution to building more inclusive political participation. As noted by Muluk (2015), political education based on local wisdom will be more easily accepted by the Papuan people, because they feel more connected to the culture and values around them. An inclusive democracy must also ensure that the rights of the Papuan people, including the right to self-determination, are respected and fulfilled. According to Ardiansyah (2020), strengthening democracy in Papua must start with respecting Papuan cultural and traditional rights, as well as creating a political

system that allows the Papuan people to have a greater voice in their government.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand the role of political education in shaping the future of democracy in Papua. This research is descriptive-analytic research, which aims to describe and analyze the phenomenon of political education in Papua and its relationship to the development of democracy in the region. This research focuses on the subjective experiences of Papuan people regarding political education and how these experiences influence their views on democracy. This research design also uses a case study approach to dig deeper into the specific context in Papua.

Data is Collected through Several Techniques as Follows:

In-depth Interviews: Interviews were conducted with various key informants, such as community leaders, academics, traditional leaders, local politicians, and Papuans who are active in political activities. The aim is to explore their views and experiences regarding political education and democracy in Papua. **Focus Group Discussions (FGD):** FGDs are conducted with groups of people from various backgrounds (for example, youth, women and indigenous peoples) to gain a collective view on the impact of political education on democratic awareness. **Survey:** The survey was conducted to collect quantitative data regarding the level of understanding of the Papuan people about democracy, political rights and participation in the political process. This survey was carried out in several representative regions in Papua to describe social and political variations in the region. **Documentation Study:** This research also examines documents related to political education policies in Papua, reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as data related to the implementation of elections and political participation in Papua.

Key Informants: Community figures, academics, politicians, traditional leaders and socio-political activists who have experience in the field of political education or democracy in Papua. **Survey Respondents:** Papuan people from various ages, genders and educational backgrounds. **Documents and Archives:** Policy reports, statistical data, and literature related to political education and democracy in Papua.

Data obtained from interviews, FGDs and surveys were analyzed using thematic analysis and descriptive analysis approaches. The analysis process is carried out in several steps as follows:

Data Transcription: The recorded interviews and FGDs were then transcribed to facilitate analysis. **Coding:** Transcript data was organized by identifying main themes related to political education, democratic awareness, and political participation in Papua. **Data Interpretation:** Thematic analysis is used to understand the patterns that emerge in the data and relate them to theories of political and democratic education. **Data Triangulation:** To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various sources, such as interviews, FGDs, and surveys.

This research follows the principles of research ethics, including: Informed Consent: Before interviews or FGDs are conducted, informants are given an explanation regarding the purpose of the research and are given the opportunity to provide voluntary consent. Confidentiality: The identity of informants will be kept confidential and the data obtained will only be used for research purposes. Safety and Well-Being: The researcher ensures that participation in this research does not harm or harm the informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Future of Democracy in Papua

This section discusses the prospects and challenges for the future of democracy in Papua in an effort to create a more inclusive and just society. This analysis includes factors that influence the development of democracy in Papua, such as the issue of special autonomy, socio-economic inequality, and the recognition of traditional rights as well as the participation challenges faced by the Papuan people in the national political structure.

Challenges to Democracy in Papua

Democracy in Papua is faced with a number of challenges, including unequal access to education and the economy, a special autonomy policy that has not been fully realized, and security problems that continue to loom. In Papua, the marginalization experienced by indigenous communities has created distrust of the central government, thus affecting enthusiasm and participation in democracy. A healthy democracy requires a basis of equal access to education and the economy; in Papua, this is still a serious problem (MacLeod, 2015).

The main challenges facing democracy in Papua include economic inequality, distrust of the central government, social and political tensions, limited political participation, and limited infrastructure and access to information. All of these factors play a major role in hindering the development of a more inclusive and just democracy in Papua.

a. Economic Inequality and Access to Education

Papua has one of the highest levels of economic and social inequality in Indonesia. Papuan people, especially indigenous peoples, are often marginalized in the educational and economic sectors, which is one of the main factors in their low participation in the democratic process. Without adequate access to education, Papuans tend not to fully understand their political rights, so their participation in elections and other political activities is limited. Papua faces inequality in many aspects, and without significant improvements, democratization efforts will continue to falter" (King, 2004). Economic inequality and low access to education in Papua are serious obstacles to achieving inclusive democracy" (McGibbon, 2004). Limited access to education in Papua hinders the community's ability to participate effectively in the democratic process" (Aspinall, 2009).

b. Distrust of the Central Government

Papuan people often feel alienated from the central government, especially because policies are deemed not to reflect their needs and

rights. Although there is a Special Autonomy (Otsus) policy aimed at providing more control to Papua, the implementation of the policy often does not meet expectations, resulting in distrust of the central government and the Indonesian government structure as a whole. Distrust of the central government in Papua has hampered broader and more inclusive democratization efforts" (King, 2004). The central government has often failed to meet the expectations of the Papuan people, leading to further tensions and divisions" (Murray, 2013).

c. *Social and Political Tensions*

Papua also faces social tensions involving inter-ethnic conflict, violence, and inequality in the distribution of natural resources. These tensions are often rooted in historical injustices experienced by the Papuan people, including colonial policies and marginalization that occurred after the integration of Papua into the Republic of Indonesia. Social and political tensions in Papua worsen the democratization process, hindering efforts to build dialogue between community groups" (Ward & Ballard, 2003). This condition further worsens the political climate and hinders the development of stable democracy in Papua. Inter-ethnic conflicts in Papua are often triggered by social injustice and unresolved colonial history (Zairin & Samsudin, 2009).

d. *Limitations of Political Participation*

One of the big challenges in Papuan democracy is limitations in political participation. Many Papuans feel that their voices are not valued in the Indonesian political process, whether in general elections or in making important decisions that affect their future. Limited political participation in Papua is caused by distrust of the political system which is deemed not to represent their interests" (Fealy, 2007). This low political participation is largely caused by distrust of the existing political system and political domination by certain groups. The election process in Papua it is often considered a formality, with little impact on people's daily lives (Aspinall, 2011).

e. *Limited Infrastructure and Access to Information*

Access to free information and limited infrastructure are significant challenges in increasing political participation in Papua. Without adequate infrastructure, Papuan people find it difficult to access political information and participate in the broader democratic process. This causes a greater knowledge gap between urban and rural communities.

The Role of Special Autonomy in Papuan Democracy

Special Autonomy (Otsus) was given to Papua as a solution to reduce political tensions and give the Papuan people the opportunity to participate more widely in local politics. However, the implementation of Special Autonomy has not met the expectations of the Papuan people due to bureaucratic obstacles and unfair budget distribution. Special autonomy should be an instrument to increase the participation and welfare of the Papuan people, but in reality there are still many obstacles faced (Elmslie, 2010). If implemented well, Special Autonomy can encourage more participatory democracy and strengthen the political rights of indigenous Papuans. Papua's Special Autonomy must be evaluated to make it more relevant to community needs and support sustainable democracy (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019).

Special Autonomy (Otsus) in Papua is a policy implemented by the Indonesian government to provide more local power in governing the area, with the aim of addressing Papuan people's dissatisfaction and reducing political tensions. Special Autonomy should be an instrument to encourage a government that is more responsive to the needs of the Papuan people and to increase the political participation of indigenous peoples. However, in practice, the implementation of Special Autonomy is often hampered by lack of clarity in policy implementation, lack of transparency in budget use, and questionable policy sustainability.

Special Autonomy has the potential to be an important democratization instrument for Papua, but its implementation often fails to achieve its goals due to various challenges such as non-transparency, lack of administrative capacity, and public dissatisfaction with the results of this policy. A thorough evaluation and reform of the Special Autonomy policy is urgently needed to ensure that Papua can experience the benefits of true democratization.

a. Special Autonomy Goals and Expectations

Special Autonomy was granted to Papua in the hope of improving economic prosperity, education, and health in the region, while giving Papuans greater control over their local affairs. However, many people believe that the main aim of Special Autonomy is to reduce political tensions and overcome demands for separatism, not to truly empower indigenous peoples. Special autonomy could provide an opportunity to improve the quality of local government, but poor implementation hinders these hopes (Chauvel, 2005).

Therefore, although there have been some improvements, there is still a lot of dissatisfaction regarding the implementation of this policy. The hope for Special Autonomy is to give the Papuan people greater control over their political affairs, but structural problems still hinder this (Aspinall, 2010).

b. Challenges in Implementing Special Autonomy

Although Otsus holds many promises, major challenges in its implementation are lack of clarity in fund management, low administrative capacity at the provincial and district levels, and a lack of transparency in budget use. The main problem in Special Autonomy is the non-transparent management of funds, which actually increases

the dissatisfaction of the Papuan people" (Elmslie, 2010). One of the biggest complaints of the Papuan people is that Special Autonomy funds are often not used effectively to improve their welfare, but are instead absorbed by the bureaucracy and certain interest groups. One of the biggest challenges in Special Autonomy is the lack of local administrative capacity to manage funds efficiently and transparently (Westerlund & McDoom, 2012).

c. *Community Dissatisfaction with Special Autonomy Results*

Papuan people who yearn for real change often feel that Special Autonomy does not have a significant impact. Despite the flow of funds from the central government, social and economic inequality in Papua remains high. This caused widespread dissatisfaction, which resulted in a decline in the level of trust in the government and the Special Autonomy policy itself. The Papuan people feel that Special Autonomy only benefits a handful of political elites, while the majority of citizens do not experience significant changes (MacLeod, 2015). The demand for improvements to Special Autonomy or even changes to the Special Autonomy policy is one of the things that is often echoed in political debates in Papua. "Otsus has not been able to address the social and economic inequality experienced by the majority of Papuan people" (King, 2004).

d. *Special Autonomy as a Solution or Obstacle in the Democratization Process?*

Some circles argue that Special Autonomy should be an instrument of democratization that strengthens the influence of the Papuan people on national policies, but in fact this policy can also exacerbate polarization between the central government and the Papuan people. "Otsus, although aimed at encouraging democratization, sometimes functions more as a tool of political control by the central government" (Cohen, 2008). In some cases, the implementation of Special Autonomy is considered more as a means to maintain Indonesia's political stability, rather than as an effort to politically empower the Papuan people. "Special Autonomy has created uncertainty in Papua's relationship with the central government, which can hamper the democratization process" (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019).

e. *Prospects for Improving Special Autonomy in the Future*

The success of Otsus in supporting Papuan democracy in the future depends on how effectively this policy can be changed to truly reflect the aspirations of the Papuan people. "Otsus must be thoroughly evaluated to ensure that this policy truly reflects the needs of the Papuan people and supports a more inclusive democracy" (Henderson & Ward, 2012).

Efforts to improve Special Autonomy policies must include increasing transparency, better budget management, and strengthening the political capacity of local communities so that they can be more involved in the political process. "Improving Special Autonomy policies is key to improving democracy in Papua, by giving people more space to participate" (Chauvel, 2005).

Strengthening Human Rights and Customary Rights as the Basis for Papuan Democracy

Recognition and respect for human rights and the traditional rights of the Papuan people are important in developing a healthy democracy. In many cases, the disregard for traditional rights and discriminatory practices against indigenous Papuans creates distrust of the government. "Democracy in Papua can only function if indigenous people feel that their rights and identity are respected. So "Democracy in Papua needs to be built by respecting local customary rights and traditions so that it is more inclusive and sustainable. (Ballard, 2002). "Customary rights are an important part of the human rights of the Papuan people, and without respect for these rights, democratic participation will be difficult to achieve" (Munro, 2016).

Papua, as a region with unique cultural and historical diversity, faces major challenges in the democratization process. One of the main challenges is the recognition and protection of human rights (HAM) and customary rights which are often neglected in the policies and practices of the Indonesian government. Healthy democracy in Papua can only be realized if the basic rights of the Papuan people are recognized and strengthened, especially human rights and customary rights which are an integral part of their identity and existence as a distinct community.

a. Human Rights as a Pillar of Democracy

Human rights are rights inherent in every individual and must be respected within the framework of a democratic legal state. In Papua, human rights violations have become an ongoing issue, especially related to political freedom, land rights, and the right to self-determination. "A well-functioning democracy does not only involve elections, but also recognition and respect for the human rights of every individual, especially in marginalized regions such as Papua" (McLeod, 2015).

To realize an inclusive democracy, it is important to recognize and respect these basic rights, and ensure that the Papuan people do not become victims of ongoing violations. "Strengthening human rights in Papua is important to create an inclusive and just political space" (King, 2004).

b. Customary Rights as a Form of Recognition of Papuan Identity

Customary rights in Papua are not only related to recognition of the culture and traditions of indigenous peoples, but also with rights to land and natural resources which are part of their continued existence. Recognition of these customary rights is very important, considering that many indigenous communities in Papua depend on land and forests as the main resource for their lives. "Recognition and protection of customary rights is an important part of strengthening democracy, because without this recognition, the Papuan people will not feel respected within the framework of the Indonesian state" (MacLeod, 2015). These customary land rights must be protected so that they can participate fully in the democratic process without the threat of losing their identity or the resources they rely on. "Without respect for

traditional rights, Papua will not be able to achieve prosperity and social justice in democracy" (Aspinall, 2011).

c. *Increasing Papuan People's Access to Justice*

One of the big challenges in strengthening human and customary rights in Papua is the community's low access to a fair and transparent justice system. Many cases of human rights violations do not receive adequate solutions, and the Papuan people often feel that they are not treated equally in the eyes of the law. "Papuan people often feel marginalized in a justice system that is unresponsive to violations of their human and traditional rights" (Bakker & Tan, 2016). Better legal education, as well as a justice system that is more responsive to the needs of the Papuan people, is needed to ensure that their rights are respected and protected. "To achieve justice, strengthening the Papuan people's access to a transparent and fair legal system is very necessary" (Westerlund & McDoom, 2012).

d. *Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Special Autonomy Policy*

Special autonomy (Otsus) in Papua actually has the potential to provide space for the recognition and protection of customary rights. However, the implementation of these policies often fails to effectively protect the rights of indigenous communities, which are sometimes threatened by policies that do not meet local needs. For this reason, there needs to be a policy that is more adaptive to customary rights, and encourages the government to work together with indigenous communities in formulating more inclusive policies. "The implementation of Special Autonomy in Papua must integrate customary rights to ensure the continuation of fair democracy in the region. that" (Fujita, 2011).

"Without recognition of customary rights, Special Autonomy will fail to provide social justice for the Papuan people" (Ward, 2010).

e. *Establishment of an Inclusive Democratic System for the Papuan People*

Inclusive democracy requires recognition of social, cultural and political diversity, including recognition of human and customary rights. "To create true democracy in Papua, we must recognize and protect their human and traditional rights" (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019).

Establishing a democratic system that can include the Papuan people in political and economic decision-making processes will give them more control over their future. Strengthening these rights is very important to reduce the social and political inequality that exists in Papua. "Democracy in Papua will only be achieved if traditional and human rights are respected, not only as legal norms, but also in daily practice" (Sukanta, 2013).

f. *Human Rights and Customary Rights in an International Perspective*

In the international context, human rights and Papuan traditional rights have become global issues that have received attention from international organizations such as the United Nations (UN). "The issue of human rights in Papua has become an international concern, and the world expects Indonesia to improve these conditions within a democratic framework" (King, 2004).

Emphasis on protecting these rights is not only the obligation of the state, but also the responsibility of the international community to support Papua's efforts to achieve true justice and freedom within a democratic framework. "International understanding of Papuan customary rights is also an important step to support their struggle to gain international recognition of their rights" (Fealy, 2007).

Strengthening human and customary rights in Papua is very important to ensure the creation of a more inclusive and just democracy. Recognition of these rights not only improves the quality of life of the Papuan people but also allows them to play an active role in the democratic process. Renewing policies and systems that are more responsive to the needs of indigenous peoples and human rights in Papua is a key step in realizing true democracy in the region.

Education and Political Participation as Determining Factors for the Future of Democracy

Political education and political participation are two interrelated components in forming sustainable democracy, especially in Papua. Political education provides the foundation of knowledge necessary for people to understand their rights and how to participate effectively in the political process. Meanwhile, political participation is a measure of the extent to which people are involved in political activities, such as elections, civic activities, and decision making that affects their lives. In Papua, given the unique social, economic and political context, political education and political participation are determining factors in creating a more inclusive and sustainable democracy.

Targeted and inclusive political education can help the Papuan people understand their roles and rights in a democratic system. "Political education is the foundation for people who want to participate in democracy consciously and critically" (Freire, 1970). Education that emphasizes political knowledge and participation can encourage the young Papuan generation to be more actively involved in the political process. With the right education, Papua's young generation can become important agents of change for a more inclusive future democracy. "To create a sustainable democracy, political education in Papua must be prioritized" (Chauvel, 2005).

a. Political Education as a Foundation for Democratic Awareness

Political education in Papua is still relatively weak compared to other regions in Indonesia. This contributes to low political awareness among the Papuan people which hinders their active participation in the democratic system. "Political education is an important tool for increasing political awareness which will encourage the Papuan people to become involved in the democratic process" (Fealy, 2010).

Good political education must be able to provide an understanding of the principles of democracy, human rights, as well as the election and government processes. In Papua, where people are often isolated by geographic conditions and limited access to information, political education becomes even more important to strengthen their role in Indonesia's democratic system. "Inadequate political education in Papua

hinders the progress of democracy and social equality in the region" (Ward, 2010).

b. *Political Participation as an Indicator of the Quality of Democracy*

Political participation is a key element in any healthy democratic system. "Low political participation in Papua indicates a large gap in Indonesian democracy that must be addressed immediately" (Aspinall, 2011). In Papua, political participation is often hampered by social and political factors, such as distrust of the government, prolonged conflict, and a lack of understanding of the importance of voting rights. "A well-educated public will be more easily involved in the political process, which ultimately improves the quality of democracy" (Fealy & Mason, 2010). Therefore, to create a more inclusive democratic future in Papua, it is important for the community to have a deep understanding of the importance of their participation in elections, civil society organizations and other political forums.

c. *Political Education as a Tool for Liberation from Social Inequality*

In Papua, huge social and economic disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous populations often create gaps in access to education, employment and political participation. "Political education in Papua is not only about understanding democracy, but also about empowering people to overcome the social inequality they experience" (McLeod, 2015). Political education in Papua not only functions to increase awareness about democracy, but also as a tool to free society from social injustice. Inclusive education, which respects local values, can strengthen the self-confidence of indigenous Papuans and give them the strength to participate more actively in the political system. "Political education based on local values can empower the Papuan people to play a role in determining their future" (Sukanta, 2013).

d. *Increasing Access to Political Education in Remote Areas*

One of the main challenges in improving political education in Papua is limited access to educational resources, especially in remote areas. "Limited access to political education in remote areas affects the political participation of the Papuan people, which ultimately hinders the democratic process" (Bakker & Tan, 2016). For this reason, there needs to be a more serious effort from the government, educational institutions and community organizations to develop political education methods that can be accessed by people in remote areas. The use of mass media, the internet and communication technology can be a solution to reach communities in more remote areas and less accessible by conventional educational facilities. "The use of technology and social media can be an effective means of conveying political information in Papua" (Sutrisno, 2014).

e. *The Role of Civil Society Institutions in Education and Political Participation*

Civil society institutions have a very important role in promoting political education and encouraging political participation in Papua. "Civil society institutions in Papua play an important role in increasing access to political education and encouraging community political

participation in the democratic process" (McGibbon, 2004). Non-governmental organizations and indigenous groups can help raise political awareness, provide training, and create spaces for dialogue to strengthen community involvement in the political process. With the active involvement of civil society institutions, political education and political participation can be more effective and more appropriate to the local context in Papua. "Active participation from civil society can strengthen democracy by providing a platform for citizens to interact with government and advocate for their rights" (King, 2004).

- f. *Education and Political Participation as Factors in Strengthening Democracy*
Good political education and political participation can improve the quality of democracy in Papua, by ensuring that all levels of society have a voice in government. "Improving education and political participation in Papua is key to strengthening democracy and ensuring that people's voices are not ignored in decision-making processes" (Fealy, 2010). Through effective political education, the Papuan people will be better prepared to understand their rights and obligations as citizens, as well as ways to demand accountability from the government. Higher political participation will strengthen the government's legitimacy and increase public trust in the democratic system. "Society's active involvement in politics will strengthen democratic countries, encourage more transparent government, and improve social welfare" (Bakker & Tan, 2016).

Education and political participation play a very important role in determining the future of democracy in Papua. To create an inclusive and sustainable democracy, efforts are needed to increase the Papuan people's access to relevant political education, as well as encourage their active participation in the political process. Apart from that, civil society institutions must also be involved in this effort to strengthen political awareness and expand the space for participation for the Papuan people. By overcoming these challenges, Papua can move towards a more equitable and just democratic future.

Future Prospects for Democracy in Papua

Democracy in Papua faces a future full of challenges, but also has great potential to develop if fundamental factors such as human rights, special autonomy and political education are taken seriously. "The future of democracy in Papua depends on the ability of the government and society to create openness and more inclusive participation" (ICG, 2020). By increasing community participation, inclusive government support, and involving traditional leaders and youth, Papua can build a fairer and more resilient democracy. The future of democracy in Papua will also depend greatly on the political will and commitment of the central government in respecting the aspirations of the Papuan people. "Democracy that is inclusive and respects traditional rights will be an important pillar in building a peaceful and prosperous future for Papua" (Widjojo, 2010).

The future of democracy in Papua is at a critical point, where political, social, economic and cultural factors interact with local and national

complexities. In this context, democracy in Papua faces challenges and opportunities. One of the biggest challenges is public distrust of the central government, caused by a long history of marginalization, discrimination and conflict. On the other hand, the special autonomy granted to Papua offers the opportunity to form a more inclusive and participatory democracy, as long as the government and local communities can utilize this potential wisely (Fealy & McRae, 2010).

Although special autonomy provides a foundation for building democracy, Papua still faces significant challenges. Political instability, economic inequality, and lack of political understanding often become obstacles in creating a strong democracy. Many Papuans feel that special autonomy only improves the surface situation without addressing deeper structural injustices (Webster, 2002). In addition, the low level of community participation in political decision making worsens the situation, where the existing democracy is not yet fully able to provide adequate representation for the indigenous Papuan people (King, 2004). "The fundamental challenge in building democracy in Papua is overcoming public distrust of central government policies which are often considered discriminatory" (King, 2004). "The special autonomy policy in Papua still has weaknesses in overcoming socio-economic inequality and discrimination" (Webster, 2002).

The Role of Special Autonomy in Strengthening Democracy, that oSpecial autonomy has great potential in improving democracy in Papua, especially in giving greater power to regional governments and indigenous communities. By being given broader powers, the Papuan people have the opportunity to manage their own resources and make policies that are more appropriate to the local context (Aspinall, 2010). However, the implementation of this policy has not been optimal. Many parties argue that the involvement of indigenous communities in the decision-making process is still lacking and only a small portion of the community actually feels the benefits of this autonomy. "Special autonomy is expected to be a means of increasing democracy by giving the Papuan people more authority in managing their own territory" (Aspinall, 2010). "Even though special autonomy has been granted, much remains to be done to ensure that this policy truly strengthens local community participation in democracy" (McGibbon, 2004).

Political Education as a Pillar of the Future of Democracy

Political education is an important component in strengthening democracy in Papua. By increasing political awareness and understanding, Papuan people can become more involved in the political process and better able to demand their rights. Political education in Papua should focus on empowering indigenous communities and encouraging them to actively participate in politics. The importance of political education was also emphasized by Fealy (2010), who stated that political education can be a tool of transformation for people who have been marginalized from the political process. "Political education in Papua not only provides an understanding of democracy, but also empowers people to participate actively" (Fealy, 2010). "A public that is better educated in politics will

be more likely to demand accountability and transparency from government" (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019).

Besides that, Political Participation as Strengthening Democratic Legitimacy, because active political participation from the Papuan people will strengthen the legitimacy of democracy in this region. Wider participation, especially from indigenous communities, sends the message that democracy is able to represent the voice of all society, not just certain groups. Thus, political participation is not only important to increase representation, but also to create ties between society and government. Often, low political participation in Papua is caused by a sense of distrust of the government and a feeling that their voices have no real impact (Hill, 2007). "Without broad participation from indigenous peoples, democracy in Papua will continue to face a crisis of legitimacy" (Hill, 2007). "Increased political participation can strengthen ties between the Papuan people and the government, thereby strengthening democracy" (Feith, 1964).

Economic Development as the Foundation of Stable Democracy

Inclusive economic development in Papua is also an important prerequisite for sustainable democracy. The large economic inequality between Papua and other regions in Indonesia creates discontent that can threaten democratic stability. The Indonesian government must strive for equitable economic development in Papua as part of a strategy to strengthen democracy (Kirksey, 2002). "Just economic development in Papua will provide a stable foundation for democracy" (Kirksey, 2002). With more equitable economic development, it is hoped that the Papuan people will have more opportunities to be involved in political and social activities. "The large economic inequality in Papua has the potential to hinder the development of healthy democracy in the region" (Chauvel, 2005).

Therefore, building democracy in Papua must be based on local values which has long existed in Papuan culture. Indigenous peoples in Papua have unique community values and collective decision-making systems, which can be integrated into modern democratic systems. By respecting and accommodating local values, democracy in Papua will be more inclusive and relevant to society (Webb-Gannon, 2016). This approach is expected to reduce tensions between local communities and the central government, as well as increase participation in the political process. "The integration of traditional values in democracy will make the political system more accepted and understood by the Papuan people" (Chauvel, 2005).

The future prospects for democracy in Papua depend largely on the ability of the Papuan government and people to face the main challenges that have been identified. By optimizing the implementation of special autonomy, improving political education, encouraging political participation, and ensuring inclusive economic development, the future of democracy in Papua can be stronger and more sustainable. Adopting local values into democracy will ensure that the Papuan people have a greater and more relevant role in the political process..

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, several important things can be concluded regarding the role of political education in shaping the future of democracy in Papua, as follows:

1. Political Education as a Tool for Democratic Empowerment

Political education in Papua has great potential in empowering people to understand and exercise their democratic rights. Although existing structural and cultural challenges hinder the equitable distribution of political education, increasing political awareness among the public shows that political education can be an effective instrument in strengthening democracy in the region. People who are more educated in political matters tend to be more active in participating in the democratic process, from elections to local political decision making.

2. Challenges of Implementing Political Education in Papua

Political education in Papua faces a number of challenges, both external and internal. Limited access to formal education and political information, especially in remote areas, is a major obstacle. Apart from that, very strong cultural and social factors, such as the dominance of traditional traditions and the political marginalization of indigenous peoples, also influence the way people view and receive political education. This requires an approach that is more sensitive to local wisdom and the socio-political context of Papua.

Based on these findings, this research recommends several important steps to strengthen political education in Papua, including:

1. Develop a political education curriculum that is more relevant to the needs and context of the Papuan people, by incorporating local values and traditional culture.
2. Increasing access to political information through mass media and digital platforms, as well as supporting political training and education for the community, especially in remote areas.
3. Encourage collaboration between government, educational institutions, civil society organizations and traditional leaders to create political education programs that are more inclusive and based on community participation.
4. Provide sufficient facilities and resources to expand political education programs for marginalized groups, such as women, youth and indigenous communities.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every research is subject to limitations; thus, you can explain them here and briefly provide suggestions to further investigations.

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