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Aims and Scope:

PCD Journal of South and Southeast Asia's Power, Conflict, and Democracy Studies is an international refereed journal initiated by the Power, Conflict, and Democracy (PCD) consortium, a collaborative work by the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka, Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia, and the University of Oslo in Norway. It is a journal that comprehensively examines the dynamics of power and democracy, including practices of human rights, popular representation, and public policy, particularly, in Indonesia but still giving a space for comparative studies. Invitation is extended to authors with interest in making comparison experiences in Indonesia with those of the rest of the globe. PCD Journal publishes articles, literature review, field notes, and book reviews in major sub fields of political science, human geography, and political anthropology.

PCD Journal aims to address some of the most current issues of power, conflict, and democracy in Indonesia with comparative perspective. While the journal is open to all methodological approaches, all submissions are expected to be theoretically grounded. The journal can be of great value to teachers, students, researchers, experts, journalists, and social movement activist dealing with these issues and regions.

Submission

Submitted papers should be no longer than 8,000 words excluding tables and figures. Submit the manuscript via e-mail to the editor-in-chief at pcd@ugm.ac.id.

Manuscript preparation

For detailed instruction check our website: <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/v3/PCD> or <http://www.jurnal.ugm.ac.id/pcd>.

Peer Review

Every submitted article will be subject to peer review. The normal review period is three months. Most research articles in this journal have undergone rigorous peer review based on initial editorial screening and refereeing by anonymous referees. Authors should take care that the manuscript contains no clues as to identity. Nevertheless, articles published under 'Research Notes' section, aimed at setting up future research agenda, are non-peer-reviewed.

PCD Programme

The state of democracy in the Global South is marked by a striking paradox: while liberal democracy has attained an ideologically hegemonic position through two so-called waves of democracy, the qualities of such democracies is increasingly called into question. The "old" democracies in the global South like Sri Lanka are weakened. Democracy deficits have emerged within constitutional and institutional arrangements as well as in political practices. Further, the "third wave of democracy" is over. "New" democracies like in Indonesia have fostered freedoms, privatisation and decentralisation but continue to suffer from poor governance, representation and participation. Hence there are general signs of decline. Vulnerable people are frustrated with lack of actual influence and sustained elitism. Politicians winning elections often need to foster ethnic and religious loyalties, clientelism and the abuse of public resources. Powerful groups and middle classes with poor ability to win elections tend to opt for privatisation and return partially to authoritarian governance.

Critical questions are therefore asked about the feasibility of democracy in developing country contexts. Some observers say it is only a problem of better crafting of institutions. Others contend that "full" democratisation was premature in the first place and that necessary preconditions need to be created beforehand. Both positions are based on a narrow and static understanding of democracy. While the core elements of democracy are universal, real world democracies develop (or decline) over time and through contextual dynamics; in processes and contexts of actors, institutions and

relations of power. Therefore, the crucial task is to analyse the problems and options of expanding the historically “early” freedoms and deficient elements of democracy that fortunately exist in spite of poor socio- economic and political conditions in countries such as Sri Lanka and Indonesia rather than giving up on these freedoms until the other have somehow improved. This is to advance towards the universally accepted aim of democracy in terms of popular control of public affairs on the basis of political equality, and to be able to use democracy to handle conflicts and alter unequal and unsustainable development.

With this in mind, researchers at the University of Oslo (Norway), Gadjah Mada (Indonesia) and Colombo (Sri Lanka) have come together in a collective research— and post- graduate programme. The idea is to pool their research projects and results, and to promote doctoral as well as master studies by way of, first, a joint framework for analysing power, conflict and democracy and, second, a basic electronic peer reviewed journal and report series (published by PCD-Press) to the benefit of students, scholars and priorities in the region. Basic resources—in addition to the participants own voluntary work and projects— are provided by their respective universities and the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU).

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The Impact of Indonesia's Village Fund (Dana Desa) on Village Head Election: Evidence from Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract

Through the implementation of the Village Law in 2014, the Indonesian government seeks to promote rural development and village autonomy by decentralizing power. The 2014 Village Law has two important points: the village fund and the extension of a village head's term. This article tested to what extent the village fund has impacted the village head election and whether the village fund has improved villagers' political participation in running for the village head election. The method used in this study is quantitative through a survey of 96 random village head candidates in the 2016 village head election in 117 villages in Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan. The findings show that the village funds have an impact on the quality of the nomination of village heads and facilitate the public's involvement in the election. This phenomenon underscores the importance of village funds in encouraging democratic practices and the grassroots community's participation in village governance. Changes in regulations of village fund implementation influence the participation of village residents in running for village head election, encouraging them to participate in the democratic process at the village level.

Keywords: Village Fund; Village Head Election; Political Participation

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government implemented the 2014 Village Law to support rural development and promote village autonomy through the decentralization of power. According to data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the current number of villages in the country stands at 83,734. In particular, this study's location, the Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan, is home to 277 villages. This shows the rich and diverse rural communities that make up the Indonesian village governance landscape. It also highlights the importance of local governance structures and the role of village heads in managing and leading their respective communities. Understanding the scale and complexity of rural regions is critical for policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners seeking to promote sustainable

development and inclusive growth in Indonesia.

The 2014 Village Law comprises two essential components: the establishment of *Dana Desa* or village fund and an extension of the village head's term to three six-year periods. Prior to the enactment of this law, grants were distributed to regency governments and passed to village governments. These governments are independent of each other. Meanwhile, the village fund initiative mandates that a minimum of 10% of the fiscal balance funds for local governments from the state budget (APBN) be allocated to villages. This amounted to IDR 72 trillion (USD 4.6 billion) in 2022. Furthermore, the article proposes that elected village heads must be trained in effective fund management to promote the sustainability of rural areas and empower village communities



to have greater autonomy. The village fund from the central government and the allocation of funds from regencies to villages significantly contribute to the rise in the village budget. Figure 3 shows that in Banjar Regency, the tax share to local revenue was minimal and remained consistent at around IDR 3 billion (USD 191,826) from 2009 to 2016. However, there was a significant growth to IDR 6 billion (USD 383,655) in 2017. Before the implementation of the 2014 Village Law, Banjar Regency allocated about IDR 130 million (USD 8,312) per village. After the implementation, one village was granted around IDR 1 billion (USD 63,942), which is a ten-fold increase. As independent local entities, villages need to identify their own sources of revenue. However, this is challenging for villages in Banjar Regency.

Aside from village funds, the implementation of the 2014

Village Law also has an impact on the village election. Nonetheless, to date, research on villagers' participation in village elections before and after the law enactment has been limited. Aspinall and Rohman (2017) highlight the lack of systematic research on village politics, with most research focusing on specific locations. This limitation has created gaps in the understanding of the dynamics of village politics in general, which warrants further research. Furthermore, Aspinall and Rohman (2017) investigated the practice of vote buying in village elections, particularly among the elites and affluent class in the community. Connections with the district government also allowed village elites to sway votes, as they could win government projects by lobbying the district government officials. In terms of village head elections, studies have examined local elections at

the village/rural level in Indonesia. For example, Kis-Katos & Sjahrir (2017) found that direct local elections offer no beneficial effects on local development. Sjahrir, et al. (2013) found that incumbents in direct local elections have significantly larger political budgets when running for re-election. In Indonesia's election, Aspinall (2014) identified three types of election brokers, namely activist brokers, clientelist brokers, and opportunist brokers. Brokers' roles in elections, in terms of their loyalty towards election candidates, are to carry out predation and defection. This affects the chance of becoming a candidate in a village head election. Aspinall's study identifies the prevalence of clientelism amongst candidates, as well as the effectiveness of local actors in capturing the attention of the village community. These observations

highlight the significance of local actors in shaping the electoral outcomes of village head elections and underline the importance of understanding the dynamics of candidate-client relationships in such contexts.

An incumbent village head's election rerun is motivated by increases in the village budget (due to increased village funds and other village grants) and the three-term opportunity. The village head, as the top leader in the village, has the authority to control and utilize the village budget. Furthermore, as the budget has increased, the 2014 Village Law has mandated that village heads and officials should be paid well. In other words, the elements in the 2014 Village Law have made village politics and competition for the village head position more attractive to village residents to compete in the election. This makes participating in the village



government attractive for residents seeking jobs.

In addition, there is a discourse surrounding the proposed revision of the village law in 2023, which is a subject of local political debate. It has been proposed that there will be an increase in village funding to almost IDR 5 billion (USD 320,056). This, and the three-term occupancy, motivate village heads to run for the next term and create small oligarchies at the village level. The village head association organized a demonstration at the national House of Representatives in response to the proposed term of office extension. The existing term spans six years and is intended to be prolonged to nine years. Furthermore, the village head suggested augmenting the village budget, citing the need for a more effective allocation of funds. The discussion is centered around the extension of the term

and the allocation of additional funds to the villages. To date, local political battles at the village level have been escalating because the proposal to extend the term of office and increase the village fund budget has become a draft law, so the competition for village heads has become fiercer.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article aims to answer two questions: (1) To what extent has the existence of the village fund impacted the village head election? (2) How has the village fund impacted the village residents' political participation in the running for a village head? To answer the question, this article used a quantitative method. Banjar Regency was chosen for this study because, considering the note of Vel et al. (2016), Indonesia village studies are dominantly based in Java Island and thus needed more research outside that Island. The



Banjar Regency is situated in the southern part of Kalimantan Island, covering an area of 4,688 square kilometers. In 2017, the region was home to a population of 571,573 individuals. The area is demarcated into 20 sub-districts, 277 hamlets, and 13 residential areas. The 2016 village head elections in Banjar Regency were conducted across 117 villages, indicating that the present village fund conditions may have motivated residents to become village heads.

A questionnaire was distributed to 96 randomly selected candidates for the position of village head. The survey did not classify the respondents based on any special criteria to determine the sample size before and after the existence of village funds. This field survey only collected information available in some villages in Banjar Regency. The survey used a 10-point rating

system ranging from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). The questions aimed to indicate the candidates' motives and confidence levels in certain competencies and were not divided into categories based on the rating ranges.

The survey questionnaire was composed of two principal inquiries aimed at measuring the motivation of ordinary citizens to contest the role of the village head. The first question asked participants to evaluate their reasons for running for the election. Six motives were provided for the candidates to assess, namely: security, facilities, power, prestige, salary, and budget (increase in budget due to the village fund). Five of the six motives were derived from Dunleavy's (1991) bureaucrat self-interest motive, as the village head is considered a village-level bureaucrat responsible for overseeing the village government. The second



question asked respondents to rate their competence as a candidate for village head. The candidates were given seven non-technical skills, including honesty, empathy, anti-corruption spirit, loyalty, leadership, coordination and cooperation, and supervision, as well as four technical skills, namely budgeting, accounting, planning, and computer literacy. The non-technical and technical skills were identified and interpreted by the author from the competencies required in compliance with the regulations stipulated in the 2014 Village Law. This research focuses on these two aspects of the questionnaire. In addition, the supplementary questions in the questionnaire covered general respondent characteristics.

The statistics of village head elections focus on three key variables: the education level, the age of candidates, and the

number of contenders per village. The data was analyzed against the conditions before and after the introduction of village funds (Village Law Number 6 of 2014) based on the information from 96 candidates across villages in Banjar Regency. The analysis was carried out through a sample t-test using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The study seeks to determine whether the three variables remain consistent before and after the introduction of village funds. Additionally, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to find out if there is a correlation between village conditions and citizen participation in village head elections. The analysis considers factors such as population, poverty rate, area, and village development index. The study also examines the motivation of people to run for village head and the presence or absence of

village funds to identify the correlation between the two. The analysis looked at the number of candidates running for village head, as well as the percentage of the population that voted in the election. The study aims to gain insights into the influence of village funds on the dynamics of village head elections. The village development index was established by the National Planning Board (BAPPENAS) and Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in 2015. The composite index for measuring the level of development in a village comprises five components, with a range of 0 to 100: (1) the basic service index represents villages' education and health facilities (2) the infrastructure index represents infrastructure facilities for the economy, connection and information, power, clean water and hygiene (3) transportation index represents village transportation

and access (4) the index of public service represents the provision of amenities for public health and athletics (5) the governance index measures the autonomy and performance of village apparatus.

The motivation and competency sub-variables were respectively accumulated into a single variable, i.e., the total motivation value to be a village head variable and the total competence value of the village head variable. The variables were then placed with other variables, namely education level, age, and experience being a village head, to understand their relationships with the voting result. The purpose is to see which variables have a strong relationship with winning the village head election. The analysis applied Pearson correlation to know the relationship between motivation, (self-measured) competency,



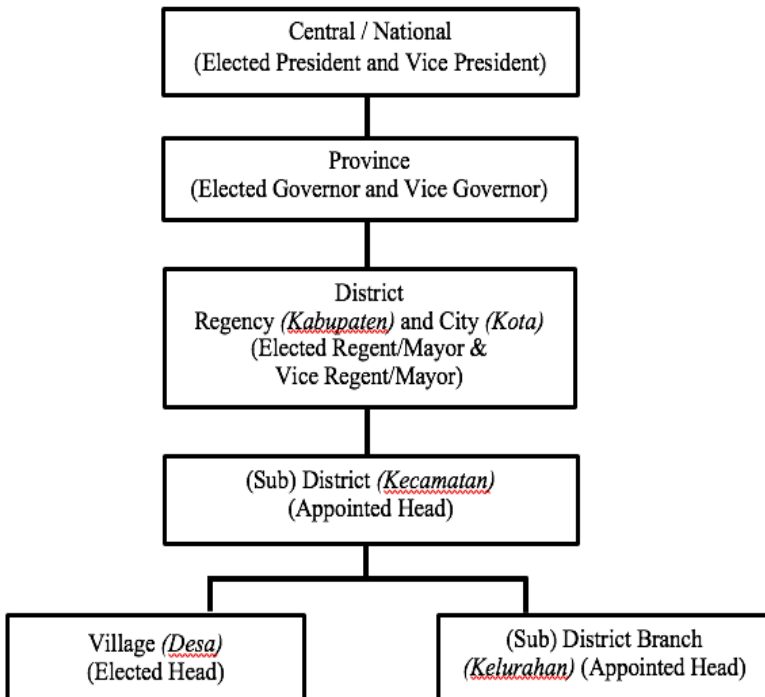
and other factors with the percent of votes.

INDONESIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND VILLAGE FUND: A CONTEXT

Indonesia's administrative hierarchy comprises three levels, as depicted in Figure 1. The

government is divided into different levels, including the central government with the president and national entities, the provincial administration called *provinsi*, the district administration consisting of cities (*kota*) and regencies (*kabupaten*), and the (sub)district

Figure 1. Indonesia's Levels of Government



Source: Local Government Law No. 23/2014.

(*kecamatan*), which is the lowest level of government. At the village level, there are two types of government: *desa* for rural areas and *kelurahan* for urban regions with high population density.

In Indonesia, the village government is overseen by (sub)districts, which function as the representatives of the regency government. These villages, known as *desa* in Indonesian, derive their name from the Indian term *swadesi*, which means origin, hometown, or ancestor land. *Desa* refers to a community or group of individuals who share a strong bond based on shared customs and norms and who reside within established boundaries (Wasistiono & Taher, 2007). In Indonesia, a legally recognized community referred to as a village is characterized by territorial boundaries. It holds responsibility for enacting governmental functions that

align with the community's societal requirements, traditions, and customs. This accountability is acknowledged by the government and serves as a means of ensuring effective governance within the community (Rahayu, 2018). In addition, Paryoto (2015) offers a comprehensive definition of a village as a self-contained entity within a larger country, specifically Indonesia, with its own unique territory, governmental structures, population, local institutions, and economic resources. This characterization emphasizes the distinct responsibilities and functions that villages hold in ensuring effective governance and meeting the societal needs of their respective communities. Meanwhile, a village, from a political perspective, is understood as an organization of power that has certain authority



in the structure of state government (Pratikno, 2000).

In 2014, the legislation governing local government was divided into three distinct laws: Law 23/2004; Law 1/2014, which concerned local elections; and Law 6/2014, which concerned villages. This separation of local government Law 32/2004 was the hallmark of the next level of government decentralization. Decentralization from central governments to local governments began in 2001, but the village level only started in 2015. The key feature was the provision of substantial grants for villages, which influence all aspects of village governance, including village politics. According to research results by Briando et al. (2017), fiscal decentralization creates more efficient budget allocations, stimulates economic growth in the region, and has a larger impact on various sectors.

Overall, this will have implications for inter-regional development activities and rural autonomy. In this case, a greater emphasis on financial equilibrium between central and regional governing bodies is needed. The division of the legislation that governs local government in 2014 led to the establishment of three distinct laws, including Law 23/2004. The demarcation has become even more apparent with the introduction of Law Number 6 of 2014, which pertains to villages, and Government Regulation Number 43 of 2014, which elaborates on the stipulations for implementing this law. These regulations have broadened the scope of fiscal decentralization in villages, underscoring the importance of effective governance and financial management at the local level.

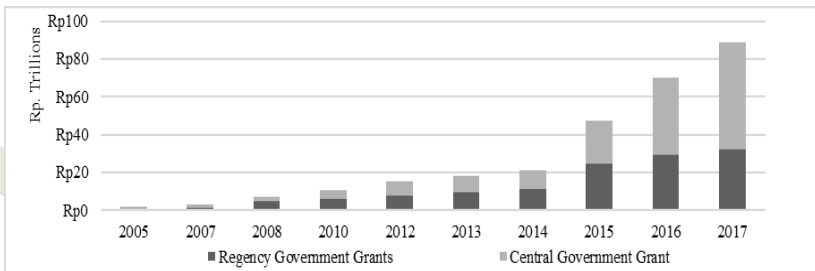
Figure 2 depicts the national grants allocated for Indonesian villages. These grants comprise



the village fund funded by the central government and the regency village allocation fund. Figure 3 shows the grants for villages in the Banjar Regency. There was a significant disparity in the allocation of grants to villages at both the national and regency levels between 2014 and 2015. Specifically, the total amount of grants disbursed by the central and regency governments in 2014 amounted to IDR 22 trillion (USD 1.406 billion). However, this number increased dramatically by the end of 2015, with a total of IDR 47 trillion (USD 3.005 billion). In 2016, this sum further increased

to IDR 70 trillion (USD 4.475 billion). The allocation of funds to rural areas has steadily increased over the years. In 2014, villages received a budgetary increase of IDR 39 billion (USD 2.493 million) from the regency, which gradually increased to IDR 175 billion (USD 11.188 million) in 2015, and further rose to IDR 265 billion (USD 16.942 million) in 2016, and finally reached IDR 316 billion (USD 20.205 million) in 2017. Given that villages are local entities, it is crucial for them to identify their own sources of revenue.

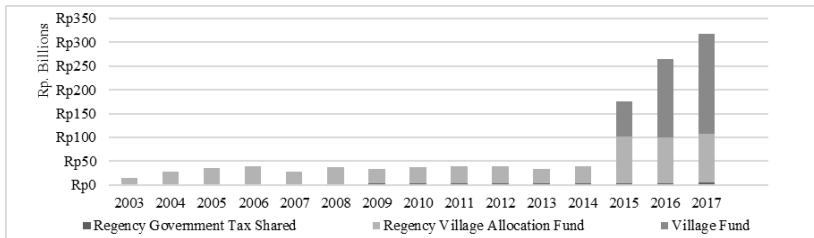
Figure 2. Grants for Villages in Indonesia (2005–2017)



Source: Indonesia’s Village Government Financial Statistics 2005-2017



Figure 3. Grants for Villages in Banjar Regency (2003–2017)



Source: Banjar Regency (2017)

PARTICIPATION IN KEY CONCEPTS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This article explores the concept of political participation. According to Nelson & Huntington (1994), political participation can be categorized into two categories: autonomous and mobilization participation. Autonomous participation is motivated by a desire to engage in political activity, either due to one's responsibility to civic life or to advance one's own interests or the interests of one's group. In contrast, mobilization participation refers to political involvement that is prompted, requested, or even compelled by

others. Typically, people's political participation is derived from specific socio-political foundations.

In the context of public political participation, Nelson & Huntington (1994) have categorized the various bases of political participation into several groups, such as those with a similar social status, income, and occupation. The group or communal participation also involves individuals who share similar racial, religious, linguistic, or ethnic origins. Meanwhile, neighborhood participation is characterized by individuals who reside in close proximity to one another and share a common



interest in political issues that concern their immediate community. Political parties consist of individuals who identify with a formal organization seeking to achieve or maintain control over the executive and legislative spheres. Finally, factions are groups of individuals who share similar racial, religious, linguistic, or ethnic origins and who eventually form patron-client relationships with those with unequal levels of social, educational, and economic status.

According to Naidoo & Finn (2001), studies have shown the impact of village funds on community-driven development. The village fund impacts how the community is involved in making decisions related to regional development and optimizing the use of resource areas that suit the village's needs. Similar studies in Thailand and the Philippines show the same

impact. A successful example of community-driven development in Thailand is the Thai Village Fund (2001-present). It is a microfinance program that provides micro-credit to communities in 78,000 villages through credit committees that provide short-term credit loans and agricultural investment. There was also a program called Laban Sa Kahirapan Kapit-big-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services in the Philippines (2002-2014). This was a clean water infrastructure development program, 50% for school construction, 28% for basic transportation, and 22% for entrepreneurial community facilities. The program distribution mechanism was through the empowerment of local communities to collaborate with local governments (barangay). In India, the Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiative Program (2000-2016) focuses on



microfinance activities for household activities, 30% agriculture, 29% non-agricultural trade and livestock farming, 10% and microcredit and other productive activities in six regions, the poorest in the Andhra Pradesh region.

In Indonesia, the optimal utilization of village funds is geared towards the development and empowerment of rural communities. This requires a focus on enhancing the quality of life, reducing poverty, and promoting overall community welfare, which is determined by a specific formula: 10% for the total population, 50% poor population, 15% for the area, 25% for geographic difficulty level, and 3% for underdeveloped villages and very underdeveloped villages.

According to research results by Wibowo et al. (2019:176), "The Village Fund empirically increases the achievement of infrastructure, health, education

outcomes, and improves economic performance that serves as an economic catalyst and balancer." The evaluation results show that the impact of allocating village funds to new welfare can be enjoyed in the long run. However, it has not been able to reduce poverty, unemployment, and inequality and increase the income index of the people.

The person elected as village head holds the highest level of authority over the village's finances, including the village fund and budget. Additionally, the village head serves as the official representative of the village government and is responsible for managing the village's assets. The village head's authority over village finances includes stipulating the village budget policy, appointing the technical officer for village finances, assigning the officers who collect the village revenue, approving



village expenditures, and initiating actions funded by the village budget. Therefore, the position of village head is strategic with regard to control of the village fund and/or village budget.

Residents in the village directly elect the person who will serve as the village head. Every resident who meets the village head candidate requirements is eligible to register to compete in the election. Promotion by political parties is not necessary. In the village, the election of the village head is a fundamental representation of democracy and acknowledges the village's independent legal status. With the village fund contributing to significant budget surges, leadership roles in the village have become substantially more attractive.

Village elections before and after the 2014 Village Law differ. First, before the 2014 Village Law,

village heads could only run for two six-year terms. After the enactment of the law, they could run for three terms. Second, before, the timing for village elections differed depending on each village, and the elections were run independently. Now, all village elections are held on the same day, simultaneously with other villages. Also, after the stipulation of the 2014 Village law, the timing is set into a maximum of three periods (not held every year). Third, in terms of jurisprudence, the provision of financial resources for village elections was predominantly dependent upon the village head candidates and the village administration, with limited contributions from the regency government. Now, it is fully funded by the regency government, with some additional funding from the village government. As such, the village candidates do not have to



spend any money from their personal budget. Fourth, after the law, each village's candidacy is limited to five village head candidates. When more than five people register as village head candidates, the committee conducts a selection process to narrow down the possibilities to five candidates.

FINDINGS

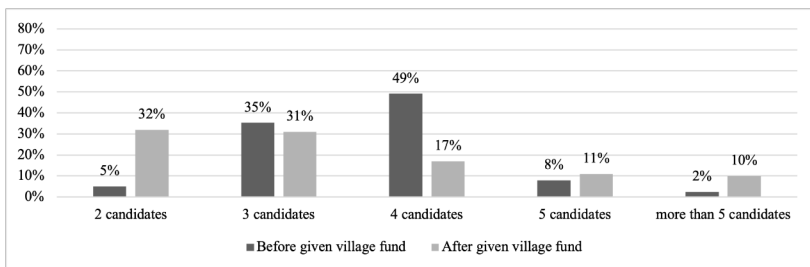
This research results in five main findings. *First*, the analysis compares village candidates before and after the 2014 Village Law/Village Fund. As shown in Figure 4, there are variations in

the level of competition in village head elections.

Second, the regency conducts a qualification test in village elections when the number of candidates exceeds five. In 2016, eleven villages studied in this research had to administer the test. This test helps to ensure that the number of candidates is limited and manageable budget-wise. However, this scheme limits participation.

Third, in terms of age (see Figure 5), our survey shows that there are more older participants (between 41-50 years, 51-60

Figure 4. Numbers of Candidates in Village Head Elections



Note: The sample contains 103 villages before the village fund and 117 villages after the village fund.

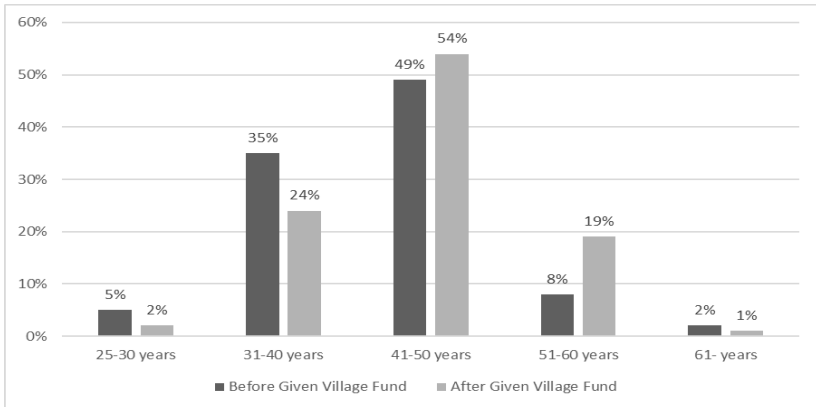
Source: Authors' survey 2017 in Banjar Regency.



years old, and more than 61 years old), and there are fewer candidates aged between 31-40 years old as well as 25-30 years old. It means that the new village law has attracted more older generations, but this is not the case among younger generations. The average age of village head candidates has also increased from 41.87 years old to 44.99 years old (see Table 1).

high school (6% increase) and university background (4%). This could be beneficial because higher education can help elected candidates assume their roles better. The average education level has increased from 2.68 to 2.82 after the implementation of the village fund (see Table 1). This increase shows that there has been an improvement in the education level of village head

Figure 5. The Ages of Village Head Candidates



Fourth, in terms of education (see Figure 6), there has been an increased number of candidates with an education background of

candidates. While the majority of candidates graduated from junior or senior high school, there are also candidates with a bachelor's

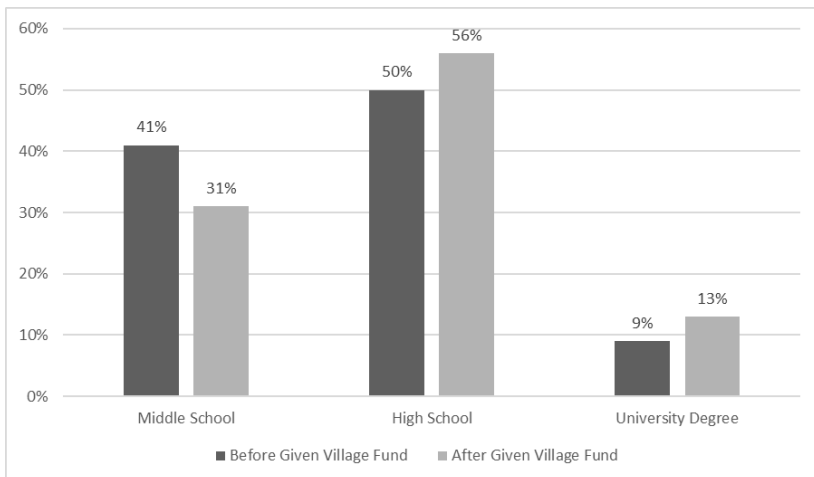


or postgraduate degree. Meanwhile, the average number of candidates running for village head has increased from 2.82 to 3.44 after the implementation of the Village Law and village funds, indicating an increase in community participation in running for village head and

voting participation in the village head election process.

In summary, as can be seen in Table 1, education, age, and rate of competitiveness increased after village funds were introduced. They all have a statistically significant difference, as evidenced by a p-value of less than <0.05 .

Figure 6. Educational Background of Village Head Candidates



Note: The sample contains 291 village head candidates before the village fund and 123 village head candidates after the village fund

Source: Authors' survey 2017 in Banjar Regency



Table 1. Social background of Village Head Candidates: A Comparison Before and After the Village Fund

No	Variables	Sample Position		P-Value	Inference
		Before receiving village funds (Mean)	After receiving village funds (Mean)		
1	Education level of village head candidates	2.68	2.82	0.039*	Different Mean (significant)
2	Age of village head candidates	41.87	44.99	0.000*	Different Mean (significant)
3	Number of competing village head candidates in one village	2.82	3.44	0.000*	Different Mean (significant)

Note: Education level: 2 = junior high school, 3 = high school, 4 = university degree; Age of village head candidates in years, number of competing village head candidates in person; p-value > 0.05 = same/no different; * denotes p-value < 0.05 = different.

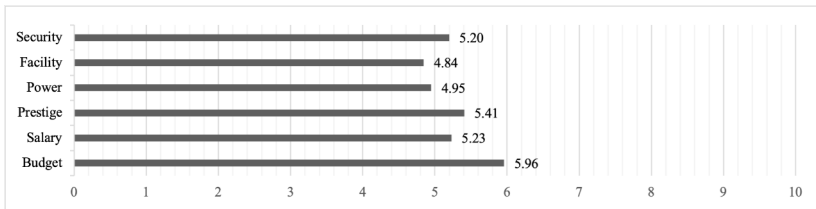
Source: Authors' calculation

Five, on motivation for becoming village head, Figure 7 shows that budget control is the main motivation, and the lowest one is on obtaining the perks/facilities. Candidates indicated that they could work effectively as village heads with their current abilities and that they had less

motivation to satisfy their personal interests when elected. Also, the respondents did not want to appear to have a vested interest and highly motivated because they would seem too eager to become the village leader.



Figure 7. Candidates' Motivation to be Village Head



Note: Score value from 1 to 10 for a sample of 96 village head candidates in the 2016 village head election. The value/score is the mean score of every sub-variable.

Source: Authors' survey 2017 in Banjar Regency.

Figure 7 compares the six motives, using the mean scores from 96 village head candidates. The motive of managing the budget is the highest. This finding indicates that the policy of providing a fund to villages motivates the residents to compete in the village head election, as the residents hope to gain control over the village fund. The motive ranked second highest is prestige, namely being the number one person in the village. Besides material things, prestige is pursued by many village candidates. For these

candidates, being the village head could offer self-satisfaction. The third motive is the salary or the payment received as village head. The lowest-ranked three motives are job security or life stability improvement when being village head, followed by power or the authority enjoyed as the village head, and facilities like owning an office and official vehicle .

CONCLUSION

The increase in village funds accompanied by changes in regulations on the use of village funds is one of the motivations



for village residents to run as village head candidates in the village elections. After the increase in village funds, there was an increase in the number of village head candidates in Banjar Regency. The educational level of the candidates also increased slightly, even though the minimum educational requirements were only up to junior high school level and the majority of candidates were high school graduates. In addition, there was a slight increase in the average age of prospective village heads, from 41.87 years to 44.99 years, which indicates that the older generation remained interested in joining the game. A village with a bigger population resulted in a larger number of village head candidates, but the number of voters who voted in the village head election would be smaller if the population were larger. Regarding the poverty level in the village, villages whose

income was still classified as poor had a greater number of candidates than villages with a lower poverty level.

The highest motivation for becoming a village head, based on the survey, was the interest in the control over the village funds. This finding suggests that the fund has influenced political participation at the village level by making positions in the village government more attractive, especially the position of the village head. The survey aimed to look at the confidence of village head candidates in a number of competencies required to become a village head. Candidates were more confident with non-technical competencies than with technical competencies. It can be concluded that candidates running for the position of village head realized that they would have the support of the village government apparatus in their



executive role and that the attraction of village funds made them put more effort into becoming village heads. Nevertheless, it is imperative for the district government to provide appropriate training for newly elected village heads to ensure the continued effectiveness of the village head and village government.

Finally, there are factors/variables that have a relationship with the selection of village head candidates. The two factors that had a significantly positive relationship with the election were motivation to become a village head and experience as a village head. A candidate with experience of being a village head was more likely to be re-elected. It is conceivable that aspirations to achieve certain goals may have influenced candidates' decisions to compete for the position of village head. In other words, the

higher the motivation, the greater the effort in campaigning, which will affect the election. Some even went as far as to spend personal funds to attract attention so that they would be elected as village heads.

In summary, the main findings of this article show that village funds as grants or transfers motivate citizens to engage in the village head election process. The academic implication of this article is in the study of fiscal decentralization and the study of local/independent communities that grant funds, which could be transformed into community-driven self-development. This study also suggests that the political participation of citizens to become community leaders also has an impact on the management of the village budget. In addition, the management of village funds by the village government is one of the drivers to demonstrate the



integrity and quality of a village to carry out a decentralization in a small scope.

As a suggestion for future research, political practices at the village level need to be studied related to the practice of money politics through campaign activities by distributing cash, goods, donations, and political promises to voters, which causes indications of misconduct in the village head election. In carrying out their actions, village head candidates are motivated by economic benefits. The provision of village funds as grants or transfers appears to incentivize citizens to participate in the village head election process, leading to greater competition for positions among various parties in the village. The focus of village heads on extending their tenure and increasing budget allocations for the village demonstrates their desire to retain power. This persistence

has resulted in significant influence over the local political environment, which has implications for the effective functioning of higher levels of government. In addition, it shapes the way people perceive the government, particularly in relation to village governance, and impacts their trust in the government.



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Resisting the Stigma of Being Papuan: Comprehending the Roles of Identity, Social Contribution, and Popular Culture Through Papuan Youth Organization in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

This article shows the stigmatization of Papuan youth in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The Papuan youth in this research is represented by a youth organization called The Mappi and Puncak Griya Sekar Aji Family Association (Ikatan Keluarga Mappi dan Puncak Griya Sekar Aji - IKMP GSA), which has made extensive efforts to create a unique identity of the indigenous people of Papua or Orang Asli Papua (OAPs) through various initiatives, such as social contributions and participation in popular culture. This study's extensive ethnographic data over four years revealed that OAPs gradually deconstruct the prevailing negative stereotypes attached to Papuan students in DIY. The success could be attributed to OAPs' collective efforts in establishing and running IKMP GSA. The members also exhibit a high level of self-awareness and actively participate in social activities and mainstream cultural elements in their daily lives. The results provide empirical evidence of effective, repeatable strategies to help improve Papuan students' social lives across Indonesia.

Keywords: *Stigmatization; Papuan; Youth Organisation; Identity; Social Contribution*

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Introduction

Minority groups in social communities are often subject to discrimination, marginalization, and a negative stigma. On the one hand, this stigmatization often makes them unable to thrive under certain sociocultural conditions. On the other hand, it “forces” them to form a social construction resistant to discriminatory practices perpetuated in the system and structure (Becker & Arnold, 1986; Becker & Barreto, 2019). They turn the stigmatization into a motivation to fight the narrative with real, impactful actions (Verma et al., 2018). Such resistance provides theoretical significance as it shows how a marginalised group can change stigmatization and people's views on a minority group through symbolic expressions and strategic actions.

This article explains the strategies used by Papuan

students in DIY to counter the negative narrative and stereotypes attached to their group. These strategies are important because they can break the stigma related to identity and ethnicity that underlies the assumptions and assessment of a certain group (Dalimunthe et al., 2020). Assessments based on ethnicity are irrational and anecdotal in nature, resulting in irrational social discrimination (Eylem et al., 2020; Howarth, 2006). However, the assessment of a group based on ethnicity factors may not be very relevant without real actions. This research aims to capture the latter as the manifestation of the former.

The increasing number of students in DIY coming from various regions has transformed the culture and social dynamics to become increasingly more heterogeneous. Heterogeneity makes a society more



multicultural and diverse (Faist, 2013). On the other hand, it also creates ethnic polarization, which is a source of inter-group conflicts (Sanjaya et al., 2023). The polarization between the “native Jogja” and “immigrants” is prevalent among students, which often ends up in a conflict. For example, when a commotion transpires in a public space in DIY, society often assumes “immigrant” students to be the masterminds of the commotion, which stigmatises these students. The “source of commotion” in DIY is stigmatization that indicates systemic discrimination against certain social groups (Kirkinis et al., 2021).

One of the fundamental problems regarding the negative stigmatization of a group reflects the failure of the existing power to manage diversity and multiculturalism (Faist, 2013). This has become an obstacle

resulting in stagnation in the state process and negative perceptions of migrant communities. However, the formation of a paradigm in social life cannot be separated from the context of majoritarianism (Modood, 2020). With the majority group feeling entitled to a certain degree of primacy, judgments against certain communities, such as those Papuan students in DIY, have become increasingly inevitable.

Stigmatization hinders a group’s ability to develop and network in a particular social situation. Negative judgment toward a group not only closes social space but can also form certain boundaries of trust that make them unable to find their place in society (Sutin et al., 2015). Over time, this results in systemic discrimination (Phillips & Jun, 2022). In the case of Eastern and indigenous Papuan students, the deep-seated



stigmatization makes it difficult for them to engage in activities, including in their studies (Viartasiwi et al, 2018).

Negative stereotypes can be changed through various strategies, including activities with outputs that contradict the existing perceptions in the community. These include strengthening identity and political expressions. Identity in politics is a vital instrument that can help communities change narratives and stereotyping (Fukuyama, 2018). This is how Eastern students in DIY try to change the various negative stereotypes attached to them. They are involved in activism and engage in academic and non-academic activities.

Stigmatization toward Eastern student groups is often caused by the perceived low quality of individuals, associating them with being uneducated (Indonesia, 2021). Therefore, they

build a narrative of resistance by improving their capacity and quality of self in accordance with the idea of nation-building. This aims not only to develop group entities but also to improve the quality of their social lives (Bendix, 2017).

In this article, Papuan youth can be an integral part of the nation and state development, which can be accomplished through identity building, solidarity, and quality and sustainable education. In this case, we can see how the narrative of resistance to the stigmatization of a minority community can be overcome with consistency and self-determination. The strategies include improving self-quality, being socially active, and contributing to the advancement of education. Education is not only a means of development for Eastern students in Yogyakarta. It can also be an effective method



to counteract negative labels attached to their group. The stereotypes related to community image have shaped the mentality to prove the opposite. In this case, the successful attempt to transform society's stigma in DIY can become a benchmark to improve other students' self-confidence in Indonesia.

Literature Review

A community is where a group develops its capability on an individual level and collectively. Ramadhan et al. (2023) argue that communities have a crucial role in driving social transformations, including conflict resolution or the alleviation of structural racism. The association between a community and a group is vital because both have a powerful connection. In addition, most organizational or group activities

are identical to communal and cultural activities.

Communities also play a role in fighting the formation of stigma or societal stereotypes toward a group. The community-building approach is one of the best ways to develop an organisational process. Negative stigma may emerge in the process (Tyler & Slater, 2018). Therefore, community building often aims to preserve a group's image and make the process effective and well-organised (Stovall, 2020). This community development can substantially improve the quality of the community and counter stigma among them.

However, a group's quality depends on its relation to another group. For example, re-territorialization is a political strategy for a community to build solidarity, and it needs to be extended to another group to gain more confidence and legitimacy.



In other words, in addition to a group's strategy, power relations with other communities are vital. A group needs to expand its position in the community to improve its quality.

Based on the description above, this research uses the concept of community building to understand the "epistemic anchor" of a group's resistance to a negative stigma. The relationship between one community and another can facilitate community building, both in terms of quality and solidity, in order to create a resistant group with a core value (Alhusen et al., 2016). The dynamics and changes in social conditions are also vital in countering the negative narrative and working effectively toward better societal order (Kastoryano, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Identities in Community Building

Identities are the underlying factor in the formation of organizations, which include diverse interests, similarities in fate, and a shared eagerness to achieve specific goals. Gibson et al. (2018) argued that identities are vital in determining long-term strategies and forming a robust organizational structure that can overcome changes in existing circumstances. Apart from becoming the foundation for organizational characteristics, strategies, and structure, identities can also maximize the political system in response to public issues (van Doeselaar et al., 2018).

A strong identity can help a community to adapt to certain social conditions. It is a vital aspect that determines a community's success in overcoming problems, especially



in relation to social challenges (Allen, 2024; Milan, 2015). A community with a strong identity can carry out various impactful social movements and breakthroughs. According to Fukuyama (2018), in the modern era, a strong identity in a social community makes it more ready to adapt to the various currents of debate in social dialectics.

The process of identity formation is supported by several factors. Milan (2015) explains that this factor comes from harmonious relationships between individuals to create a sense of collectivism. In addition, an identity may also function to present “common sense”, manifested in various ways, including common goals (Nagel & Ayoob, 2015; van Doeselaar et al., 2018). A strong identity creates a solid community (Nagel & Ayoob, 2015). A solid community not only increases the capacity of each member but

also serves to express their various interests (Brammer et al., 2007; Nagel & Ayoob, 2015). This aspect is important because it improves the quality of the organization, which leads to a solid group identity. In other words, the relationship between identity and solidity is socially and politically useful to enhance the group’s credibility.

Adjusting an organizational identity in considering and resolving social problems can build community resistance amid the current developments. Jacobs et al. (2013) emphasize that individuals' internalization of their organizational values can develop new organizations constructively and discursively, offering a multimodal way of understanding dominant organizational identities while resolving potential problems. Apart from determining corporate management strategies, individual modality

can also support community dynamics that provide opportunities to develop interpersonal identity.

Organization and Social Contribution

Community building is necessary to improve the quality of social life and allow for the formation of a group's identity and organizational solidity that are socially impactful. Apart from being a medium for developing individuals and groups, organizations have their own agendas and social contributions. Organizations have multiple functions, including a medium for a group to accomplish social goals (Gilad et al., 2015). The social goals involve collective actions to express culture, pursue capital, and even become the public's control over the ruling power.

A strong identity can support organizational capacity building as it supports the formation of a

strategic organizational mindset with a catalytic power towards social development (Honadle, 2018). Strengthening organizational identity provides social and political capital and bargaining power to change the face of the organization and improve its image (Swanson et al., 2015). Therefore, organizational improvement must start from the body of the organization by strengthening the cultural values as part of its identity.

The process of forming an organizational identity can start in various ways, including from the cultural side. Organizations provide education about their identities, which include internal and external factors. Internal factors are related to the cultural image, which significantly determines the performance and institutional design of the organization. Meanwhile, external factors include public



engagement for various purposes (Mumby, 2016).

An organization is a manifestation of various individuals who collectively express their identity. The causality between identity and organization can be seen in the social dynamics that connect identity and culture as instruments of social contribution (Brenner et al., 2014; Hamidi et al., 2024). Individual members can carry out activities and networks which improve the dynamics of development in their environment through various existing contribution models, including voluntary activities (Woolley, 1998). Volunteerism is when collectivism becomes a bargaining power and forms a sense of security in the organization's members.

The relationship between community building and social contribution has a strong

correlation to the improvement of the quality of the community. Increasing the quality of an organization will have an impact internally and externally. Internally, capacity building becomes a symbol of identity, where each individual feels more confident and is able to participate in various social activities (Allen, 2024). Externally, strengthening the identity will have a positive impact on the public's assessment of a community (Hogg, 2016). Organization becomes important and has certain social implications.

The interests of an organization certainly intersect with various aspects, including capital, which is not only defined in economic terms but also in social terms where the orientation of the organization benefits others and society in general (Mishra, 2020). A socialization process is central to



building social capital that allows organizations to contribute socially and provide advantages (Korte & Lin, 2013). An organization is an association where people can achieve diverse goals based on their resources, knowledge, and identity. Organizations play a role in the social transformation (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, 90). Three vital aspects underlying the relationship between organizations and social transition are politics, economics, and demography, all of which influence the dynamics of social change (Crotty & Schmitt, 2014; Yüceşahin & Tulga, 2017).

It should also be noted that the role of an organization varies. From a paradigmatic point of view, the function of the organization is to change the perspective of individual members to understand their respective roles better, including in important decision-making

(Smircich, 2017). If an organization has a strong role in supporting a group's activities, then the social adaptation process by the community will be adjusted to the various social changes (Tankard & Paluck, 2016). In a way, an organization can be the engine of a group to strengthen its identity and carry out social transformation in a more positive and impactful direction.

Pop Culture Implementations: From Sports to Music

Organizations have different styles, including the one with an expression of popular culture. Mihailidis and Viotty (2017) explain the importance of connecting culture, organization, and expression in responding to social transformations and providing momentum to enhance the organization. Expression, reflection, and articulating connections build an



organizational identity in a sustainable discourse that constructs organizational culture and image.

Motivations for an organization to express its creativity and achievements may vary, for example, to improve the organization's image amid the increasingly complex and heterogeneous societal developments. Several instruments, such as sports and music, enrich these relationships. Utami (2015) notices that "popular culture" is one of the most common communicative actions among the general public.

Popular culture can be an instrument for the OAP organization to counter-narrate stigma and provide conflict resolution for some social issues. The educational context is the key to achieving this. In addition, organizations also play a role in improving the quality of

human resources and acting as instruments of justice in upholding human rights principles (Chazan, 2022; Struthers, 2015).

The continuity between organizations and popular culture provides theoretical implications for assessing community and public association. Arts is no longer just a unit of culture but is also related to aspects of popular culture, which contain multiple meanings. Art as an instrument of expression symbolizes that distinctive cultural communities have distinct identities and deserve recognition for their social status (Amalia & Agustin, 2022). Popular culture applied as an organizational identity provides momentum for communicative actions in transforming social stigma in society.

Methodology

This research aims to explain the relationship between the



community as a cultural organization and the efforts of Papuan students in fighting negative stigma attached to them in society. The relationship between capacity building and stigmatization needs to be understood because it is intertwined with one another. Implicitly, communities with strong identity-building can change the public's view of them, as well as fight against negative narratives attached to them (Stovall, 2020). This aspect is explored in this study, where the efforts of Papuan students to build their community identity become a symbol of their resistance. The efforts do not have to be confrontational but subtle through positive actions, such as being socially active and achieving in the field of education.

This article employs qualitative research to help understand society's real lives,

including what motivates the attitude patterns. They underlie actions in response to particular social conditions (Abdussamad & Sik, 2021). Choy (2014) explains that qualitative research captures individuals' experiences and reflections in a specific socio-historical context.

Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore the views of homogenous and diverse groups to assist in unpacking these differing perspectives within a community. Because social capital is relational—it exists between people—asking a group of people to respond to specific questions and hypothetical circumstances may produce additional nuanced information than data derived from surveys (Choy, 2014, p. 102).

More specifically, this study uses an ethnographic approach to reveal the meaning behind the phenomenon obtained directly



from informants based on their experience (Windiani & Rahmawati, 2016). This method is also helpful for understanding social facts within a specific period to explain a social phenomenon comprehensively. The application of ethnographic methods helps understand the dynamics of change that occur among Papuan students living in DIY, both in terms of improving the quality of individuals and the organization. By joining the lives of the research's participants, researchers can improve the accuracy of the observation results as they experience first-hand the real conditions in the field.

To achieve the study's objectives, researchers observed the progress of around 25 Papuan students who are members of *Ikatan Keluarga Mappi dan Puncak Griya Sekar Aji* (IKMP GSA) or The Mappi and Puncak Griya Sekar Aji Family

Association in DIY who consistently build counter-narratives on the stigma attached to them. IKMP GSA is a community and organization owned by Papuan students who live in DIY. This community has various activities and main objectives, including a forum for capacity building, a channel for social contribution, and a platform for political and social activism. In addition, the organization also helps strengthen the identity of Papuan students in DIY.

Furthermore, this research also reveals an alignment between the ideas brought by OAPs and the nationalist values embedded in organizational activities. Three underlying assumptions in this insertion of nationalist values are as follows. The first is to create a good Papua image. The second is to demonstrate the emergence of alternative political spaces for

movements initiated at the individual and community levels by Papuan students. In this case, IKMP GSA functions as a group-strengthening platform. Through this organization, Papuan students have succeeded in the world of work, developing interests and skills, advocating for themselves and resisting the negative stigma in order to achieve upward social mobilization. The third is to provide a perspective concerning the actual conditions of Papuans in interpreting and living Indonesian values. In this case, the implementation of the nation-building concept aims to develop Papuan students' social capabilities and contribute to the management of various national problems. This aligns with the government's actions to ensure the nation's integration remains checked, including in higher education settings. Lastly, the organization also helps Papuan

students comprehend their identity, contribute to the social environment, and apply it to the contemporary development of popular culture.

Findings and Discussion

Papuan organizations and the Eastern Identities

Coming from the eastern part of Indonesia to DIY, OAPs use various methods to adapt to sociocultural changes, including forming a community. IKMP GSA is a Papuan youth organization that attempts to welcome OAPs from Mappi Regency, South Papua, and Puncak Regency, Central Papua. There are at least three main reasons behind the formation of this organization, namely: (1) creating a social space for OAPs to connect, (2) creating inclusive channels to express and develop members' capacity, and (3) creating an



intellectual forum to resolve various social problems.

The board members at IKMP GSA emphasize aspects of Papuan culture because they believe this organization can help them recollect their collective memories. Solidarity is a powerful motivation, and cultural building helps IKMP GSA achieve this value. The organization is then understood as an organization and a home for OAPs studying DIY. One of the informants, PCK, confirmed:

"IKMP GSA is a necessary organization for us to create a community in Yogyakarta. This organization was built with a spirit of togetherness. All members of our organization are delighted about that, as well as about being able to shape ourselves together in positioning ourselves in Yogyakarta." (19/09/2023)

Another informant, EY, also

exemplified how important it is to interpret Easterners' identity as an integral part of the IKMP GSA's cultural identity. She emphasized that identity reflected in the Papuan positive lifestyle is necessary to fight negative stereotypes. In addition, the organization helps recall the collective believer memories of the OAPs, which gradually manifested in their lives in Java.

"Our identity as Easterners has been held for a long time. For me, this identity will never disappear. I am glad to carry my Eastern identity to Jogja. IKMP GSA encourages all that... I am happy." (21/09/2023)

Papuan students are inseparable from their cultural values. Therefore, this cultural aspect is strategically integrated by OAPs into the organization's identity. Members make conscious efforts to revive



the image of OAPs as part of the organizational branding, such as in the organizational jargon. One of the participants, JL, stated:

"IKMP GSA brings many benefits for me because I can meet Papuan friends and grow together here... I have learned much in this organization, from learning computers and English, to developing talent and social interest activities. Wow, there are so many I can learn here." (21/09/2023)

The role of IKMP GSA as an organization extends to another dimension, such as in interpreting the relationship between Papua and Indonesia. The term dual nationalism may be the closest term to describe the efforts to bridge the value of the Papuan with its inherent principle of statehood. It is a social strategy to unite cultural identities with citizenship practices (Soetjipto & Yunazwardi, 2021). Whether

directly or indirectly, Papuan students attempt to unify these two "worlds" by making the OAPs' identities both culturalist and nationalist. One of the participants, PCK, said:

"...It is essential for Papuans to understand their culture. This culture has sacred ancestral values, which we must carry everywhere. It is hard for Papuans to forget their culture because it is deeply rooted in their identity as individuals and Indonesian citizens." (19/09/2023)

The IKMP GSA strives to form political attitudes based on this organizational identity. The pattern of the organization's activism aims to promote their values as much as attempting to respond to problems, such as discrimination cases against Papuan students in DIY. The social mobilization carried out by OAPs also refers to collaborating



with other social entities to address local and national issues. The resistance of OAPs through IKMP GSA by developing social mobilities in Yogyakarta built a new social movement style that promoted the idea of egalitarianism and equality among the members. As the movements are mainly cultural, discrimination can be minimised.

The IKMP GSA activities are divided into academic and non-academic domains. Activities in

the educational field include training in soft skills, namely English classes, communication, and presentations, and writing classes. Non-academic activities include sports and music, such as volleyball, futsal, badminton, and music. Meanwhile, concerning technology, IKMP GSA, assisted by several other institutions, such as the Gajah Mada University Papua Task Force (GTP UGM) or community organizations, consistently runs computer classes. Additionally,

Picture 1. IKMP GSA Participating in Indonesia Independence Day



Source: Research documentation

to support academic activities for Eastern students, academic tutors from UGM, consisting of students from several faculties, moved to assist Papuan students in increasing their capability. This movement is essential as education reinforces identity and improves the quality of individuals and organizations (Chazan, 2022).

Papuan Organizations and Social Contributions

IKMP GSA in DIY also carries out consolidations and responds to several social problems. The organization has taken at least two actions. First, it teaches socialization strategies to Eastern students in DIY and the communities in general. Second, this organization provides a channel for social mobilization in responding to various problems. In other words, the role of IKMP GSA is vital in managing the lives

of Eastern students in DIY. One of the participants, BYK, stated:

*"We people here (IKMP GSA) are glad because we can express ourselves to the maximum... I participate in various social activities because now I am a resident of Jogja. Almost every time there is an activity, I try to participate in it because I believe I can project an amicable impression to the people around me."
(19/09/2023)*

Socialization strategies are essential for organizations to penetrate and integrate into various social structures. Socialization is also needed to understand environmental circumstances, study them, and use this knowledge to improve the organisation's adaptability (Van Maanen, 1978). The IKMP GSA strategy to analyse the sociocultural situation in DIY can be interpreted as a strategic approach. The organization uses



cultural adjustment to maintain regional social dynamics.

IKMP GSA often utilizes social mobilization to respond to social issues, including providing narratives of resistance to stigma attached to Eastern students, especially Papuans. The narrative to fight the stigma is built around achievements and direct, impactful contributions to society. One of the UGM students, PCK, portrays the image of a model Papuan student who has many academic achievements. According to Paulina, her characterization as an “outstanding student” also illustrates that there is no disparity between OAPs and non-OAPs in academic achievement.

"Papuan people are clever, but people think we are behind just because we started late. Personally, it has been proven that I can excel in various fields, including in college. Here,

I believe that, in education, everyone is equal, whether they are Papuans or not. Everyone has the same rights in education".
(19/09/2023)

The social mobilization accomplished by IKMP GSA to gain social legitimacy, especially for the DIY society, also refers to social collaboration. On certain occasions, members of the organization often carry out activities with the community, such as community services, cooperation in improving village infrastructure, and other activities related to festivities and celebrations, including the National Independence Day. To maximize the social contributions, they build synergy with other parties. As such, IKMP GSA's social expressions can be realized and felt by various



parties in society. One of the participants, JT, stated:

"Collaboration is important for me. The society in Jogja politely welcomed me when I participated in an activity. Often, when I was just hanging out in the dormitory, the residents invited me to help with community service, cleaning the streets, and other tasks. For me, collaboration is cool."
(21/09/2023)

Social collaboration is a strategy that focuses on building connections between internal parties and external elements in a community, thus forming a participatory community and co-existence (Waddock, 1989). Placing IKMP GSA as a cultural entity that can assimilate with the social life of Yogyakarta's society allows for a transformation where collaboration builds synergy between various elements and functional social

relations and indirectly corrects the stigma.

The position of IKMP GSA has become increasingly strategic because it has received positive assessments from society. It has also indirectly transformed the perspectives of DIY citizens towards OAPs. At this point, the social contribution of IKMP GSA by being involved in social activities has a reflective meaning. The focus is to provide social impact in an inclusive reality that frames the social dynamics. This reality becomes the hallmark of the success of IKMP GSA as a Papuan youth organization in responding to social problems and identifying bullying, discrimination, and racism against specific identities.

Fighting Social Stigma: From Education to Popular Culture

As explained in the previous section, IKMP GSA is a Papuan youth organization whose mission is to fight stigma toward



Papuan communities in DIY. The resistance is exercised, among others, in education and popular culture. Through this, a positive image of OAPs in society is maintained ethically and OAPs can adapt to sociocultural circumstances in DIY.

IKMP GSA utilizes education to present a good narrative to the public about OAPs in DIY. Activities carried out by IKMP GSA's members correct the stigma attached to Eastern students, who were considered lazy, troublemakers, and even uneducated. Students live in an organic, discursive, and inclusive dormitory culture, which supports students' education. Therefore, the outcome of the organization members can be accounted for academically, as stated by PCK:

"This community prioritizes an educational and democratic organizational culture. Here, we learn together about all matters

related to education. With education and achievement, we can oppose the societal stereotypes and prove that Papuans also have strong competitiveness."
(19/09/2023)

IKMP GSA is the leading organization in developing Papuan students to become more concerned about education and competitiveness. They believe that education is the key to upward social mobility (Indonesia, 2021) and minimising social gaps, where Eastern students are considered inferior. The discrimination of OAP students in DIY is immediately refuted by the large number of students at IKMP GSA, who have achievements and competitiveness.

JT is an example of a student and IKMP GSA member who has achievements in both academic and non-academic areas. In academics, he accumulated high



grades and participated in various academic activities on local and national levels. Meanwhile, in non-academic areas, JT actively participates in internship and social contribution programs to acquire practical learning and experience for his post-university life.

"I am currently participating in an internship program, and I have learned many things there. Starting from creating social empowerment activities and so on. Wow, there is a lot. From this, Papuan students are competitive if they dare to take advantage of the existing opportunities."
(21/09/2023)

One form of discrimination in DIY is OAPs' access to decent job opportunities, which is subdued by the stigma attached to OAPs. However, having Janius as a successful representative of OAPs presents a narrative of

resistance that indirectly corrects the stigma in society. Gradually, the consistency of Papuan students in strengthening their positive identity enhances the public's perception of them.

Another accomplishment of the IKMP GSA is adapting popular culture and artistic expression as a strategy to immerse in the community. BYK, one of the organization's members, is a student at the Faculty of Agriculture and a musician/disk jockey. He often expresses his complaints through typical songs—a combination of hip-hop and reggae music written in the Papuan language.

"I prefer music to express my creativity and skills. As an Easterner, I have always been raised with music, friendship, and brotherhood, which continues to make me who I am today. I also believe that Papuan culture can be better known to the public



through music. because all Indonesians like music!". (19/09/2023)

Popular culture is influential in framing social problems uniquely so that people can understand the message the creator expresses. Popular culture is also an effective strategy for specific communities in branding organizations through creative channels so the public can easily receive their messages.

Another vital aspect in fighting stigma attached to Eastern students is activism. In recent times, especially when Papuans experience societal discrimination, cultural solidarity has emerged as a control mechanism. IKMP GSA's position is to help rectify stigma and manage conflict resolutions. Paulina explained that the position of IKMP GSA is as a means of advocacy for Papuan

students in facing various social problems. He stated:

"Often, when discrimination against Papuan students occurs, we all come to them to give our support. Nevertheless, that does not mean we defend them; if they are wrong, then they are wrong and deserve to be punished, but if not, we will try to help the victim."

The strong activism traditions at IKMP GSA have also become a political statement supporting the creation of democratic values. Several members of this organization have also become activists and are involved in various sympathetic actions in DIY. Their actions are motivated by the desire to position themselves as Papuans who care about the country and exercise public control in initiating various kinds of national issues.



Conclusion

This research concludes that IKMP GSA, as a representative of the Eastern Student Organization, can offer a counter-narrative to stigma attached to Papuan students in DIY. The resistance strategy begins with self-capacity development activities (capacity building) through an influential educational culture, which produces intelligent and competitive Eastern students.

The three factors underlying the development of Papuan students' self-capacity at IKMP GSA are understanding identity, social contribution, and popular culture. First, understanding identity internalizes the values of Papuan students' locality, where they place themselves as both OAPs and Indonesian citizens residing in DIY. This aspect of identity forms an image of competent 'dual nationalists' and

empowers OAPs in various Indonesian cultures.

Second, the social contributions help OAPs increase community acceptance and secure a higher place in society for the organization. Indirectly, the contributions of Papuan students have gradually built a positive social image. Furthermore, the synergy with residents built by IKMP GSA in carrying out social contributions confirms that collaboration can minimise social disparities. The contribution has directly reconstructed DIY people's perception, which became more positive in framing the behaviour of OAPs.

Third, popular culture becomes an instrument for Eastern students to express their Papuan identity. Eastern people are well-known for their music and sports, so OAPs use this as leverage in the process of cultural synchronization that emerges.



The public can quickly grasp the message expressed through the medium of art and positively respond to what is described. The appropriation of values between popular culture and activism among Papuan students also contributes to their good reputation.

dynamics of social change in a particular area.

The implication of this research is that good organizational capacity building can help a community to counter the stigma against them. This research also notes that understanding the stigmatization of a group should not be based on sentiment alone but should be based on more rational reasons. This illustration can serve as a frame of reference for future research on ethnic discrimination that occurs in Indonesia and DIY, focusing on a community's efforts to improve its capacity and quality and a social capital that has real implications for the





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From Collective Identity to Counter-Hegemony: A Representation of the Political Logic of Papuan Voices Cultural Activism

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Abstract

In mass media, such as films, the Papuan region and people are still regarded as "the other", for example, portrayed as a people and region that needs to be civilized through various approaches. In addition, Papua is rich in natural wealth and culture, but instead of bringing prosperity, it become a source of new conflicts that threaten the existence and survival of the environment and the Papuan. This condition encourages young Papuan filmmakers and members of the Papuan Voices (PV) community to create an alternative narrative about Papua. Through documentaries produced collectively, they aim to present another side of Papua from the perspective of the Papuans. Using a poststructuralism approach elaborated with Gramsci's theory of hegemony, this study aims to explore the dynamics of collective identity formation and efforts to create counter-narratives as part of a counter-hegemony movement, namely by criticizing inequality and instilling solidarity for Papua. The analysis shows that the formation of PV's collective identity is based on the history of Papuan suffering memories (memoria passionis) related to the experiences of injustice.

Keywords: Papuan Voices, Cultural Movement, Collective Identity, Counter-Hegemony

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Introduction

Discussing Papua² in socio-cultural and political contexts cannot be separated from two contradictory perspectives. On the one hand, Papua is viewed as an economically important enclave that can increase economic growth; on the other, Papua is the “other” Indonesia, as the general public perceives the identity and way of life of indigenous Papuans to be “different” than theirs (the majority). These two perspectives have existed since colonial times³ and continue to prevail today as part of

dichotomous reasoning about Papua, especially perpetuated by the mass media.

As I Ngurah Suryawan argued, Indonesia places Papuans as a group with no culture, or even if they do have one, the degree is lower than the culture of other regions. Moreover, the struggle of the Papuans fighting for their basic rights remains fruitless (Suryawan, 2011: 297). The movements made by the Papuan civil resistance are often considered separatist movements that potentially threaten the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Related to that, Elvira Rumkabu maintains that the separatist attribute attached to Papuans, as demonstrated by Jakarta politicians and many national media, is an oversimplification of the complexity of the problems in Papua. Separatism is used to justify the state’s security approaches to the increasingly

² In this paper, the term “Papua” refers to both the indigenous people and nature, which are often subjected to discriminatory and exploitative practices

³ Agus Alua in *Papua Barat dari Pangkuan ke Pangkuan: Suatu Ikhtiar Kronologis* (2006) notes that the injustice in Papua has existed since the Dutch colonial era (1875-1944). The colonists claimed to be a “first class” group with more power and knowledge and the Papuan was seen as the “third class” group in the social and political strata. These categories became the basis for the Dutch to control the Papuans. As a result, the Papuans were alienated on their own land (Alua, 2006: 35).



strengthening civil resistance movement in Papua, when in fact, the civil resistance is part of a campaign to voice the rights of the indigenous peoples and reject deforestation, militarism, and the existence of corporations and state policies that increasingly corner the indigenous Papuans.⁴ In this case, the narratives in national media is more like a political imaging tool to construct the image of government's success in developing Papua.⁵

By obscuring the complexity of problems, the mainstream mass media actually creates disinformation about Papua in a

discriminatory and colonialist manner.

Quoting Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, mass media is a device of hegemony,⁶ as well as a medium of interpellation⁷ used by the regime's apparatus to create consensus and relations of agreement in society (Patria & Arief, 1999: 126-127). Thus, the mass media not only informs but

⁶ Before Gramsci, the term 'hegemony' was limited to the meaning of the domination of one state over another. Due to the influence of Gramsci's writing, hegemony is now used to describe the intricacies of power relations in literature, education, film and cultural studies to political science, history and international relations. In this case, hegemony is redefined as the establishment and organization of consent (Ives, 2004: 2; Simon, 2004: 19).

⁷ Louis Althusser in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essay* (1971: 127-187), explained that within the framework of social formation, social order and relations in society need to be formed by instilling ideology in each individual. In this case, the ideological state apparatus, such as religion, education, and mass media, is used to bring public awareness so the narratives can be accepted and justified, even though they are inversely proportional to reality. This process is referred to as the media's attempt to interpellate the masses in order to become "ideal" citizens according to the ideals of the regime apparatus. (See also <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>)

⁴ See <https://tirto.id/nkri-harga-mati-operasi-militer-bukan-solusi-masalah-papua-dcCK>

⁵ See Dana Otsus Mampu Tingkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Papua - Nasional Tempo.co (Accessed December 11, 2023); Luhut Tawarkan Investasi Hijau di Papua Kepada 24 Perusahaan (cnnindonesia.com) (Accessed December 11, 2023); Membasmi Separatisme (mediaindonesia.com) (Accessed December 11, 2023); also Kegiatan Seru TNI di Balik Pengerjaan Proyek Trans Papua - YouTube (Accessed December 11, 2023)



also interprets something through certain narratives and framing. This mass media's interpretation and information can shape the public's perceptions, assumptions, and subjective understandings.

Fighting the common misconception, young Papuan filmmakers and members of Papuan Voices (PV) seek to produce alternative narratives about Papua through documentary films as a means of advocacy and media campaigns at the local, national, and global levels. In addition, PV also provides a forum to form a collective identity and a platform to send a message about the discrimination and injustice experienced by the Papuans. According to Pamungkas & Yayusman (2023), PV is an example of how indigenous Papuans resist the state's hegemony through mass media

as and build justice and peace in Papua.

PV and its activism are an interesting phenomenon to be studied as a cultural product connected with the politics of social movements in the Marxist tradition. Therefore, using a poststructuralism approach, elaborated with Gramsci's theory of hegemony, this study aims to explore the dynamics of collective identity formation and efforts to create counter-narratives as part of the counter-hegemony movement, namely by criticizing inequality and instilling solidarity for Papua.

This paper consists of three main components of PV's cultural activism. The first is the framing of news about Papua in mainstream media, such as feature films and online media, which also becomes the background for the birth of PV and its activism. The second is PV as a collective identity,



which is established and grows from the history of the memory of suffering (*memoria passionis*) and various demands and collective wills moving towards universal will and demands for Papuan narratives. The third is the movement to build a counter-hegemony narrative through documentary films to contest meanings and build democracy for Papua's nature and people.

Papua in the Mass Media Frame

In an article entitled *Another East: Representation of Papua in Popular Media*, Anggraeni (2011) explained that the image of Papua in the eyes of the public today cannot be separated from the construction of mass media. Based on her analyses of several media outlets, such as the novels *Namaku Tewriteraut* (2000), *Tanah Tabu* (2008), and the film *Denias: Senandung di Atas Awan* (2006), she found that narratives about Papua created by people from

outside Papua that contain stereotypes, such as Papuans as a backward group. Although these three media products have tried to represent the voices of indigenous Papuans, the pattern of constructing the image of the indigenous people contains fundamental differences compared to the image of other Indonesian groups, which are considered more advanced and "modern". It is as if the problem of Papua will never be resolved unless the basic problem of its "backwardness" is resolved, referring to the life of Papuan inland tribes that have not been touched by modern civilization.

In addition to the narrative in those three films, the problematic and discriminatory image construction of Papua can also be found in the films *Lost in Papua* (2011) and *Di Timur Matahari* (2012). Not much different from *Denias*, both films also fail to authentically narrate



Papua and its socio-cultural conditions. Instead of describing the problem of education in Papua and cultural practices that are considered not to uphold human values, the two films actually reinforce negative assumptions and stigmas about indigenous Papuans and their sociocultural life.

In those movies, Papuans are described as a group of people whose mindset is not yet advanced, cannibalistic, warlike, and primitive. As depicted in these films, one alternative solution offered for progress in Papua is to bring in “experts” from outside to “help” them in various sectors, such as teachers, doctors, pastors, or security forces. Papuan children must go to school and live outside Papua so that their behavior and mindset can progress and develop. In short, the narrative in these films is morally and socio-culturally

flawed because it legalizes the understanding and practice of subordination and inferiority to humans and culture.

What Gramsci has argued is relevant here. Films are an ideological device for the state and the general public to legitimize and perpetuate subordination and discrimination. The audience, with their limited background on the subject matter in the movie, is led to accept the message conveyed as neutral information. Without criticality, it is easy for them to accept the narrative as the truth. Indeed, films are a powerful tool in constructing human consciousness to help justify the narrative. This is accomplished using a persuasive approach to build a relationship of agreement (Patria & Arief, 1999: 126-127).

The consensus or consent relationship that people receive is passive because the information



and knowledge are not their own but a construction of human false consciousness. This is how cultural hegemony works, which aims to lead public opinion in seeing Papuan nature and people from the perspective of a storyteller. According to Gramsci, this is due to the absence of a critical conceptual basis in people's minds so that they cannot understand social reality fully. The only source of society's critical attitude lies in what Gramsci called "good sense" as opposed to "common sense", which is two theoretical consciousness⁸ (Saukko, 2003: 21).

⁸ According to Gramsci, "theoretical consciousness" is a force to liberate individuals from the ideological dominance of the ruling class in society. Theoretical consciousness involves a critical understanding of power structures and transformative actions to bring about social change. He emphasized the importance of expanding theoretical consciousness among the working class and oppressed groups within a capitalist society. The revolutionary power to transform society could only be realized if these individuals clearly understood their conditions and acted together to change them (Gramsci, 1971).

Under these conditions, Gramsci argues the importance of forming a historical bloc and raising organic intellectual figures to perform counter-hegemony or counter-narratives to reach consensus among the public. In this way, critical awareness (good sense) can be achieved because the agents are qualified to narrate Papua authentically and fight for the rights of indigenous Papuans.

Papuan Voices as Collective Identity

In the study of social movements, the formation of a hegemonic social formation is inseparable from the entire process of forming a collective identity. The identity is not born spontaneously or as a consequence of the ideological pressure of the ruling class, but it is born from the political work of the mobilizing actors. In Gramsci's language, actors who carry out political work of



leadership are “organic intellectuals”⁹ who carry out intellectual and moral reforms in society as a prerequisite for the formation of a hegemonic, collective identity. Only in this way, civic organizations and their activism can be instilled in society and will be increasingly hegemonic (Simon, 2004: 84-91).

Complementing Gramsci's views, Laclau, inspired by Rosa Luxemburg, argued that collective identity is born from collective wills. The particularity of the demands and wills of each

social agent is placed in a broader context to find a universality of wills and demands. It is this dimension of universality that inspired the hegemonic movement. To achieve collective identity, two factors are needed: a chain of equivalence and a political frontier that becomes an internal unifier and an external differentiator (Butler et al., 2000: 301-302).

In the context of PV as an association of young Papuan filmmakers, the dynamics of collective identity formation can be traced through the collective wills. Individuals or groups involved in PV activism are those who have the desire to be morally and ethically responsible in voicing messages from Papua to the wider community. They come from various communities and civil organizations in Papua, such as GEMPAR (Youth and People's Student Movement) Papua,

⁹ According to Gramsci, “organic intellectuals” are actually grassroots people born from situations of oppression and speak out on the basis of their experience of oppression by using languages that can be understood by people from the same social circle. Organic intellectuals are not characterized by the intrinsic thinking activity possessed by all people, but by the function they carry out as organizers in the social, political and cultural fields, where they relate abstract ideas to their social reality. They can feel emotions, enthusiasm and what is experienced by society and use cultural language to express feelings and experiences that cannot be expressed by society. In short, Gramsci asserted that all people are intellectuals, but not everyone has an intellectual function (Simon, 2004: 141; Gramsci, 1971: 9; Jones, 2006: 85).



PAPEDA (Papua Peace Addicts), JERAT (People's Network) Papua, BELANTARA (Inter-People Learning Workshop) Papua, SKPKC (Secretariat for Justice of Peace and Integrity of Creation), Papuansphoto, WPU (West Papua Update), journalists, women activists, environmental activists, as well as youth and indigenous peoples.

Of course, each joins PV with various individual and collective wills and demands from their respective communities. So, how does PV accommodate differences to reach a single goal and a collective identity?

One characteristic of the PV movement is the transformation of critical consciousness by upholding human rights. Each PV member consciously manifests these traits in thoughts and actions that respect equality and diversity and reject violence, exploitation, and injustice, especially to women and other

marginalized groups. PV activism prioritizes respect for human rights regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Differences in views and opinions are allowed to bind each member without exception. Complaints and demands raised are usually related to nature and the people of Papua. They are conveyed properly by considering human values that are inherent intellectually, morally, and ethically. The collective will to present counter-narratives in the name of Papuan people departs from a shared awareness of the experience of injustice that occurs in Papua and the mainstream narratives that are not in accordance with the historical, social conditions of the indigenous Papuans.

According to PV's General Coordinator, Bernard Koten, this is the reason why PV claims that the narratives filmed belong to



Papuans, and Papuans' voices filmed belong to PV. There is an inseparable unity between PV as the voice of the Papuans and the Papuans as the main characters in films. PV is the voice of the Papuans, and the voice of the Papuans is the voice of PV.¹⁰

In addition, PV continuously transforms the critical consciousness (intellectual and moral) of its members through training and capacity building in the audio-visual field to unite the wills. PV's regular agenda to garner consensus include developing planning strategies, research and investigation methods, workshops on themes relevant to the context of Papuan life, watching and discussing films, and the annual Papua Film Festival (FFP). In addition to improving technical skills to documentaries, these activities aim to raise critical awareness of PV members to continue to

reflect Papuans' aspirations in the films' narratives.

The cultural movement¹¹ to form a collective identity is necessary to distinguish a group from others or external institutions. Unlike the various groups and individuals outside PV, each PV member was born and grew up with the joys and sorrows of the Papuans. Therefore, the narrative built also departs from their daily experience. They are Papuans who come, gather, and move in the name of the will to voice the story from Papua, demanding the fulfillment of the rights and

¹¹ Understanding the terminology of the "Cultural Movement" from a cultural studies perspective cannot be separated from the concept of 'culture' conceptualized by Raymond Williams. According to him, during the 19th century, the definition of culture was more anthropological in nature, describing culture as a whole and distinctive way of life with an emphasis on life experience. Culture is also related to art as well as values (abstract ideas), norms (principles or rules) and material objects and symbols of everyday life. In short, culture is everyday meaning that can be found from ordinary things in the daily lives of all people, as well as in every thought (Williams, 1989: 4)

¹⁰ Interview with Bernard Koten in Jayapura on July 30, 2019.



respect for Papua, which has been subjected to capitalism, militarism, subordination, marginalization and stigmatization.

In short, the collective identity built by PV is not based on concrete identities such as workers, women, neighborhoods, or ethnicities but on the voices of Papuans collectively. Quoting Suryawan (2011: 297), the history of the memory of the suffering (*memoria passionis*) of the Papuans is the most powerful binder of the wills and demands of PV members to fight against injustice in Papua. It is an internal unifier and an external distinction from non-Papuan voices.

PV activism can be defined as a New Social Movement, which sees cultural movements as networks or elaborative informal interactions among a plurality of individuals, groups, or organizations involved in a political or cultural conflict

(Melucci, 1989: 29). PV is one part of the socio-cultural and political force that fights the antagonistic position to win the sympathy and consensus of the wider community.

In this context, the struggle for a position is part of the antagonism that forms collective identity in a historical bloc. Antagonism is not an objective relationship but a relationship where the limits of objectivity become visible, an area that determines the boundaries of collective identity from something outside itself (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: xiii-xiv). In short, antagonistic relationships play an important role in the formation of collective identity and counter-hegemony because the creation of a social antagonism includes the creation of a common enemy, which is important for forming the political boundaries of



a collective identity (Hutagalung, 2006: 12).

Contestation of the Meaning and Struggle of Popular Democracy as a Counter-Hegemony

In a discussion with Helena Kobogau, PV Coordinator for the Timika region, she said that not all stories about Papua that have been widely circulated so far are in accordance with the facts in Papua. A number of development policies in Papua are also not oriented towards fulfilling the rights of indigenous Papuans. In addition, the public needs to know about the cries about investment opponents, militarism, discrimination, and various injustice phenomena experienced by Papuans. According to Kobogau, the aim of PV is to accommodate the neglected voices so that the truth can be revealed and the suffering

experiences of Papuans can be known to many people.¹²

On the same occasion, Otto Wanma, a PV member of the Tambraw region, also said that so far, there has been a lot of news about Papua, but it did not reflect indigenous Papuans. According to Wanma, PV is a forum for Papuans to tell the true reality of Papua to show that in Papua, there is no peace and justice.¹³

According to Wens Fatubun, an initiator of PV, the purpose of PV is simple, namely so that the wider community knows the difference between stories 'about' Papua and stories 'from' Papua.¹⁴ Indeed, there have been many narratives 'about' Papua published, but not all of them are accurate information and knowledge. There are still many

¹² Interview with Helena Kobogau in Sorong on August 6, 2019.

¹³ Interview with Otto Wanma in Sorong on August 6, 2019.

¹⁴ Interview with Wens Fatubun in Sorong on August 9, 2019.



narratives that are twisted and bent.¹⁵ Therefore, PV-produced documentaries become a tool for indigenous Papuans to tell stories, consolidate collective memory, support human rights advocacy and help heal trauma. Furthermore, PV films are useful in raising critical awareness of Papuans in relation to the outside world. It is time for the outside world to see Papua from the perspective of Papuans themselves because Papuans also have adequate capacity to narrate their life experiences without having to rely on others to speak (Fatubun, 2023).

The three statements to show PV's counter-hegemony that aims to: 1) reject all forms of

unrealistic twisting of the issue of Papua, 2) fill in the gaps of information and knowledge about Papua, which are rarely or never covered or exposed by mainstream national media, 3) present a new perspective in narrating Papua, where Papuans are the subject of narration, and 4) raise critical awareness for the community to participate in fighting for truth and fighting injustice in Papua.

In general, the dynamics of the cultural movement championed by PV depart from the antagonistic relationship in terms of cultural framing about Papua between stories 'about' Papua and stories 'from' Papua. The aim is to rally solidarity with Papua and organize a consensus on a realistic understanding of Papua. PV becomes the terrain for the formation of every subject of society into an agent of change in

¹⁵ Misdirection of public opinion about Papua also occurs through subtle media propaganda. Based on the results of media searches by Tirto and Tabloid Jubi, it was found that there were around 18 media that spread hoaxes about Papua. For more information, see <https://jubi.co.id/hati-hati-netizen-kini-ada-18-media-siluman-di-papua/>, and <https://tirto.id/media-siluman-di-papua-propaganda-hoaks-hingga-narasumber-fiktif-da5B>



the practice of signification: Papuans tell stories.

Reviewing Three Movies

To find new meanings PV produces through its documentary films, this section reviews three films, namely *Ironic Survival* (2011), *Love Letter to Sang Prada* (2012), and *Resep Pendidikan Papua* (2018). First, *Ironic Survival* (2011)¹⁶ is a short documentary, with a duration of 05:46, that talks about the irony of life carried out by Alex Mahuze and his family in the Merauke region. Like other ethnic groups in the Papua region, sago, in the eyes of Alex's family, is a staple food of Papuans that should be maintained and preserved for their survival in the future. However, since the establishment of the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) in the Merauke region in 2010, they have experienced many

obstacles in several aspects of life. The MIFEE program, which was launched to improve food security, was a disaster for Alex's family. Conservation forests with sago fields and various sources of living needs of Merauke people are converted into agricultural land oriented towards agribusiness interests. As a result, Alex's family life was shaken because of the loss of living spaces without any guarantees from the company or the government.

To survive, they have limited options, so they mine sand on the coast and then sell it for cash. This mining is ironic because the harmony of life that has existed between humans and nature in Papua for thousands of years must be destroyed so that they can survive. MIFEE has impoverished them, made them hungry, and forced them to destroy nature, which is the source of life from the past to the

¹⁶The film *Ironic Survival* (2011) can be accessed on <https://papuanvoices.net/2012/07/23/ironic-survival.html>



present and in the future. Urbanus Kiaf, as the director, has succeeded in making a framing that is contextual, relevant, and on target. This is a picture of the socio-historical conditions that really happen in Papua. There are so many development programs in Papua that are claimed to be able to improve the welfare of the community, but the fact is that Papuan people and nature are left with the crumbs of development projects on their customary land.

In other words, national development still departs from neoliberalism, which emphasizes privatization and economic growth. This has serious consequences, among others, the deposition of local communities on the one hand and the integration of local communities into the global market. Unfortunately, this kind of perspective tends to be absent in the coverage of the dominant mass media in Indonesia. Instead

of becoming voices of people's aspirations, the mainstream media is trapped in a regime apparatus tasked with strengthening the grip and hegemony of the state at the local level. In addition, the film also contains harsh criticism as well as a political message for the audience. Of course, Urbanus (the director) does not just want to show what problems Alex's family experiences but invites the audience to think hard about how to end the irony and how to treat nature as it should.

Second, *Love Letter to the Prada* (2012).¹⁷ The short documentary film directed by Wenda Tokomonowir in collaboration with Engage Media and JPIC-MSC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation - Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) had become a hot topic of conversation because it

¹⁷The film *Love Letter to the Prada* (2012) can be accessed on <https://papaunvoices.net/2012/08/03/loveletter-to-the-soldier.html>

managed to uncover the human tragedy that befell a young girl named Maria Goreti Mekiw (Eti). This documentary tells the story of Eti's complicated life without the presence of a husband and father for her baby, Yani. In 2008, Eti is involved with a TNI soldier named Samsul, who is serving in Bupul Village, Papua, a village located in the border area of the Republic of Indonesia-Papua New Guinea. In Eti's eyes, Samsul is a kind, polite, and responsible person. Every time he visits her house, Samsul always brings biscuits, milk, rice, instant noodles, and canned fish, as well as clothes and bedding for her family. It seems that Samsul is good at persuasion, so Eti falls for him and even puts high trust in him that they will become husband and wife in the future. Unfortunately, Eti's love story with Samsul does not last long and ended in loneliness and deep disappointment. When Samsul's

term ends, he leaves Eti pregnant, and he does not keep his promise. Eti has written to Samsul twice but never receives any reply. Eti and Yani depend on their parents, who are growing older, while still waiting for good news to come.

Through Eti's story, Wenda wants to present a different and distinctive framing model about the life experience of Papuans in relation to militarism as a security approach. By placing Eti, a Papuan woman, as the subject of his story, Wenda opens a new veil, showing a dark side of militarism in Papua that is rarely presented by the mainstream media.

From this movie, we learn that militarism in Papua always leaves wounds in the Papuan mind. It is like a disaster that continues to erode the socio-cultural life of Papuans and foster acute social diseases. Through the packaging of such



documentary narratives, it is hoped that the Papuan public and people outside Papua will gain awareness about the threat to the survival of Papuans. It is time for the public to be critical of the outdated narratives of mainstream media while reflecting on stories 'from' Papua to find the most authentic truth.

The third movie is *Resep Pendidikan Papua* (2018)¹⁸ by Yosep Levi. In the movie, Levi criticizes the poor education system in Papua. Levi shows that Papuan children have great potential in terms of knowledge to the figure of teacher Tri Ari Santi and her students at State Elementary School in Saminage, Yahukimo Regency. They can read, write, and count like students in other areas. It is just that they need more contextual education following their respective traditions and

cultures, where they live, and work in the future. If children and teachers are forced to comply with national curriculum standards, all efforts to increase the capacity of Papuan children will be in vain. They do not need the knowledge that has been standardized by the central government. The centralized model of education is not sensitive to the local context and daily life and eventually keeps them away from their own lives.

For Levi, education should be rooted in local traditions and culture fit within the context of their daily lives. Education also should not just be about school buildings with various models of learning devices determined by the national state. Education is about freedom of thought and expression. When education ignores these things, it will become a new world full of imagination about everything they have never encountered in

¹⁸ The film *Resep Pendidikan Papua* (2018) can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRxBS07IXxg>



the nature and culture of Papuans. As a result, knowledge will become something abstract and difficult to imagine and understand among the students. The hope is that the film will open the public's eyes to fight against the discourse and practice of education that is centric. The movie also aims to combat stigma about Papuans who are still considered 'backward' and 'other' that need to be civilized by those who claim to be more advanced in all aspects of life.

Based on a brief review of the three films, this paper aims to show that the framing method and film content packaged by PV filmmakers depart from the socio-historical conditions of Papuans. Substantially, the narrative packaging is also in stark contrast to the popular narratives in online media, television, feature films and stealth media. That is why PV filmmakers claim that

documentary is not only an art product, but also an ideological tool capable of raising critical awareness and garnering public consensus on a new meaning of Papua. In this condition, the new meaning of Papua is interpreted as a counter-narrative, which is the first step for PV to carry out *counter-hegemony*.

In this regard, Irene Fatagur, a member of PV for the Keerom region, testified that documentary films produced by PV members so far have been the most effective media for growing knowledge as well as raising critical awareness of indigenous Papuans; especially for those who are not familiar with the world of reading and writing. By watching these documentaries, a person or group of people can learn about the problems that are currently plaguing nature and fellow Papuan people from the perspective of Papuan filmmakers. By doing so, it is



hoped that a sense of solidarity will grow, which lead to the creation of grassroots power in thinking of solutions so that the same problems do not happen again in the future.¹⁹

On the same occasion, Monaliza Upuya also added about the importance of documentaries as part of non-violent resistance to reject stereotyping of the Papuans, such as separatists, backward, rebels, and other types of stigmatization, including government policies that are not in favor of preserving nature and the rights of life of indigenous Papuans. Furthermore, Upuya emphasized that Papuan people and nature are just as dignified as any other tribes and, therefore, need to be cared for and respected by everyone.²⁰ This finding is in line with Faye

Ginsburg's (1995) statement that globally, indigenous peoples have widely used several types of media, such as film and video, to communicate their struggle for the right to self-determination and as a tool to fight foreign cultural domination.

In addition to producing new meanings about Papua through documentaries, PV activists also carry out several activities in an effort to maintain the consistency of the counter-hegemony movement at the local, national, and global levels. The first is the regeneration of young Papuan filmmakers through workshops and exercises in producing documentary films in a number of PV work areas, such as Merauke, Sorong, Wamena, Biak, Timika, and Keerom. In each PV work area, there are also other routine agendas, such as watching and discussing films with indigenous peoples in nearby villages to be

¹⁹ Interview with Irene Fatagur at the III Papua Film Festival in Sorong, 9 August 2019.

²⁰ Interview with Monaliza Upuya at the III Papua Film Festival in Sorong City, 9 August 2019.

able to formulate and map the basic problems that are plaguing Papua.

Not only that. PV also provides a special platform in the form of a website (www.papuanvoices.net), YouTube account (Papuan Voices), as well as social media such as Facebook (Papuan Voices), Twitter (@papuan_voices), and Instagram (@papuanvoices) so that it can be accessed by the public at national and global levels. In addition, PV is also involved in various activities outside Papua, such as the Roadshow program entitled "Tutur Ufuk Timur" organized by PV with Engage Media in six cities in Java (Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, Salatiga, and Semarang) in 2018.

In general, these activities are part of a new process of defining Papua according to the perspective of indigenous Papuans, as well as a way to

establish a collective Papuan identity to build the spirit, sympathy, and solidarity of non-Papuan people to create a counter-hegemonic, joint movement, i.e., fighting for democratic values on Papua land. In this way, each generation is expected to become a mass mobilizing actor at the grassroots level to build counter-hegemony against dominant discourse, such as globalization and developmentalism, that threatens democracy and social justice. Under these conditions, efforts to garner support, sympathy, consensus, and trust from the public become a necessity.

Conclusion

Since its emergence in Europe and America at the beginning of the 20th century, until now, social movements have become an interesting phenomenon to study. Social movements have become a field of study that are relatively



long and continue to experience theoretical and practical updates.

As part of the study of new social movements in the Marxist tradition, this paper draws on the idea of Gramsci's hegemony, elaborated in a post-structuralism approach to see the political dynamics of PV's cultural movement. Although many aspects are part of the study of social movements, this paper only emphasizes the background of the birth of PV as a collective identity and efforts to create new meaning about Papua according to the perspective of indigenous Papuans as part of counter-hegemony.

The results of the analysis show that mainstream mass media, such as online media, television, and feature films, become the working tools of the regime's hegemony apparatus in shaping a biased public opinion about Papua. Through these media, the ideology of the ruler is

instilled and disseminated to gain the approval and consensus of the wider community related to two things. First, Papua needs control, civilization, and development, where the regime apparatus is the main subject. In this perception, there is a political imagination on the best role the state and its apparatus can play, at the same time legitimizing a number of development policies and practices, although they are opposed to the socio-historical conditions in Papua. Second, the mass media is used to obscure the interests and political orientation of development, which is full of exploitation, discrimination, and subordination practices in Papua.

It is on this basis that PV exists as a historical bloc and forms a collective identity. Interestingly, various wills and demands from various elements of society can be integrated into a collective identity in the name

of Papuan voices. There is no single category in terms of issues being fought for or participants in the movement because it includes the universality of wills and demands that uphold human rights and the preservation of Papuan nature. It means that PV is not fighting for a single issue, such as anti-capitalism or racism alone. The participation is not based on a particular ethnicity, religion, or social class but on an ideology that binds each individual together in a collective identity. The ideology is not an abstract idea that is far from empirical reality but has a materialistic nature because it is based on the understanding and closeness of the mobilizing actors to the experience of the daily life of Papuans.

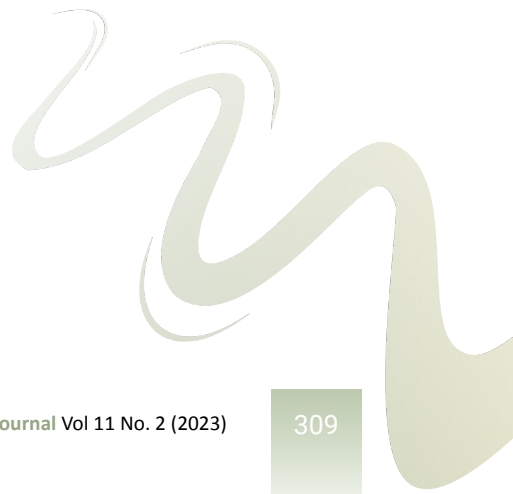
In addition to forming a collective identity, PV's cultural activism also aims to counter hegemony. By utilizing documentary films, they produce

a medium for campaigns and advocacy in the community. PV activists continue to strive to create new meanings about nature and Papuan people based on the perspective of Papuans. The process of creating a new meaning involves popular education, which aims to raise critical awareness about the situation and living conditions of Papuans and overcome the problems.

In this way, PV fights to gain public trust and consensus while continuing to regenerate agents of change for the hegemonic continuity of its activism. In this case, documentary films are not merely works of art but are part of the political work of the leadership to realize popular democracy. It provides a space for Papuans to fight for social change and transformation. Thus, in addition to being a medium of articulation of the daily life experiences of



Papuans, documentary films are also a field of contestation of meaning while criticizing the working model of liberal democracy that does not favor the sovereignty of the people.





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Countering Patriarchy Hegemony: The Political Leadership of Megawati Soekarnoputri and Margaret Thatcher

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Abstract

The dominance of male leadership in politics indicates that patriarchal hegemony by the media is deeply entrenched in various layers of society. Women who enter political leadership are considered subordinates of men. Such dominant patriarchal hegemony has undermined and suppressed women's leadership in the political sphere. This article aims to discuss how Megawati Soekarnoputri in Indonesia and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom emerged against the patriarchal hegemony entrenched in the political systems of their respective countries. We applied a qualitative approach and desk study as a research method, as well as Gramsci's concept of counter-hegemony. The analysis shows that there were three primary issues that Megawati and Thatcher opposed: (1) dependence on men in building political careers, (2) weak female leadership, and (3) the expectation for women to be obedient. By opposing these issues, these two women leaders could stand out in their respective political arena.

Keywords: Megawati, Margaret Thatcher, Counter-Hegemony, Hegemonic Patriarchy

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Introduction

The patriarchal system is hegemonic and prevalent in all aspects of society, including in politics (Intentilia, 2020), reflected in the dominance of men over women in this field (Pramono, 2013). Research conducted by Pramono (2013) also found that women are positioned as subordinate to men and are considered incompetent to participate in politics. This hegemonic oppression has been going on for a long time and is perpetuated by society, even by women, as the repressed group itself (Intentilia, 2020). The patriarchal hegemony in political arenas could inhibit women's participation. The lack of women's representation in politics will hinder progress in overcoming equality problems and in achieving equal access to political, economic, and social rights.

This deeply entrenched patriarchal system dominates almost every country, which can be seen from the low participation of women in politics (Idrus et al., 2023). Although many countries have made revolutionary progress in civil and social rights, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions. In the UN Women's Report on "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals" (2023), women occupy top executive positions in only 31 out of 196 countries. Women's participation in parliament is only considered complementary, which indicates no gender equality in politics. The hegemony excluded and even considered women subordinate to men (Intentilia, 2020).

The low participation of women in politics is caused by many factors, one of which is the social construction. Langford & MacKinnon (2000) in Cavazza &



Pacilli (2021) explain that the pattern applies to both genders. According to traditional gender role descriptions, women are portrayed as weak, dependent on men, unfit for work, obedient, emotionally inclined, and unable to think logically. This contrasts with men, who are constructed as competent beings, have high self-confidence, and are independent and rational (Intentilia, 2020). This social construction then causes women to be unsuitable for working in the political world, which is often considered to be “scary” and full of dangers and challenges. The existing social construction believes that women’s nature is only in domestic affairs.

Another reason for the low participation of women in political leadership is due to the stigma and stereotypes surrounding politics, which is often considered a masculine, violent, and

manipulative occupation (Cavazza & Pacilli, 2021). Cavazza & Pacilli (2021) also state that according to traditional gender constructions, men are better suited to work as leaders and be in the public sphere, so politics is deemed a man’s job. Women who want a political career must struggle with this stereotypes and access is difficult for them. The constructs and stigmas formed and attached to women and men are not easily shifted. The construction has been accepted by society and reproduced repeatedly. When women or men violate the construction, then they will be called an aberration. As a result, women’s participation in politics is low, and women who have been in politics are always described as “not a woman” (masculine) because they do not follow existing social constructions.



In constructing the male-dominated hegemony, dominant groups need a tool to preserve their values. Gramsci (1971) in Idrus et al. (2023) argue that mass media can be one of the tools dominant groups use to spread and propagate their values to repress a particular group. This is because the media plays an important role in shaping public opinion. Most mass media that are still dominated by patriarchal ideology tend to perpetuate negative social constructions regarding women. Instead of being neutral, the media adheres to toxic traditional gender roles when depicting female political figures.

In addition to mass media, religion also plays an important role in shaping public opinion in Indonesia, including Islam, which says that only men can become Khalifah, imams, or leaders. This belief indirectly affects how

society sees female figures in politics and discriminate against women, resulting in their low participation (Intentilia, 2020).

Even though it is often said that politics is a man's playground, some women can break this bias, such as Megawati and Thatcher, who will be discussed in this article. Megawati was selected because she was the first female president in Indonesia, and Thatcher was England's first female prime minister. In this paper, we focus on the news online about Megawati's leadership from 1987 until the present day and when she was president from 2001-2004. The period of observations on Thatcher is from 1947 to 1990, during which she was UK Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990.

Based on the explanation above, we focus on how Megawati and Thatcher fought gender bias toward women in the



political sector. This paper uses qualitative methods, specifically literature and media study. Data was collected from journals, books, and online articles related to this topic. Data from online news articles focus on public opinions about Megawati and Thatcher during their leadership. We applied the theory of counter-hegemony proposed by Gramsci as an analysis tool. According to Gramsci, counter-hegemony is questioning the current dominant knowledge, challenging the disordered understanding of the dominant groups, and replacing the weakness of such hegemony using new values. This research aims to discover the real form of counter-hegemonic actions by Megawati and Margaret Thatcher in their political process. We also traced the new values brought by Megawati and Thatcher when they became the first female leaders of their respective countries.

Resistance by Megawati Soekarnoputri and Margaret Thatcher to Gender-Biased Perceptions

The doubt toward women's leadership is a manifestation of patriarchal hegemony. Megawati Soekarnoputri and Margaret Thatcher were present as tangible symbols of resistance to that. We identified at least three perceptions of women's leadership that Megawati and Thatcher opposed, namely (1) dependence on men in careers, (2) the perceived weakness of women's leadership, and (3) the expectation of women to be obedient. These three topics were selected because they are common discourses to stereotypes of women's leadership in politics (Cavazza & Pacilli, 2021). This stereotype is perpetuated by the media, with negative perceptions reaching more than 80% in reporting female politicians in both



advanced and developing democracies³.

Dependence on Men in Careers

Politics is known as the “men’s world,” so women are considered less capable of building a career on that path. Women are described as individuals with maternal traits more suited for domestic or private work (Idrus et al., 2023). The media has a significant role in this perception because every female candidate receives a smaller portion of the news than men. News about women in politics is dominated by negative sentiment and often only focuses on domestic issues such as fashion, family, partners, and beauty rather than highlighting substantive issues such as ideas

(Alfirdaus et al., 2022). The media is not fair enough to provide space for reporting women in the political sphere.

Women who choose a career path in politics are often underestimated; their achievements are also discredited. Female politicians are considered to be dependent on male figures in their political careers. Megawati Soekarnoputri and Margaret Thatcher were the victims of this negative perception⁴ (Basit et al., 2022). These two women then resisted the patriarchal perceptions that dominated the political world.

Megawati

Megawati is often described as an ordinary housewife with no special ability. The only attribute that makes her special is

³ Basit's research shows that female politicians are portrayed negatively in media, reaching 87.70%, while the positive perspective was only 8.80% and the neutral perspective was 3.50% (Perspektif Media Massa Terhadap Politisi Perempuan. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 975-1006)

⁴ Basit's research shows that an average of 57% of people in both developing and advanced democracies show negative perceptions of women's leadership (access in Perspektif Media Massa Terhadap Politisi Perempuan. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 975-1006)



because she is the daughter of Sukarno, the founding father and the first president of the Republic of Indonesia (Museum Kepresidenan, 2020). The media implicitly formed this perception by not mentioning Megawati's name and often using the pronouns "*Putri Proklamator*," "*Putri Karno*," and "*Anak Sukarno*" when she ran for the presidential election. Those pronouns are considered to shape the public's collective that Megawati does not stand on her own behalf and has no qualified abilities other than her father's big name (Agustina et al., 2005). Indeed, using the name Sukarno increased Megawati's electability but proved that the public could not see Megawati as an independent figure. The media also often cut Megawati's speech to remove the substance. For example, when she talked about Pancasila, the media highlighted

her jokes about "I am a unique human being, Karno's daughter".

In addition to her attachment to her father, Megawati is considered only capable of politics with the support of Taufiq Kiemas (Tokoh Indonesia, 2013)⁵. She was predicted to no longer have power after her husband's death, Taufiq Kiemas, in 2013 (Tokoh Indonesia, 2013). The media portrays Megawati's political career and PDI-P would end because, so far, Taufiq Kiemas is a figure who could bridge communication for PDI-P. The media saw Megawati as too rigid and not articulate, so it would be challenging to expand

⁵ "Taufiq is described and appreciated as an important figure in the political journey of Megawati and the PDI-Perjuangan. Some of the appreciation implied (impression) actually 'underestimated' Megawati's abilities as General Chair of the PDI-P and former President. It is as if Megawati can only get involved in politics with the support of Taufiq Kiemas". Article source: Tokoh.ID - <https://tokoh.id/biografi/1-ensiklopedi/sepeninggal-taufiq-kiemas/>

PDI-P⁶. This phenomenon illustrates a perception that Megawati's achievements seem to be caused only by male figures in her life.

There is a history of male influence in Megawati's political career, but it is not as significant as perceived. This success was not considered her work but a symbol of Sukarno and Taufiq Kiemas's communication skills. Megawati's capabilities have never been recognized. (Sobary, 2003). Nevertheless, that allegation was broken again when Megawati managed to bring PDIP to win legislative and presidential elections twice in a row in 2014 and 2019 when Taufiq Kiemas died.

⁶ "Political observer from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Indria Samego, called Taufiq a bridge between PDI-P and the outside world. For example, Taufiq diffused the political atmosphere between PDI-P, President SBY, and many political rivals. Meanwhile, Megawati will be harsher (cold) towards President SBY and political rivals" Article source: Tokoh.ID - <https://tokoh.id/biografi/1-ensiklopedi/sepeninggal-taufiq-kiemas/>

Meanwhile, Sukarno's other children, such as Rachmawati Soekarnoputri and Sukmawati Soekarnoputri, failed to become central political actors. The Indonesian National Party (PNI) Marhaenism, founded by Sukmawati, and Partai Pelopor, founded by Rachmawati, failed in political contestation (Widhana, 2016). Both parties failed to qualify for parliament. Nonetheless, these historical facts show that women can stand alone without depending on men. Megawati was not privileged by Sukarno's power network because the new regime had destroyed it. Her communication skills also did not depend on Taufiq Kiemas because Megawati's life experience trained her to become an accomplished political actor (Erianto, 2022). She could still bring PDIP to win elections twice after Taufiq Kiemas died.



Thatcher

Margaret Hilda Thatcher also experienced a similar story. She was born to Alfred Roberts and Beatrice on October 13, 1925, in Grantham, Lincolnshire, the UK. Her father was known as an activist in the Methodist Church and a member of the city council of Grantham (Young, 2023). In 1951, Thatcher married Dennis Thatcher, a wealthy businessman in England. Thatcher admitted that her father and husband influenced her success. It was Roberts who interested Thatcher in politics and Dennis always supported her political ambitions (Ball, 2013). Thatcher was not a figure who relied on men in her career, unlike some media accused at the beginning of her political career in the British Conservative Party.

Margaret Thatcher's career began with being nominated as a people's representative for the borough of Dartford, Kent,

southeastern England, for the 1950 and 1951 elections that ended in defeat. Despite her failure, Thatcher succeeded in running as the youngest candidate from the Conservative Party, putting her in the media spotlight. She succeeded in saturating the votes of the Labour Party (Bahy, 2021).

In this defeat, she was proposed by Dennis Thatcher, who promised to give his full support in politics. Dennis said that Margaret would not have been successful in politics if she had not married him, who had reliable finances (Ball, 2013). Their marriage was often reported as transactional and the subject of attacks by Thatcher's political opponents (Katz, 2012). Thatcher was accused of being dependent on Dennis' material capital to gain power and when Thatcher came to power, Dennis' business became more successful (Katz, 2012).



However, this accusation was not proven because, after the marriage, she ran for councilor but failed again in 1955.

Margaret Thatcher's political career took off quickly after becoming a member of parliament (MP) through Finchley's constituency, known as the Conservative base, in the 1959 election. Thatcher continued to soar until she succeeded in becoming the first female Prime Minister of the UK and Europe in 1979. Intellectual ability, hard work, and a decisive speaking style contributed to her success.

Thatcher also did not rely on men during her political career. She ran as an MP in a constituency different from her father's mass base when he was on the city council. Thatcher's father advanced from Grantham, while Thatcher had a mass base in Finchley. Thatcher refused to run for office in her father's

electoral district to prove she had more political skills than her father (Campbell, 2012).

Many researchers have not shown the role of her father's network in influencing Thatcher's career (Campbell, 2012). She failed at the beginning of her political career in 1955. Her wealthy husband could not change Thatcher's political career (Ball, 2013). It took eight years after her marriage for her to enjoy a strategic political position. Before Dennis' presence, Thatcher also had qualified from her college time as she was President of the Conservative Party at the University of Oxford. Dennis had a more moral role rather than capital support⁷.

⁷ "I could never have been prime minister for more than 11 years without Denis by my side," she wrote in her autobiography *The Downing Street Years*. (Accessed in <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/the-crown-denis-thatcher-husband-margaret-b1723535.html>)



Megawati and Thatcher proved they did not entirely rely on their fathers' political legacy. Although their fathers had much influence on their political careers, these ladies sought their ways to pursue a career in politics. They were successful because of their hard work, patience, consistency, management, charisma, and communication skills. They brought new values and fought patriarchal hegemony in politics that undermine women's success. This can be seen from how Megawati neither depends on Sukarno's big name in Indonesian politics nor Taufiq Kiemas when raising the party. The same thing also happened to Thatcher, who did not rely on the vote base of her father and her husband in every position she held.

Female Leadership is Weak

The perception that women are weak, thus unfit for leadership

and unable to lead people to a better direction, has been rooted in society. This can be seen from a study conducted by Aspinall et al. (2021), in which the majority of respondents in Indonesia believe that men should be the head or leader of society and are considered more capable of leading. Work reserved for men is also more complex and intensive, and they pay higher wages than women.

Female leadership is considered to be dominated with emotion. They are not firm, slow, and irrational when making decisions in crises (Wayan & Nyoman, 2020). Women are considered only capable in assisting male leaders rather than being the main actors in making important decisions in crises. Women leaders are considered to have lower capabilities in crises (Cavazza & Pacili, 2021). Fox & Lawless (2011) in Cavazza & Pacili (2021)



explain that women pursuing political careers are less likely to be considered as equally qualified as men.

This dominant cultural discourse is deeply rooted albeit without scientific evidence. The media is an instrument to construct and preserve the discourse as it is favor of men than women. It is thrice more difficult for female candidates to be covered by mass media. If they do, 70% receive negative sentiments (Basit et al., 2022). This happens in all countries, whether fully democratic or still partially free (Basit et al., 2022). Due to the limited media spotlight, female politicians face difficulties presenting strong characters in the political sphere.

Initially, during the Reform Era, Indonesian societies were heavily influenced by the discourse of Islamic groups. Women should not be leaders because Imams must be men (Yabassum &

Nayak, 2021). Strengthening women's positions in political leadership is considered taboo and contrary to existing values and norms. Women have a lower opportunity to become leaders because it is contrary to their nature (Yabassum & Nayak, 2021).

A similar situation occurred in the UK. This country already campaigned for gender equality and had the figure of Queen Elizabeth II on 6 February 1952. However, stereotypes toward female leadership remained. British society and the mass media depicted female politicians in traditional gender roles, i.e., the housewife (Campbell, 2012). Moreover, after World War II, the UK experienced a prolonged crisis. Women's leadership was undesirable because the British societies needed decisive leaders who dared to make risky decisions (Campbell, 2012). Female



politicians are portrayed as representatives of their gender rather than gender-neutral like male politicians (Basit et al., 2022). Women in politics is still considered an 'oddity.' Traditional patriarchal views makes them underrepresented in certain areas, such as politics, and they often appear in non-political fields dominated by personal matters (Basit et al., 2022).

Megawati and Thatcher were not immune from this framing, especially at the beginning of their administration. Megawati came to power in Indonesia in 1999-2004 and Thatcher in England in 1979-1990. Megawati was doubted by many Islamic media, both the neutral or affiliated with political parties. *Tempo* and *Kompas* were the only presumably objective media (Yulianti, 2010). On the contrary, *Gatra* and *Republika* were the media with the most critical questions about Megawati's

capacity simply because she is a woman (Sadikin, 2008). *Gatra*, for instance, issued a poll that concluded Amien Rais and Gus Dur were more capable to lead than Megawati. The reason was because she seemed afraid to participate in a debate event. So, her capacity was doubted⁸ (Agustina et al., 2015). *Gatra* held another debate forum, which again labeled Megawati as incapable. As a woman, she was deemed unable to lead Indonesia in escaping a multidimensional crisis, and it was feared that her leadership would worsen the situation (Agustina et al., 2015).

Thatcher also experienced the same thing when she tried to make a breakthrough for the UK to be more assertive in facing

⁸ Magazine *GATRA* says that attitude Megawati Soekarnoputri who did not want to talk and don't want to join in the debate was deliberately held triggering a decline in support votes towards himself. Source: *Tempo* and *Gatra's View of Megawati as a Presidential Candidate in 1999 and 2004*. Susurgalur, 3(1): 71-84



communism. The Soviet media immediately criticized her as a woman who looked strong but was weak and timid in reality. The Soviets considered Thatcher unable to lead the UK to escape the multidimensional crisis, which weakened Britain's position⁹. Thatcher doubted her goals would be achievable because the UK was in a severe economic crisis (Simms, 2008). The British internal media also highlighted Thatcher's personal matters, such as her fashion and family life, i.e., continuing to cook for her children and husband before working. (Katz, 2012). "Thatcher is not the leader of Britain" was voiced by the media

and the Labor Party (Campbell, 2012).

Megawati and Thatcher broke the stereotype that women were weak leaders during their leadership. They prove this through their legacy as governors and political party leaders. Their leadership completely opposed existing stereotypes. They showed that women in leadership can be equal to or even stronger than men.

Megawati

In 2001, Megawati Soekarnoputri was appointed the 6th President of the Republic of Indonesia, replacing Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), who was impeached by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in a Special Session. Megawati led when Indonesia underwent a transitional phase of a multidimensional crisis. Indonesia was drown in debt, and the IMF blocked the state budget. The socio-politics field also

⁹ The original article in Russian was titled "Zheleznaya Dama Ugrozhayet", which Evans (the Reuters bureau chief in Moscow) translated as "The Iron Lady's Threat". The article stated that Thatcher was considered a threat to the world and Britain itself because of her stubborn character. Her leadership was believed by the Soviet Union to weaken Britain. Source: The Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher: From Grocer's Daughter to Iron Lady.



experienced chaos in the form of ethnic and religious conflict and terrorism, so the capital market did not attract many investors (Megawati, 2021). Legally, Indonesia was also transitioning from authoritarian and centralistic to democratic and decentralized.

As a president, Megawati had a central position in the national leadership at that time. She played a crucial role in determining the state policy outline. Megawati made a bold move by selling Indosat's important assets that were considered corrupt, stopped the Caltex oil mining contract in the Natuna Block, punished 17 generals who were Suharto's cronies, established a democratic system of direct elections, and established the KPK to eradicate corruption. The most successful decision was when she brought Indonesia an escape from the IMF's trap (Soekarnoputri, 2021).

She also decreased Indonesia's alignment towards the West and acted neutrally.

This decision was bold because the West had been the leading supporter of the New Order government for 32 years (Chomsky, 2022). During her administration, ethnic, religious, and terrorist conflicts occurred in Indonesia. Clashes between Christians and Muslims erupted in Maluku, Aceh, Papua, Poso, and Kalimantan. There were Bali Bombings I and II, which have painted dark spots in the history of Indonesia (Chomsky, 2010). Allegedly, these incidents happened because of the West's interference, so Indonesia became dependent on them again (Chomsky, 2010). Western and Eastern blocs have consistently implemented proxy wars to suppress developing countries that did not comply.

Megawati kept Indonesia from the IMF and be more neutral



in international politics. Almost all her decisions were based on data (Soekarnoputri, 2021). Her leadership succeeded in lifting Indonesia from a multidimensional crisis (Wijaya & Permatasari, 2018). She was considered successful in making Indonesia's economy more decentralized, the political system more democratic, the inter-ethnic social situation more conducive, the environmental governance improved, and the defense capabilities more competent.

Megawati also showed her strong leadership as Chairman of the largest party in Indonesia, PDI-Perjuangan. Megawati initiated the party's constitutional struggle against the New Order regime with lawsuits to the Supreme Court. Megawati made PDI-Perjuangan the strongest party in Indonesia, opposing the regime and becoming ruler. In PDI-Perjuangan, she initiated a

guided democracy system that was different from the usual Western style of party democracy and not as authoritarian as communist parties. Guided Democracy is a system where all can deliberate and discuss when a final decision has not been reached. However, when Megawati makes the final decision, all party cadres must obey (Tempo, 2023). Megawati built PDI-Perjuangan by grounding its ideology in pragmatism. Although not successful, the ideological platform of Nationalism PDI-P managed to preserve its dedicated grassroots mass.

Megawati has a relatively firm grip over the PDI-Perjuangan on all fronts when determining the party's policy. Internal conflicts have always been successfully resolved through negotiations or her decisions. PDI-Perjuangan cadre was fired if they rejected the party's decision, whether



they're a strong or just an ordinary cadre. Megawati also became a decisive figure in every political event without her being a candidate. In the 2014, 2019, and 2024 elections, she determined the direction of elections in Indonesia (Erianto, 2022). The "Queen Maker" nickname was pinned on her because her decisions always determined the path of ongoing political contestation at the national level. This nickname indicates Megawati's leadership strength as a female figure. In addition, she is the longest-serving party leader in Indonesian history (Tempo, 2023).

Thatcher

In her reign as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Chairman of the Conservative Party (Tory Party), Margaret Thatcher experienced more complicated problems. Britain had to face a cold war with the mighty Soviet Union then. At that

time, the UK experienced an economic crisis that led to an inflation of 24% (Moore, 2013). Britain's prestige fell because its economic condition was far inferior compared to France and Germany, and unable to combat the widespread Soviet communism ideology (BBC News Indonesia, 2013). The British government also continues to face a crisis of declining levels of public trust.

Thatcher became a spotlight in 1976 when she led the opposition Conservative Party. She believed that freedom and individualism would save the country from crisis. She denounced Soviet-style communism that emphasized collectivity over individuals. The condemnation made the Soviet media dub her "The Iron Lady," which she gladly accepted and was her nickname ever since (Campbell, 2012). During that time, Thatcher opposed



the Labour Party, which gave too much subsidy to the public that led to dependency. On the other hand, high tax rate policies are also uncondusive to the investment climate in the UK. Thatcher coined a campaign slogan “Labour is not Working” (Campbell, 2012).

In 1979 the British Conservative Party won over the Labour Party, and Thatcher became Britain’s First Female Prime Minister (Moore, 2013). She believed the crisis arose from the state’s intervention that went too far into economic affairs. The interventions originally aimed at ensuring social welfare have caused, but was backfired with inefficiencies and crises (Young, 2023). Thatcher’s victory also brought the Cold War between the Soviet Union and Britain to its peak. In this domestic and foreign turmoil, she came up with

the “Thatcherism” idea, which shocked the world (Bahy, 2021).

“Thatcherism” changed the British economic paradigm by reducing state intervention in economic affairs to mere regulators and emphasizing free market principles. She reduced employer’s taxes from 60% to 40%, raised the value-added tax from 8% to 15%, privatized homes and mining companies, pressured trade unions, and reduced health and social assistance subsidies for people experiencing poverty (Moore, 2013). Her foreign policy was also harsh on the Soviet Union and anyone who dared to oppose Britain. She did not hesitate to deploy an army to fight with anyone who dared to fight the British.

Thatcher faced serious threats from trade unions, especially in mid-1984-1985 when she closed most coal-fired power stations because they



were deemed unprofitable for future Britain. The unions went on strike for a year but was unable to change Thatcher's policies. The Iron Lady rendered trade unions powerless in British society. Her leadership character was bold, and she did not hesitate to suppress any opponent who dared to oppose her.

Despite the negative connotation, "Thatcherism" succeeded in repowering Britain. Inflation in 1983 began to decline to only 4% as investor's trust began to recover. The economic condition was able to recover. Thatcher's foreign affairs worked with Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, to suppress the Soviet Union and ensure the failure of the communist system. The Soviet Union then collapsed in 1990. The Iron Lady's mission was successful, and the world

recognized how fiery her leadership characteristics were.

While leading the Conservative Party, she sharpened the basic ideological platform. She used "Thatcherism" as the party's ideological foundation until the present day. She is also the longest-serving female party leader in the British political history (Ball, 2013). Her successes have proven that women's leadership can be much stronger than men's. The nickname "The Iron Lady" shows her leadership strength domestically and abroad.

Megawati and Thatcher provided evidence that women's leadership can be effective to drive a country out of a crisis and maintain power. A country cannot come out of a crisis without a decisive leadership factor from its leader. Megawati and Thatcher left a legacy of this system, making it easier for their



successors to the country. They also proved that weak female leadership characters were only media framing and societal stereotypes. Strong or weak leadership does not depend on gender. They counter stereotypes of women's leadership with their actions and policies.

Women Must be Obedient

The social construction of women continues to create barriers to women's career advancement (Yabassum & Nayak, 2021). Megawati and Thatcher, as the first female leaders of their countries, often face unreasonable patriarchal expectations. Eagly & Karau (2002) in Yabassum & Nayak (2021) explained that this happens because female leaders tend to break their gender standards. Leaders have always been closely associated with male stereotypes, while female

stereotypes have been associated with followers.

Stereotyped beliefs are also visible in Indonesian Islamic traditions. As a country with a majority Muslim population, the belief in women's obedience is supported by religious belief. Unfortunately, this is often misused. This phenomenon believes in a patriarchal heretical proposition. Women who become leaders can only obey their environment and men in particular. Not only Islam, Javanese cultural construction, which is dominant in Indonesian politics, also places women as "konco wingking," which literally means "a friend at the back". Women are perceived only to be spouses, cooks, and caregivers (Mys, 2004).

The UK has a more advanced civilization and a monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. Nonetheless, patriarchal culture is still dominant in its politics. For



example, negative news spotlight female politicians' personal lives rather than their political careers. If they win, the media will likely ignore them, and there are usually minimal reportage compared to male politicians. Female politicians are considered to not adhere to values and norms, so the media tend to be hostile.

Women are considered obeying all existing norms (Pramono, 2013). They cannot resist social construction, let alone oppose the majority's voice. Women are thought to obey men even when they are the leaders. Megawati and Thatcher refused to adhere to such expected obedience.

Megawati

Megawati's existence in national politics was not a highlight of the New Order regime. Soerjadi Sudirja, Chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) during New Order time, argued that

although Megawati is Sukarno's daughter, she is a woman and not as capable as Guntur Soekarnoputra, her older brother. Soerjadi believed that Megawati could raise the voice of PDI Perjuangan, but it would not be significant (Erianto, 2022). The New Order regime did not prevent Megawati's rising at the beginning of her political career. Megawati was considered unrefined and having poor communication skills. Being a female politician means that there is nothing to fear about her figure in the national political sphere.

Megawati's existence in national politics was also relatively quiet from media reports. Many media believed that she would not bring significant changes to PDI because there were previously few strong female figures in Indonesia. The media also believes Soekarno's legacy was



through Guntur Soekarnoputra, not Megawati. The state media barely wrote anything about Megawati's joining the PDI. The circulating assumption was that Megawati, who had not graduated from college and whose husband had been eliminated, did not dare fight.

This reflected the perception that women would quickly obey if they mastered the logic of the Soeharto and Soerjadi regimes at that time. Unfortunately, Megawati increased PDI's votes significantly, from 24 seats in 1982 to 40 seats in 1987, with the main basis being in Central Java. This rising popularity surprised Soerjadi and the New Order regime. Megawati was not allowed to enter the party structure as a party member (Presidency, 2020). She was forced to obey and only be a token in parliament. Nevertheless, she still made achievements by increasing the

PDI vote to 54 seats in the 1992 election.

Megawati, who was considered obedient, succeeded in showing her strength in national politics. The peak was when she was lined up to be the Chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) Surabaya Congress in 1993. The split in PDI was prevented when Megawati became a symbol of resistance to the New Order regime. Then, the "Kudatuli" (the 27th July coup) incident happened in 1996 at the DPP PDI office, which killed dozens of Megawati loyalists, and many people disappeared. This incident raised Megawati's name and made her a resistance symbol to rise against the New Order regime.

The problem did not stop there; after the Reform, when the Indonesian Democratic Party changed its name to the Indonesian Democratic Party of



Struggle (PDI-P) in 1999, a black campaign against Megawati was carried out. In the run-up to the 1999 presidential election, when the Islamic Congress was held, there was a call from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) to issue a fatwa on women's leadership¹⁰ (Fasabeni, 2004). This issue spread quickly not only among the public but also among the political elites, especially when Amien Rais and the Islamic Party formed a central axis and highlighted the issue of women not becoming leaders or presidents. PDIP, which obtained a parliamentary majority of 33%, must accept the fact that the candidate from the central axis, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), won over Megawati Soekarnoputri. This proves that women's persistence in becoming leaders is subjected to

stigma of obedience, so they cannot become number one.

Megawati only won the presidential election in 2001 when Gus Dur was forcibly deposed by the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR). Megawati made history as the first female President of Indonesia. This surprised the world because Indonesia was a new democratic country with the largest Muslim population. It had its first female president earlier than the United States, who had applied the democratic system for much longer.

When Megawati ran for president again in 2004, the gender discourse was repeated. The Indonesian Mujahideen Council (MMI) and a group of Islamic leaders (Kyai) in East Java declared a female President haram following the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, which are the main sources of law in Islam

¹⁰ Indonesia Ulema Council is a national body of Islamic scholars (ulama) that issues fatwas and recommendations (Islamic rulings and legal opinions)



(Fasabeni, 2004). All these fatwas were issued when Megawati was running for a presidential election in 2004. She was considered a woman who refused to obey God's commands. Accusations of Megawati violating religious orders were also expressed among lower levels of society.

This belief is weaponized by the patriarchal system to subordinate women. The fatwa prohibiting women from becoming state leaders (president) is not based on a strong proposition (*dalil*). The judgment basis does not come from the Qur'an but from a weak and controversial hadith because Islam upholds gender equality in society's social standing. Unfortunately, this issue was spread so massively that PDIP recognized it as one of the

factors in Megawati's defeat in the 2004 election.

During the campaign, there were also disparities in the quantity and quality of media reportage. Data shows that news reports regarding Megawati more spotlighted her fashion, family, and other personal matters than her expressed ideas. Meanwhile, her political rivals, such as Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and Wiranto, are predominantly reported about their ideas rather than their personal lives (Yulianti, 2010). In terms of quantity, Megawati's reportage as an incumbent is not as much as SBY's. This phenomenon happens not only in Indonesia but also worldwide, where women who become politicians often receive news reportage about their domestic sphere rather than their ideas.

As General Chair of the PDI Perjuangan, Megawati also often oppose the consensus of a



deviant and male-dominated political elites. Most recently, she was the only head of the government coalition party to oppose President Jokowi's narrative of three-term administration and the postponement of elections, which was almost agreed upon by Indonesia's political elites. Megawati refused to obey most parties, such as the National Awakening Party (PKB), the National Mandate Party (PAN), The Party of Functional Groups (Golkar), and the United Development Party (PPP) (Tempo, 2023). President Joko Widodo also never provided a firm refusal regarding this issue. In fact, behind the scenes, this is the political maneuvering of people around "Istana" (the palace) to exercise power even though it is dangerous because it violates the constitution, as the

president is limited to two term administration (10 years).

This wild issue was refuted when, in the PDI Perjuangan anniversary speech in January 2024, Megawati expressed a strong rejection directly in front of President Joko Widodo. Some pro-democracy figures praised Megawati's attitude of obeying the constitution and succeeding in silencing the unconstitutional maneuvers of the political elite. Again, she appeared to resist decisively when many parties obeyed the power of the Palace. This shows that women can fight and not only obey. Megawati, who was ostracized and underestimated since the New Order, emerged as a symbol of resistance and women's leadership. She proved that women are powerful, can fight, are empowered, and are not inferior.



Thatcher

Slightly different from Megawati, Thatcher entered the world of British politics at a young age. She faced obstacles in adhering to party policy norms in Britain. There was a norm agreed upon by the British Labour Party and Conservative Party after World War II. They agreed that the state needed to be more present in helping the community. Thatcher's existence was considered not to undermine the agreement between these parties. The mass media did not spotlight Thatcher until 1970 when she dared to oppose the "free milk" policy for primary school children in England. The slogan "Thatcher, Thatcher, Thatcher milk snatcher" appeared in the media, and for the first time, European female politicians were highlighted by the media (Ball, 2013).

Thatcher was the only political figure to challenge and break the

agreement. She initially did the same thing when she was the Secretary of Education. She cut free milk to children under seven years from the initial plan for those aged 12 and below. Suddenly, a strong reaction came from the Labour Party, which echoed the slogan "Thatcher milk Snatcher" (Ball, 2013). This decision also makes her seen as not caring about women and violates the value that women should make it easy on their own. Thatcher refused to comply and continued saying this was for saving Britain, which was then in crisis.

As mentioned, Thatcher's career rose when she succeeded in becoming the first woman to become Party Chairman in Britain. Thatcher forced Ted Heath to step down as leader when she defeated him in the first round of the leadership race by 130 votes to 119 (Moore, 2013). At this time, the idea of



“Thatcherism” was voiced for the first time, leading the Soviet media to dub her “The Iron Lady.” “Thatcherism” led the Conservative Party to win the 1979 election, and Thatcher became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. She showed that women can be firm and not readily obedient during this time.

Thatcher announced an economic policy called “Thatcherism” by reducing state intervention in the British economy. Privatization of state enterprises, tax cuts, and reductions in social assistance were carried out. The policy reduced UK inflation from 25% to 4% quickly but raise unemployment rise to 3 million people and widen the inequality (Young, 2023). Thatcher thought that unemployment was caused by laziness. She also said the state did not want to care for the idlers. Protests ensued both externally and internally within

the conservative party. Many disagreed with Thatcher’s policy, which brought unfortunate fates to some groups. She emphatically answered at the party congress, “You can turn if you want. The ladies not for turning,” was Thatcher’s answer, who refused to cancel or reverse all her economic policies (Young, 2023).

Thatcher’s steadfastness and refusal to comply was also reflected in the conflict over the Falkland Islands, thousands of kilometers from Britain. The island is a British possession, but its closer territory to Argentina leaves it with de facto clear status. In 1982, Argentina suddenly declared the independence of the Falkland Islands when an economic crisis hit Britain. At that time, Thatcher was advised to settle diplomatically and avoid open war. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, also suggested



that Britain should address the issue with diplomacy (Campbell, 2012). There were many doubts about the capabilities of the British fleet if Thatcher went to war openly because of the risk of heavy losses due to Falkland's position. She made one firm decision by sending a British fleet to the Falklands. A battle ensued, and the British won, while the Falkland Islands remained British possessions. All were shocked because the British were in crisis, and the attack made Argentina retreat. This decision made Thatcher's name famous in the UK until she was re-elected as Prime Minister in 1983 (Ball, 2013).

However, not all of her decisions against obedience were good for Thatcher. Media outrage over stereotypes of women resurfaced when Thatcher became skeptical of the European Union. She wanted Britain to exit the European Union

and become the most powerful country in Europe. This desire is against the will of the public and most Conservative Party elites. Negative news about Thatcher's personal life was propagated, such as the divorce rumor and attacks on her children (Basit et al., 2022). Thatcher, who had continued to go against the grain, was finally forced to concede when, in 1990, the Conservative Party replaced her with John Major. After that, she fought back by choosing to stop being a Conservative Party politician and become a lecturer. Nevertheless, her decision to refuse obedience made "Thatcherism" embraced by the British Conservative Party to this day.

Even though they often failed in political contestation, Megawati and Thatcher had proven that women were not like the stereotypes that had been perceived. Megawati, in the 2024 elections, was still recognized as



one of the figures who play a role in making choices. The term “Queen Maker” was raised to remind the central role of Megawati Soekarnoputri. Margaret Thatcher also left traces of “Thatcherism” espoused by many conservative parties worldwide. The legacy of these two significant figures are remembered. They rejected the stereotype that women would only obey the larger patriarchal values and culture. Instead, they showed their strength by resisting, proving that women can fight back. They defied the mainstream political policies and attitudes.

Megawati and Thatcher as The Gender Bias Breaker: Conclusion

The negative portrayal of women in politics can be seen in Megawati Soekarnoputri and Margaret Thatcher, who became disruptors of male dominance as leaders. Indonesia and Britain

have distinctly different socio-cultural systems, but these countries have similar in patriarchal dominance. The process they have to go through to occupy the positions of president and prime minister was much more difficult than men because they has to deal with patriarchal hegemony.

Social construction makes society believe that a woman’s best place is in the home and her best career is becoming a housewife (Muhammad, 2022). These perceptions are perpetuated into values and norms that are deeply rooted in society as a patriarchal system. The actions taken by Megawati and Thatcher can be regarded as a form of resistance to patriarchal hegemony in their country’s system of government. These women directly opposed traditional gender construction.

Megawati and Thatcher fought for the position of women



in government. Their struggle became more complicated when they also had to challenge traditional female stereotypes perpetuated by the media that framed doubts about their capacity for political leadership. The mass media framed them as incompetent in their positions, especially at the beginning of their political existence. Being underestimated because of gender was not a new phenomenon for Megawati and Thatcher.

Women's traditional gender role construction is that they are more suitable to work in the domestic field even though no scientific evidence can explain the physical or biological relationship between the female gender and typical traditional roles such as cooking and nurturing (Idrus et al., 2023). They are also considered unable to lead decisively and do rational policymaking because the

construction illustrates them as weak creatures influenced by feelings.

Megawati and Thatcher succeeded in countering the perception that women cannot stand alone and are permanently shadowed by men in their careers. That was because of their abilities, which starkly contrasted public perceptions of them, especially early in their political careers. Their stories reflect two women fighting against hegemony that has always emphasized the dependence of women's careers on men, not themselves.

In addition, obedient women are desired in a patriarchal culture. These stereotypes continue to hamper women's career advancement (Yabassum & Nayak, 2021). Women will face high pressure, especially when entering a male-dominated job. This is because of patriarchal expectations that expect women



to behave according to their “nature,” as reflected in the case of Megawati and Thatcher at every step of their political careers.

The patriarchal hegemony directly contributes to women's low participation in politics. Politics is referred to as a “masculine” job and is attached to male stereotypes so that women are considered unsuitable to be in that realm. In the process, women in politics and become leaders are considered inappropriate because their nature is to be followers. Such beliefs are deeply entrenched and reproduced repeatedly by state institutions.

Over time, some values and norms change in political leadership. This was shown by Megawati, who became the first female president of Indonesia, and Margaret Thatcher, who became the first prime minister in the UK. In the dynamics,

these women challenged many stereotypes attached to them. Their leadership journey was difficult because the media often highlighted their failures and seemed to lead public opinion that women could not be leaders. The existing social norms also influenced the form of resistance carried out by Megawati and Thatcher. Social norms in Eastern culture are considered stricter than in Western culture. This can be seen from the religious aspect, which still determines the criteria for a good leader in Indonesia.

Megawati and Thatcher proved to bring new values and norms to fight patriarchal hegemony in their countries. Their actions were called by the Gramscian counter-hegemony, a challenge to existing hegemony. In this study, three stereotypes were found to be challenged by Megawati and Thatcher, namely: (1) dependence on men in careers, (2) the presumably weak

women's leadership, and (3) the expectation for women to be obedient. Their leadership certainly brought new hope for women. The Queen Maker and the Iron Lady were among the many women who have paved the way against patriarchy in their countries.



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Pancasila in a National Curriculum: Political Education or Indoctrination? Case Study: Indonesian School of The Hague

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Abstract

This article examines the operation of Pancasila, the Indonesian state ideology, in school courses in an Indonesian school in the Netherlands, "Sekolah Indonesia Den Haag" (SIDH). It aims to examine the way Pancasila is taught at SIDH, whether it functions as political education or political indoctrination. The study was conducted using qualitative data analysis, with data from interviews and field observations. The findings show that the way Pancasila is taught at SIDH is a dynamic process consisting of both cultural value and critical engagement to help students understand Indonesia's cultural heritage and instill national identity. The findings also indicate that Pancasila is taught as political education, predominantly relying on rote memorisation and prescribed textbooks, within the context of Dutch liberal cultural values. This leads to identity conflicts among the students. The findings in this study can inform policymaking in education and the formulation of curriculum. For example, to promote a more holistic understanding among students, we can foster critical thinking and open dialogue and encourage interdisciplinary exploration. Investing in teacher professional development may also facilitate meaningful teaching beyond nationalistic symbolism.

Keywords: Pancasila; Ideology; Education; State Indoctrination

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Introduction

This article explores the implementation of Pancasila ideology within the educational context of “Sekolah Indonesia Den Haag” (SIDH) or the Indonesian School of The Hague. The selection of SIDH as a case study is due to its distinctive status as an Indonesian school situated in Den Haag, the Netherlands. Established in 1955 as “De Indonesische School in Den Haag”, the institution initially operated from a modest city centre location. Witnessing a surge in popularity as more Indonesian families settled in the Netherlands, the school expanded, culminating in the establishment of a purpose-built facility in Bezuidenhout in 1982. Today, SIDH stands as a prominent educational institution for Indonesian children residing in the Netherlands, delivering comprehensive curricula for different levels of education from

preschool to high school. Adopting the Indonesian curriculum, the school embeds cultural values and traditions into its agenda, fostering a bond through a shared heritage. The Indonesian curriculum includes the implementation of Pancasila ideology as a fundamental component of the educational system. Pancasila is the foundation of the Indonesian state, comprising five principles that represent the nation's philosophical, social, and political values. The five principles are (1) belief in one God, (2) just and civilised humanity, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives, and (5) social justice for all Indonesian people. In the context of this study, it is essential to define the terms political education and indoctrination to establish a clear



foundation for the exploration of whether Pancasila education in SIDH aligns with either concept.

Previous studies have focused on phenomena at SIDH. For example, Mustain et al. (2021) examined the cultural aspects among elementary school students at SIDH. They explored the impacts of cultural encounters in a foreign setting, revealing the challenges faced by students in navigating two distinct cultures. Huda et al. (2021) investigated the internalisation of tolerance through Islamic education at SIDH, emphasising the importance of promoting open-mindedness and acceptance in an international school environment. Husni Mubarak (2021) addressed the broader educational framework of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum at SIDH and a school in Kuala Lumpur. Since previous studies have discussed

the implementation of Islamic education, cultural clashes between Dutch and Indonesian influences, and the application of the 2013 curriculum, this study focuses on Pancasila ideology. This focus aligns with the broader theme of assessing the cultural and educational dynamics in Indonesian schools abroad.

Aside from examining the implementation of Pancasila ideology at SIDH, this study also focuses on assessing cultural contexts within a new educational framework, emphasising the critical distinction between providing a political education narration and an indoctrination on the value of Pancasila. The focus on Pancasila as a subject of study marks a difference from the earlier works, contributing to the scholarly discourse on Indonesian education abroad. This study complements and

extends those discussions by covering Pancasila education and analysing how SIDH navigates the interplay between political education and potential indoctrination concerning Pancasila ideology. This study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on political education, ideological exploration, and educational practices.

A key distinction between political education and indoctrination is the critical engagement and the allowance of diverse perspectives. Political education is when the teaching primarily focuses on encouraging students to explore the meaning of Pancasila, analyse its principles within the context of Dutch cultural discourse, and engage in open discussions that involve examining various viewpoints. Meanwhile, political indoctrination is when the teaching methods prioritise a rigid adherence to Pancasila's

principles without room for questioning, discussion, or exploration of differing viewpoints.

Identifying the boundary between “political education” and “political indoctrination” requires carefully examining specific indicators. Indoctrination is when the educational process imposes a singular interpretation of Pancasila without acknowledging its complexity or discourages students from critically evaluating its principles in light of different cultural contexts. Likewise, a doctrinal approach may also dismiss dissenting opinions or questions about Pancasila without thoughtful engagement. Moreover, a doctrinal approach may also place an overemphasis on rote memorisation of Pancasila's points without fostering an understanding of their philosophical underpinnings. Conversely,



political education encourages students to explore how Pancasila's principles manifest in real-life situations, with an appreciation for the diverse interpretations that might arise.

The distinction between political education and political indoctrination hinges on how an educational institution encourages critical thinking, open dialogue, and a nuanced exploration of ideological principles. The examination of Pancasila education at SIDH within this framework sheds light on whether the institution's approach leans more towards thoughtful analyses or inadvertently limits students' intellectual autonomy through a more doctrinal mode of instruction. By examining the teaching methods, materials, and outcomes, this study aims to provide insights into the nature of ideological education and its impact on students' ability to

navigate complex socio-political landscapes.

This study employs a qualitative research design to comprehensively understand the implementation of Pancasila ideology in SIDH. Qualitative data for this research was collected through six interview sessions. The first session, which comprised student interviews, was conducted on June 1, 2022, followed by a student focus group discussion on June 2, 2022. Subsequently, teacher interviews took place on June 8, 2022, and a teacher focus group discussion was held on June 9, 2022. Further interviews were held on June 14, 2022, involving students' guardians, parents, and representatives from the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague. The interview series concluded with a session with the SIDH Headmaster on June 15, 2022. The students, aged 15-17, were classified as minors;



hence, the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in their dormitory and were supervised by their teachers and guardians. The purpose of using qualitative data is to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in implementing Pancasila ideology in the context of education and to explore the perspectives and experiences of those directly involved.

The interviews used open-ended questions to allow for more detailed and nuanced responses. The interview responses are recorded and transcribed for analysis. Qualitative data analysis involves a process of coding and categorisation, where the responses will be organised into themes and patterns. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the interviewees and will provide

valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in implementing Pancasila ideology at SIDH. In addition to interviews, secondary data sources such as academic papers, policy documents, and reports are also be consulted to provide a broader context for the implementation of Pancasila ideology in education and to identify any relevant national or international policies that may impact the implementation of Pancasila ideology at SIDH.

Background

Indonesia's educational system is shaped by the country's historical and cultural context, including its adherence to the Pancasila ideology. The implementation of Pancasila ideology in education is characterised by both continuity and change, reflecting the country's evolving political, social, and cultural conditions (Adha, 2020). One of the earliest



and most significant efforts to implement Pancasila ideology in Indonesian education was the establishment of the National Education System (Sistem Pendidikan Nasional) in 1963, which aimed to produce loyal, nationalist citizens adhering to Pancasila ideology. To achieve this goal, the system integrated Pancasila ideology into the curriculum, textbooks, and pedagogical practices. During the New Order regime under President Soeharto from 1966 to 1998, there was a shift towards a more authoritarian approach to implementing Pancasila ideology in education. The government enforced strict adherence to Pancasila ideology in education, often through coercive measures such as mandatory recitation of the Pancasila principles in schools (Adha, 2020). This approach was criticised for stifling intellectual freedom and

creativity in education (Suryadarma & Jones, 2013).

In the post-New Order period, the approach to implementing Pancasila ideology in education was less rigid. With the integration of the new curriculum, known as Kurikulum 2013, the Indonesian government aimed to modernise and improve the quality of education while addressing the diverse needs of students in a multicultural society (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014). This curriculum emphasised the importance of character education, including the cultivation of Pancasila values such as religious tolerance, social justice, and national unity. Under Kurikulum 2013, Pancasila education was integrated into various subjects across the curriculum rather than being taught as a separate subject. This approach aimed to expose students to Pancasila principles



holistically, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of its significance in shaping Indonesian society (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014). Furthermore, the introduction of the Kurikulum Merdeka (Freedom Curriculum) in 2021 places a stronger emphasis on promoting Pancasila values within the educational system. The Kurikulum Merdeka seeks to provide students with greater autonomy and flexibility in their learning while instilling a sense of national identity and civic responsibility (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2021).

In these curriculum reforms, the teaching of Pancasila has become more integrated and interdisciplinary, reflecting a broader recognition of its

importance in shaping students' moral and ethical development. Rather than being confined to a single subject, Pancasila education is now infused throughout the curriculum, allowing students to explore its principles in various contexts and applications. The era of Kurikulum 2013 and Kurikulum Merdeka has seen a greater emphasis on critical thinking and active citizenship, with Pancasila education as a foundation for fostering these skills. Students are encouraged to engage in discussions and debates about contemporary issues from a Pancasila perspective, enabling them to develop their analytical abilities and contribute meaningfully to society (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2021). The integration of Pancasila ideology into the



Indonesian education system reflects a deeper commitment to promoting national unity, diversity, and civic engagement. Through innovative curriculum approaches and pedagogical strategies, educators aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to thrive in the modern world while upholding the principles of Pancasila.

Over time, Pancasila education has evolved beyond its traditional role as a subject of instruction, becoming a platform for critical discourse and political education. This transformation marks a shift from a state-centric narrative to a more open discussion format, allowing for greater intellectual freedom and creativity in interpreting and applying Pancasila principles (Adha, 2020). This change suggests that Pancasila education is no longer a mere tool for state propaganda but an

evolving subject that encourages thoughtful analysis and discussions (Fitriasari et al., 2019). These positive developments in the national curriculum anticipate significant improvements in the implementation of Pancasila ideology at institutions, including SIDH, particularly in fostering critical thinking and facilitating open dialogues among students. However, it remains essential to consider the impact of these changes, particularly in schools located outside Indonesia, such as SIDH, which serve as representations of the Indonesian education system abroad. The key concern lies in distinguishing whether the implementation of the curriculum at SIDH, especially with older-generation teachers, leans more towards political indoctrination or political education.



Key Concepts

Educational theorists have nuanced perspectives on distinguishing between political education and indoctrination. Paulo Freire's construct of critical pedagogy states that political education focuses more on dialogic learning that cultivates critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). This approach promotes active engagement with societal realities and encourages learners to question prevailing ideologies instead of passive acceptance, which is often associated with indoctrination (Chalaune, 2021).

In education and ideological transmission, the philosophical insights of John Stuart Mill and Jürgen Habermas (1981) provide valuable perspectives that both align with and contrast against each other—a dichotomy between political education and indoctrination. John Stuart Mill's emphasis on pluralism, individuality, and diverse

perspectives, as articulated in his work such as "On Liberty". Mill advocates for the engagement with viewpoints even when they contradict one's own, viewing this as a means to foster intellectual growth and critical thinking. In this regard, Mill's ideas align closely with the principles of political education, which prioritise analytical thinking and the capacity to engage critically with various viewpoints.

Conversely, indoctrination tends to stifle intellectual growth by imposing a singular perspective, as highlighted by scholars like Habibi (1996). Indoctrination restricts the opportunity for individuals to explore alternative viewpoints, hindering their ability to think independently and critically. Jürgen Habermas, in his book *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), provides a critical perspective from discourse ethics and democratic theory,



adding another dimension to this comparison. Habermas stresses the significance of rational communication and mutual understanding in moral and political decision-making. His framework resonates with the goals of political education, which seeks to nurture citizens capable of reasoned dialogue and deliberation (Culp, 2020). Habermas's critique of ideological indoctrination underscores its potential to obstruct open discourse, which is a vital aspect of democratic political education (Susen, 2018).

Samuel Freeman's (2002) concept of "reasonable disagreement" extends this comparison. Freeman emphasises the value of creating an environment conducive to the exploration of diverse viewpoints, a concept integral to political education. This notion stands in stark contrast to indoctrination, which tends to suppress dissent

and discourage the expression of differing opinions (Reidy, 2007). Mill and Habermas both emphasise the importance of exposure to diverse perspectives and reasoned dialogue, but Mill focuses on individuality and intellectual autonomy, which aligns more with political education. Meanwhile, Habermas emphasises rational communication and mutual understanding, leaning more toward political education and less toward indoctrination. From these various discourses, an outline can be delineated, and three pivotal factors can be identified to differentiate between political education and political indoctrination.

One crucial indicator in distinguishing between political education and political indoctrination is the approach to learning. Drawing from Paulo Freire's construct of critical pedagogy, political education



places a strong emphasis on dialogic learning that cultivates criticality among learners (Freire, 1970). In this educational paradigm, students are encouraged to engage with societal realities, question prevailing ideologies, and develop a critical understanding of complex issues. This is in contrast with passive acceptance in indoctrination, where individuals are expected to adhere to prescribed beliefs without criticality. Thus, the presence of dialogic learning and the cultivation of critical consciousness are key indicators of political education.

Another essential indicator pertains to the extent of exposure to diverse perspectives within the educational environment. The benchmark is John Stuart Mill's pluralistic philosophy, which emphasises the importance of encountering diverse viewpoints (Mill, 1859). In political education,

the priority is exposing learners to a wide range of perspectives, including those that may be contradictory to their own beliefs, which can foster intellectual growth and stimulate critical thinking. Conversely, political indoctrination tends to impose a singular perspective, often without allowance for alternative viewpoints. Indoctrination restricts individuals from exploring diverse perspectives, thereby hindering their capacity to think independently and critically. Thus, exposure to diverse perspectives is a critical indicator in distinguishing between political education and indoctrination.

The next indicator is the promotion of rational communication and open discourse. Jürgen Habermas's discourse ethics highlights the democratic significance of rational communication and mutual understanding in moral



and political decision-making (Habermas, 1981). In alignment with this framework, political education seeks to nurture citizens capable of reasoned dialogue, deliberation, and the respectful exchange of differing opinions. Open discourse is encouraged, and dissenting viewpoints are welcomed. Conversely, political indoctrination obstructs open discourse and rational communication, discourages dissent, suppresses the expression of diverse viewpoints, and limits the opportunity for meaningful dialogue. Therefore, an educational environment that promotes rational communication and open discourse is an indicator of distinguishing political education and political indoctrination.

Findings

Prior research about curriculum implementation, although not directly related to

Pancasila education at SIDH, provides insights into how curriculum can shape students' perspectives (Mubarok et al., 2021). The finding serves as a foundation to examine the relationship between Pancasila education, political education, and indoctrination at SIDH. Therefore, this study is built upon the insights of Mill, Habermas, and Freeman, as well as the implications of prior qualitative studies examining the implementation of Pancasila ideology in the Indonesian education system. These studies collectively indicate the impact of Pancasila ideology on shaping students' civic identity, moral values, intercultural competencies, and broader national identity. By drawing parallels between these studies and the challenges and opportunities posed by SIDH's international setting, the



ideological education at SIDH can be understood.

The investigation into the influence of Pancasila ideology on civic education resonates with SIDH's commitment to nurturing responsible Indonesian citizens in a global context (Suharno, 2020). As the school operates abroad, the analysis can explore how SIDH fosters a sense of unity and responsibility among its students while considering the impact of international exposure on students' civic engagement and understanding of Indonesian identity. Indonesia's historical narratives and SIDH's international composition invite an exploration of how the school navigates these complexities (Nugroho, 2020). This can lead to insights into whether SIDH's implementation of Pancasila bridges Indonesian historical

narratives and global perspectives.

The exploration of Pancasila's impact on promoting positive moral values aligns with SIDH's daily operations and curriculum (Kariyadi & Suprpto, 2017). The analysis can delve into how SIDH's international atmosphere shapes the cultivation of virtues like honesty, respect, and responsibility among students with diverse cultural values. The study on the role of Pancasila ideology in promoting cultural diversity and religious tolerance holds particular relevance to the diversity among SIDH's students (Subagyo, 2020). Aside from the contrast between Indonesian collectivism and Dutch individualism, the analysis can explore how SIDH fosters cross-cultural understanding, religious tolerance, and respect for diversity, which ultimately contributes to the student's



holistic development as global citizens.

Students and Teachers' Perspectives

SIDH, as an Indonesian school abroad, emphasises the importance of Pancasila in shaping its educational philosophy. This is in line with the Indonesian government's efforts to promote Pancasila as a guiding principle for national development. According to a report by the Ministry of National Education and Culture, the government recognises Pancasila as the foundation of the national education system and should be integrated into all levels of education (Direktorat Jenderal Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan, 2019). Pancasila is integrated into every aspect of the school's curriculum and activities. For instance, in addition to regular classroom instruction, the school offers extracurricular activities that

promote Pancasila values, such as the Scout program, the student government program, and the traditional Indonesian arts and culture program. The school's principal promotes this to ensure that students not only learn about Pancasila but also experience its values in practice.

The teachers at SIDH also view the implementation of Pancasila as an essential part of their role in promoting Indonesian culture and values (Interview session three, June 8, 2022). In a focus group discussion session two on June 9, 2022, several teachers expressed their belief that Pancasila is a critical element of Indonesian identity and that it is their responsibility to pass on this knowledge to their students. They also noted that Pancasila education is not limited to the classroom but also occurs through various activities and events organised by the school. The teachers also



highlighted the importance of regularly assessing students' understanding and applying Pancasila values.

Students at SIDH also value the implementation of Pancasila ideology in their schools. In a survey conducted with 11 secondary school students at SIDH, all of them believed Pancasila education was essential and that it helped them better understand Indonesian culture and values. They also appreciated the various Pancasila-related activities and events organised by the school (Interview session one, June 1, 2022). Furthermore, from the focus group discussion session two on June 2, 2022, some students also noted that they felt a sense of pride in their Indonesian identity and culture due to learning about Pancasila.

The Indonesian community in The Hague also supports the implementation of Pancasila

ideology at SIDH. For instance, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in The Hague has organised cultural events and educational activities that promote Pancasila values at the school (Interview session five, June 14, 2022). Members of the Indonesian community, such as parents of SIDH students, have also expressed their support for the school's commitment to Pancasila education. Overall, the qualitative data conclude that the implementation of Pancasila ideology at SIDH is viewed as an essential part of promoting Indonesian culture and values among the school's teachers, students, and the wider community. The school's commitment to Pancasila education is reflected in its curriculum, extracurricular activities, and its partnership with



the Indonesian community in promoting Pancasila values.

During the first interview session on June 1, 2022, students were asked to recite the points of Pancasila and elaborate on the deeper meanings, such as the significance of the first point, "Belief in one God", and its implementation. Their responses were often templated from textbooks. For instance, M, a social science major in grade 11, explained that "Belief in one God" exists because the country has various religions, which unite them under a common belief in God. She added that its implementation promotes religious tolerance in Indonesia. In other interviews, other students gave similar answers.

Although students could recite the points of Pancasila, their understanding remained largely superficial. Students expressed familiarity with primary actions, such as

tolerating others' religions and races, but their understanding lacked depth and critical analysis. The students' responses indicate the feelings bound by national mandates to uphold Pancasila, suggesting that the ideology's implementation might be perceived as a form of compliance rather than genuine internalisation. In the second focus group discussion on June 9, 2022, teachers admitted their reluctance to delve deeper into Pancasila and stimulate critical thinking among students. They feared being unable to answer more complex questions. This reluctance stemmed from their educational backgrounds, where teaching methods were traditionally rigid. Teachers struggled to meet these expectations despite the principal's encouragement to adopt new methods aligned with the independent learning



curriculum, which promotes critical thinking. Additionally, the educational discourse in the Netherlands, which emphasises critical thinking, further complicated their ability to adapt.

The pattern of rote memorisation over genuine understanding was evident across the interviews. When probed further about other points of Pancasila, students reiterated textbook definitions without demonstrating a deeper or personal connection to the principles. For example, when discussing the second point, “just and civilised humanity”, the students uniformly echoed textbook explanations about treating others respectfully and fairly. However, they struggled to provide concrete examples of how this principle is applied daily

(focus group discussion session one, June 2, 2022).

D and K, students of social science majors in grade 10, exemplified the prevalent view among the students. They highlighted the school's emphasis on recognising all religions in Indonesia, conforming to the nation's principles as mandated by Indonesia's Constitution. While this demonstrates some exposure to the ideological concepts, their responses lacked insight into the deeper philosophical foundations and historical context of Pancasila. One teacher, Miss D, admitted that teaching Pancasila at SIDH is challenging due to the different discourse surrounding topics like LGBTQ+ in the Netherlands. She voiced worries about the Dutch education system's inclusive approach to LGBTQ+ issues, contrasting it with her belief that Pancasila holds a different



stance despite no academic basis suggesting Pancasila opposes LGBTQ+ rights. This highlights incomplete understanding among teachers about Pancasila, primarily shaped by their educational background and societal narratives regarding the principle of "Belief in one God," which some interpret as a justification to reject LGBTQ+ rights. As a result, she was reluctant to elaborate further on the topic during her lessons, fearing she might not adequately address the students' inquiries and the potential conflicts arising from the differing cultural perspectives.

Furthermore, the headmaster of SIDH, Mr H, shared an incident where a student named D.E, from grade 10, was held back because she refused to acknowledge Islam in a religion class, despite her parents stating otherwise (interview session six, June 15,

2022). This incident highlighted the challenge of implementing Pancasila when the cultural discourse in the Netherlands vastly differs from that of Indonesia. In the Netherlands, religious freedom and individual beliefs are highly respected, which contrasts with the more collectivist nature of Pancasila, which emphasises national unity and identity.

Despite acknowledging the importance of contributing to the nation, a common finding among the students was a limited understanding of the underlying principles of Pancasila. Many students could not articulate each principle's deeper meanings and historical significance. This finding raises questions about the effectiveness of the implementation process, as memorisation without comprehension may hinder the development of a genuine



appreciation and transformative understanding of the ideology.

Moreover, the data revealed a lack of connection between Pancasila and students' daily lives. From the writer's point of view, the ideology's implementation at SIDH might not be effectively integrated into the students' experiences and cultural contexts. Without a tangible connection to their lives, students may struggle to perceive Pancasila as a guiding framework for their actions and decision-making processes. The limited understanding of Pancasila's philosophical foundations among students indicates the need for a more profound and moving beyond memorising its principles. It focuses on deeply understanding Pancasila's ideas, encouraging students to think critically, reflect, and apply them in real-life situations. Engaging students in critical discussions and

encouraging them to explore the historical context and underlying values of Pancasila could foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for the ideology. Additionally, incorporating real-life case studies and practical applications of Pancasila principles in students' daily lives could enhance the relevance and resonance of the ideology within the school community.

The qualitative data collected from interviews with students further highlights the challenge of the implementation of Pancasila ideology at SIDH, indicating an inclination towards a more propagandistic approach rather than critical thinking and genuine understanding. The data revealed that the students' answers were pro forma and lacked depth, suggesting limited exploration and critical questioning about Pancasila ideology. The responses appeared to align with



a predetermined narrative, emphasising conformity to national mandates and the recognition of all religions in Indonesia, without delving into the philosophical foundations or historical context of Pancasila. This pro forma response pattern raises concerns about the level of intellectual engagement and critical inquiry encouraged within the educational environment. It points to conformist learning rather than nurturing independent thinking.

The lack of critical questions about Pancasila, exemplified by the student who was hesitant to admit her religious beliefs, highlights the need for a more inclusive and open discourse at SIDH (interview session six, June 15, 2022). Allowing students to ask critical questions and engage in discussions about the ideology would promote a more authentic understanding of Pancasila.

And its practical application. Emphasising rote memorisation without encouraging critical inquiry may contribute to the perception of Pancasila as a mere formality, reinforcing that it serves as a tool for national propaganda rather than an ideology to guide ethical and moral decision-making.

Indoctrination Teaching Method Tendencies in the Pancasila Subject

The insights from the interviews conducted with students at SIDH reveal an unsettling tendency to provide formulaic responses when inquired about Pancasila ideology. While they can readily recite the points of Pancasila, their comprehension remains superficial, unable to articulate the philosophical foundations. The school's pedagogy, centred around rote memorisation and ceremonial observances (interview session six, June 15,



2022), could contribute to this limited understanding, raising concerns about the lack of internalisation.

Likewise, the interview session two, June 8, 2022, with teachers revealed that the predominance of Pancasila instructions is rooted in the usage of prescribed textbooks without substantive philosophical deliberations. The lack of comprehension among educators further impedes their efficacy in communicating the idea to students.

Discussion

The examination of the implementation of Pancasila ideology at SIDH suggests a certain inclination towards indoctrination rather than an understanding of the ideology. The limited depth of students' understanding and their recourse to pro forma responses indicate a doctrinal approach rather than an

environment that nurtures critical thinking and exploration. It is evident that while teachers at SIDH make efforts to teach Pancasila's practical application in real-life scenarios, the examples and discussions remain rooted in the Indonesian cultural context. This disparity becomes pronounced when students are exposed to the more liberal and open Dutch cultural discourse. The ideological education at SIDH tends to be more into doctrinal rigidity, as demonstrated by Miss D's reluctance to delve into topics like LGBTQ+ rights due to a potential mismatch between Pancasila's stance and the Dutch discourse.

The demarcation between political education and political indoctrination necessitates an examination of specific markers. Indoctrination is when the educational process constructively imposes a singular



interpretation of Pancasila, failing to acknowledge its inherent complexity or restraining the critical evaluation of its principles in the context of diverse cultural perspectives. Indoctrination is also indicated by a condition when responses to opposing viewpoints or queries related to Pancasila are dismissed. The next indicator is an overemphasis on the rote memorisation of Pancasila without fostering an understanding of the philosophical foundations. Conversely, an educational approach encourages students to understand how Pancasila's principles manifest in real-life situations, exhibiting a keen awareness of the possibility of multiple interpretations, which aligns more harmoniously with the principles that underpin political education. In sum, the examination of Pancasila education at SIDH raises the

question of whether the institution's pedagogical approach cultivates informed and engaged citizens equipped for thoughtful analysis.

Conclusion

The exploration of Pancasila ideology's implementation at SIDH reveals the leaning towards indoctrination, raising concerns about its impact on the understanding of the ideology. The limited depth of students' comprehension indicates a doctrinal approach that restricts critical thinking and genuine exploration. Political indoctrination, characterised by the imposition of beliefs without fostering independent thought, can have negative consequences for students' intellectual growth and societal contributions.

The Indonesian and Dutch cultural discourses further complicate the situation, resulting in hesitation to

acknowledge religion. This suggests the challenges of implementing Pancasila in a cultural context that values individual beliefs. To address these challenges, SIDH can learn from Sekolah Republik Indonesia Tokyo, which has successfully implemented Pancasila while harmonising it with Japanese-rooted philosophy. This approach enables students to maintain their Pancasila core while aligning with Japanese discourse, resulting in a high-quality education that prepares students to thrive in diverse cultural contexts.

While teachers at SIDH strive to teach practical applications of Pancasila, the discomfort around discussing topics like LGBTQ+ rights indicates unpreparedness to address differing perspectives. Such an approach risks stifling critical thinking and discouraging open dialogue, eroding the true

essence of Pancasila. This underscores the significance of an educational environment that nurtures critical thinking and open dialogue. It calls for a balanced pedagogical approach that encourages students to engage with Pancasila's principles while upholding their individual beliefs and perspectives.

In conclusion, implementing Pancasila ideology at SIDH reveals the need to evaluate whether the teaching is more of political education or indoctrination. The latter's detrimental impacts are not only incongruent with Pancasila's principles but also hinder the development of well-rounded and critical thinkers. By fostering an environment that promotes open dialogue, encourages exploration, and respects diverse viewpoints, SIDH can move toward political education.



They can learn this from the experience of Sekolah Republik Indonesia Tokyo in integrating Pancasila with another cultural discourse.





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Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Africa: Going Far but Not Further?

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Abstract

There are opportunities and challenges in the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda articulated in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 and other successive resolutions. However, these opportunities can be interpreted as an epitome of the proverb “a cup half-empty or half-full.” The WPS is a progressive agenda for gender programmes in Africa, but it appears unknown beyond policy and activist circles on the continent. Using secondary research and content analysis (CA) of current literature, this study seeks to investigate the progress made by the WPS agenda in Africa since the UNSCR 1325 was adopted. It was revealed that despite the challenges, the gender perspective is not deficient in peacekeeping operations (PKOs) except in peace agreements and that gender 1325 commitments are mirrored in the mandates of PKOs. However, the African Union-United Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) showed the most minor WPS agenda consideration, and so did the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). It remains unclear for the rest of Africa if the agenda is stagnating or going forward due to the structural challenges rooted in masculinity issues and patriarchal mindsets, among others.

Keywords: Women; peace; security; agenda, Africa

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Introduction

In the 20th century, women's involvement in the international sphere of politics was marginal (Anon, 2021). Reports commissioned by the United Nations (UN) on peacekeeping operations (PKOs), traditionally viewed as hard politics allied to masculinity and militarism, revealed a common lack of gender recognition and female participation (Simić, 2010). This highlights the need for rethinking the role of women in transnational peace and security (Simić, 2010). After a century of feminist movements, civil society lobbying, and numerous UN symposiums on women, in 2000, the UN Security Council decisively adopted Resolution 1325 concerned with Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), applauded as a milestone in international feminist endeavours (Anon, 2021). Based on lessons learnt from the

destructive wars in the 1990s, for the first time, Resolution 1325 addresses the diverse experiences and the disproportionate effects of violent conflicts on women and the need for women to engage in conflict prevention and peacekeeping processes (Tickner, 2019). Successive resolutions made in the past two decades were founded from Resolution 1325 and its mainstays: relief and recovery, protection, prevention and participation. These are further integrated into the 21st Century WPS Agenda (Puechguirbal, 2010).

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the progress made by the WPS Agenda in the present multifaceted peacekeeping operations on the African continent. This focus is different from previous studies, which focused on the implementation impact of the WPS agenda on



peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and revealed the implementation gaps (UN, 2022; AUC, 2023; AU, 2023; Binder et al., 2008; Hendricks, 2015). A previous study by Kreft (2017) showed that while a clear development towards better gender sensitivity exists in UN mandates for PKOs, not all the UN PKOs consider the essence of 1325 to the same extent. This study is built upon these findings and considers the mandates of six different PKOs. On a practical level, this study could benefit the UN Security Council, the African Union Peace and Security Council practitioners, regional blocs, governments and other stakeholders since PKO mandates directly evolve from discussions held at a higher level of international politics. On a theoretical level, this study shows an intersection of literature on

the PKOs, feminist theory, and WPS agenda.

Thus, this article first provides a background to the study, then a theoretical background, reviews the literature on peacekeeping and the WPS agenda, focussing on developments in the 20th century, the momentous adoption of Resolution 1325, and current debates. Next, the methodology employed is outlined, followed by a discussion of the main findings, policy considerations and a conclusion.

Methodology

This study employs secondary research and content analysis (CA), which was applied to various UNSC, AUPSC, RECs resolutions and other relevant commitments to the WPS agenda in Africa (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017). CA began with a search for gender and women, including an in-depth analysis of content



chosen from international resolutions stating women and resolutions that cite gender. Based on the systemic description of explicit aspects of these identified resolutions, the initial and newest PKO resolutions were selected to reveal progress based on the coding framework (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017). The coding framework adopts the criteria and four pillars expressed in the UN Secretary-General Report S/2010/498 on the WPS agenda implementation (Peace-Women, 2020b; Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017; UNSC, 2010). It is important to note that the coding framework and interpretation of the various resolutions were grounded in the researcher's experiences, which may differ from other researchers' understandings.

Background

Since African countries gained independence, they never detached fully from the residual

influence of the colonial legacy (UNSC, 2019). The continued relationship between Western powers and their former colonies has caused neo-colonialism to thrive on the continent (Zondi, 2017). In addition, the notion of Western supremacy has continued manifesting in who and what constitutes development and its measurement criterion. The same applies to defining and promoting peacebuilding and democratic governance. The same applies to defining and promoting peacebuilding and democratic governance (Zondi, 2017). Against this background, some political leaders have chosen to accept or reject certain concepts when it best suits them. As such, injustices continue in Africa, along with the marginalisation of women and ethnic minorities and governance



crises, among others (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020).

Several African countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Mozambique and Nigeria, are presently either in post-war tensions or conflicts and are in the reconstruction process after conflicts (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020). Conflicts that emerged after the Cold War include social, international-social, and ethnic conflicts (Pankhurst, 2004). Sub-regional and regional institutions in Africa have assumed mediating roles in these conflicts, including the African Union (AU) and the regional economic communities (RECs), such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community for West Africa (ECOWAS), and the East African Community (EAC) (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020). All these

institutions exercise mandates of peacebuilding.

Some conflicts are based on deep-seated identity, religion, ethnicity and tribe. Therefore, conflict management is needed at the political, national, social institutions and community levels (Aall, 2015). Additionally, most peacebuilding frameworks created by such institutions were developed from the perspectives of men, who are dominant in leadership positions. The nature of conflicts is changing, and war has shifted from the battleground to the public, increasing the impact on civilians, especially children and women (WUNRN, 2016). These shifting dynamics need new ways of countering conflicts and building sustainable peace. Achankeng (2013) argues that traditional approaches to conflict management have not succeeded in bringing sustainable peace to Africa owing to the patriarchal



characters and inadequate peacebuilding conceptualisation. Tensions are likely to be entrenched in patriarchal customs that concentrate on mediating power struggles amongst male political elites.

These patriarchal structures tend to be replicated by some peacebuilding institutions, such that even if women participate, their attempts to bring change are often hindered (Aroussi, 2009). In the African context, the WPS agenda seems to have made a substantial effort to minimise the patriarchal tendencies (Shekhawat, 2016). Examples include Liberia, where the women's peace crusade forced contending parties into an agreement, blocked windows and doors and stopped anyone who dared to abandon the peace talks (MacDougall, 2011). In Burundi, women insisted on having their position at the negotiating peace table, influencing the outcome

(MacDougall, 2011). Recently, women in South Sudan ensured a 35% inclusion quota in the revitalised agreement and allowed the representation of women in the transitional structures of the government (IGAD, 2018). Also, the women's role was critical in spearheading the uprising that ended a dictatorship that had lasted for three decades.

Notwithstanding this progress, women peace advocates' political and civic space continues to contract (AUC, 2023). For instance, despite the role of women in Sudan's liberation, their involvement in the continuing peace talks in the capital of Juba remains insignificant (IGAD, 2018). African peacebuilding approaches adopted the Western ideas of who can sit at the table and what content can be deliberated (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020). In many cases, men with an



affinity to the army are prioritised. Meanwhile, religious/community and women influential leaders with deep knowledge of local conflict dynamics are often excluded (Crenshaw, 1989). The supremacy of Western methods is inescapable because Western actors respond first in major humanitarian crises, funding most of the peace processes and holding most of the strategic positions in institutions of peace and security, which allows for the replication of their norms and patriarchal structures (Hooks, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989). Although most of these practices in Africa adopt the WPS agenda rhetorically, its transmutation into practice is generally militarist (Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012).

In a patriarchal context, Hendricks argues that there is no peace to talk about because patriarchy is itself violent and eventually creates behaviours that trigger a war or armed

conflict (Hendricks, 2015). The peace feminist's agenda is to have these patriarchal forms and the militarist manifestation dismantled in the practice of conflict and war. However, these perspectives are often not embedded in the peacebuilding processes, even though these perspectives were foundational to the WPS agenda (Hendricks, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989). What is needed, as asserted by Young, is a transformative agenda to ensure that all forms of exclusion and economic, political and social inequality are eradicated, especially in Africa (Young, 2010).

Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Feminist Perspectives

During the Cold War, research was predominantly from a realist perspective, concerned with the stability of power dynamics, national security and wars, but oblivious of women and gender in



the security concept (Sjoberg, 2009; Tickner, 2019). Conventional security research was distinguished by a dichotomous knowledge of binary variances between femininity (for peace) and masculinity (for war) (Aroussi, 2009). Women were generally associated with motherhood, vulnerability, subordination, and political irrelevance, and men were viewed as the providers of women and the guardians of state security (Sjoberg, 2009; Puechguirbal, 2012; Tickner, 1992).

Ever since the 1980s and 1990s, researchers of feminism like Tickner (1992) and Blanchard (2003) moved into the global scene, arguing that realism has veiled women from international relations, lacks gender sensitivity, discounts women from decision-making in foreign policy, and promotes the essentialist assumptions about women's

traditional roles (Blanchard, 2003; Jansson & Eduards, 2016; Sjoberg, 2009). Security studies through the lens of gender and feminist research defied conventional security studies and gave rise to gender-sensitive concepts of security (Higate & Henry, 2004). As an alternative to males as referent human beings for security, the new security definition was multidimensional, broad and gender-sensitive (Jansson & Eduards, 2016; Blanchard, 2003; Sjoberg, 2009).

The Three-Legged Stool Gender Framework

According to Dunn (2016), the three-legged gender stool framework is epistemologically and ontologically premised on three logical areas: gender as diversity, difference, and equality (Dunn, 2016). It also relates to diverse theoretical standpoints, traditions, and classifications of feminist theory, and it was influenced strongly by feminist



debates, the equality-difference discourse, and intersectionality (Dunn, 2016). The gender stool idea, as postulated by Booth and Bennet, contends that a practical mainstreaming approach and gender-sensitive perspective to policy-making lies on all three 'legs' that simultaneously interact (Booth & Bennett, 2002; Dunn, 2016).

The gender-as-equality approach is predicated on fair treatment of people, setting women's activities that ensure they enjoy the same opportunities and rights as men through legislation (Booth & Bennett, 2002). It shows feminist liberalism and socialist theory, defining success as men and women enjoying the same treatment (Dunn, 2016). The feminist liberal theory is concerned more with the growing number of representations, whereas the socialist feminist theory is related more to Marxist

feminism, which accounts for economic structures of reproduction and production at the household level to determine the position of women (Pratt, 2013; Tickner, 1992). In the framework espoused by Squires (2005), this perspective is termed inclusion and gender neutrality (Crenshaw, 1989).

The second leg of the stool, the gender-as-difference or women's approach, encourages initiatives that identify women as an underprivileged group who merit special attention based on their differences (Booth & Bennett, 2002). It aligns with the premises put forward by Squires (2005), which refers to difference or reversal politics and was influenced by cultural and feminist radical theory. According to Pratt (2013) and Hudson (2005), radical feminism is held by essentialists focusing on the dissimilarities between women and men, women's involvement,



and violence against women. Therefore, affirmative action is needed to amplify women's voices and offset institutionalised patriarchy (Dunn, 2016; Hudson, 2005; Pratt, 2013; Squires, 2005). In the classification by Hansen (2010), this feminist standpoint implies a critical understanding of the state as a patriarchal set of practices that reinforce and muzzle structural disadvantages for women (Hansen, 2010). The cultural feminist theory is a different category espoused by Pratt (2013), which is concerned more with the role of women in peacebuilding.

Lastly, gender-as-diversity seeks to change how society is organised to prevent an unbiased distribution of roles and appreciate the multiplicity of transecting identities (Dunn, 2016). The strategy of displacement, also known as gender-as-diversity, advocates

for broadening the focus from gender inequality to appreciation of intersecting and diverse inequalities (Booth & Bennett, 2002), following Crenshaw's (1989) and Hooks' (2015) intersection of postcolonial and feminist theory (Booth & Bennett, 2002; Crenshaw, 1989; Dunn, 2016). Postcolonial feminism reviews the main racial narrative assumptions, such as white men perceived as protecting peacekeeping operations (PKOs), brown/black men seen as symbols of sexual harassment, and women are excluded from the antiracist and feminist discourse (Crenshaw, 1989; Pratt, 2013). Focusing on the experience of black women, postcolonial feminism is an intersection between race and gender discourses (Crenshaw, 1989; Hooks, 2015).

The three perspectives in the framework of the three-legged gender stool help to answer the



research question in this study. Previous studies have shown that all three perspectives are echoed in the WPS agenda, though to different degrees (Hooks, 2015; Pratt, 2013; Anon, 2021; Dunn, 2010).

Based on the liberal feminist theory and gender-as-equality viewpoint, the current African PKOs are expected to focus intensely on amplifying women's voices in all political activities to promote equality (Dunn, 2016). In light of the gender-as-difference view and the cultural and radical feminist theory, the WPS agenda in Africa considers different women's experiences in wars. Referring to differences between women and men, the pillars in Resolution 1325 of 2000 on protection, relief, and recovery in Africa are expected to include women's needs and embrace a gender-as-difference standpoint. However, the critique of the essentialist assertions on men's

and women's differences dictates that PKOs should concentrate on reconstruction in the later stages of a conflict. The gender-as-difference perspective is like an afterthought in the current African context. Meanwhile, unlike the other two established traditional perspectives, gender-as-diversity draws mainly from Africa's postcolonial epoch and black feminism in the 1990s.

Literature Review

The literature was reviewed under the following themes: international WPS efforts in the 20th century, the adoption of UN Security Resolution 1325, the implementation of the WPS Agenda, and the African Union's Commitment to the WPS Agenda in Africa.

International WPS Attempts in the 20th Century

Even though the initial women activists for equal participation can be traced as far back as the



late 1800s to the early 1900s, the roots of women's involvement in international politics, particularly on issues of international security, were explicitly started in 1915 at the International Congress of Women, convened in The Hague (Anon, 2021). In 1919, the Women's Peace Party, which merged into the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, brought together 1,500 women worldwide (Tickner & True, 2018) have recommend stopping the First World War and attune international women to peace and security with positive peace principles (Tickner & True, 2018; Otto, 2006). In 1948, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom assumed consultative status at the UN. This paved the way for a more official mobilisation of women's global cause through numerous women's UN world conferences, conventions and declarations (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016; Binder

et al., 2008). Examples include the Commission on the Status of Women from 1969 Report, the 1974 Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict prepared for the 1975 and 1980 conferences on the participation of women in their struggles against apartheid regimes in Mexico City, and on colonialism and racism in Copenhagen (Binder et al., 2008).

From 1975 to 1985, the UN's "Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace" focussed on increasing the prominence of UN women's events. In 1981, the UN General Assembly held the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women" and in 1982, the "Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation" (Otto, 2006; Binder et al., 2008). Despite the Nairobi conference in 1985



aimed at strengthening social and economic empowerment of women and censuring violence against women, it was only in 1995, at the “Beijing UN World Conference on Women,” that the experiences of women in conflicts or their lack of involvement in peacekeeping (just of 2% women) raised grave concerns (Klein, 2012; Miller et al., 2014).

In the 20th century, the UN PKOs mandates never issued specific women requests. However, the 189 guarantors of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action shifted to this position (Simić, 2010). The Beijing +5 conference, held in June 2000, developed the “Namibia Plan of Action,” the “Brahimi Report,” and the “Windhoek Declaration,” which referred to the 1990s destructive wars and their effect in their cause and justification (Tickner, 2019). The paradigm shifts of the

security situation in the post-Cold War and the determinations by the NGO Working Group on WPS ultimately made the UN Security Council more informed of the significance of women’s positions in conflict and peacekeeping (Puechguirbal, 2010). As such, Resolution 1325 on WPS came into being.

The Adoption of UN Security Resolution 1325

Resonating with the principles of 1915, Resolution 1325 is equally traditional since it was developed in earlier works and takes a more inclusive approach (Tickner & True, 2018). Adopted unanimously on the 31st of October 2000, Resolution 1325 was the creation of the UN Security Council’s first whole session dedicated to women’s experiences in post-conflict situations and related to peace, security and gender equality (Dharmapuri, 2011). Targeting women’s stigmatisation as



merely armed conflict victims, the resolution depicts the women's image as agents for and of change after conflicts (Pratt, 2013).

However, it also highlights the various experiences in post-conflict and conflict locales of women and the disproportionate effects of violent conflict (Otto, 2006). The UN resolutions provide four pillars that reflect different perspectives and equality to foster a gender perspective (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011). It recognises the contribution of women to peacekeeping operations, exhorting all women to participate at all decision-making levels concerned with the management, resolution, and prevention of conflicts (Dunn, 2016). The second pillar is based on the concept of equality (Dunn, 2016), with stronger prevention of violence and the promotion of rights for women through

domestic law, prosecution of murder criminals and support for local peace initiatives. It calls for women's protection against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during emergencies and acknowledges gendered issues of conflict and the vulnerability dissimilarities between women and men (Harrington, 2011; Dunn, 2016).

Working in line with these three pillars, the last and fourth pillar is recovery and relief, focusing on women's priorities in demobilisation, disarmament, reintegration, governance reform, transitional justice and security sector reform (Dunn, 2016). The three main objectives of UNSCR 1325 are women's participation in all peace-related decision-making, protection of women's rights in all cases of conflict, human rights violations, and the adoption of a gender approach in peace and security matters.



WPS Agenda Implementation

The framework of the WPS is predicated on ten resolutions adopted in national action plans (NAP) by 84 countries and several regional and international organisations (Peace-Women, 2020a; Adjei, 2019). Successive Resolutions 1325 lengthened the WPS agenda in the past twenty years and concentrated on increasing awareness of PKOs and SGBV (Dharmapuri, 2012). In 2008 resolutions, Resolution 1820 introduced the policy of zero-tolerance for sexual abuse. In 2009, Resolution 1888 created the office of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016; Miller et al., 2014). Other resolutions focus on monitoring mechanisms of CRSV implementation (Resolutions: 1889 of 2009, 1960 of 2010, 2106 of 2013 and 2122 of 2013) and a

UN Security Council gender-perspective working areas (Resolutions: 2242 of 2015, 2467 of 2019 and 2493 of 2019) (UNSC, 2019; Kirby & Shepherd, 2016).

Departing from the original notion of 1325 to stop the stigmatisation of females as victims, the next resolutions included and legitimised essentialist suppositions on women's intrinsic peacefulness (Puechguirbal, 2012). Apart from these feminist appraisals of the WPS agenda, recent research has focussed on processes of peace-making (Shepherd, 2015). For instance, implementing the Global Study on Resolution 1325 revealed that women's recognition and participation have been improving, especially among civilians and police personnel, but also revealed implementation gaps (Hendricks, 2015; Adjei, 2019). Although literature in this area is somewhat



limited, Kreft (2017) showed that while a clear development towards better gender sensitivity exists in UN mandates for PKOs, not all the UN PKOs consider the essence of 1325 to the same extent. Krause (2015) also revealed that gender sensitivity was correlated with the prevalence of sexually violent conflicts. The 2018 report from the UN Secretary-General on WPS revealed that from 1990 to 2017, women constituted just 8% of negotiators, 1% of mediators, and 5% of witnesses and agreement signatories (UNSC, 2019).

African Union's Commitment to WPS Agenda in Africa

For the past 20 years, violent and inter-state armed conflicts have diminished significantly in Africa (AUPSC, 2019). However, intra-state conflicts and a spate of violence continue, posing security threats that have disproportionately affected women in different ways (AUPSC,

2019; AUC, 2023). Conflict perspectives can change awareness of gender roles in peace, security, international relations and development (AUC, 2023). More efforts are needed to build structures and address protection issues of non-combatants in conflict and the challenges women face during and after conflict in Africa (AUPSC, 2019).

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) report of 2018 emphasised that instability and conflicts in Africa exacerbate the pre-existent discrimination patterns against girls and women, subjecting them to increased risks of human rights infringements (CEDAW, 2018). Between 2018 and 2019, most of the victims were women (AU, 2023). According to the UNSC (2019), a record of political violence level was aimed at women in the past 12 months in



Africa, involving sexual violence, killings, offline and online harassment, forced disappearances, mob violence and physical assault. Starting in 2018, in the context of the Security Council's agenda, more than 50 parties to the conflict were suspected of having instigated or committed rapes and other patterns of sexual violence (Kishi et al., 2019).

A critical analysis of more recent mediation processes showed that most representatives and special envoys tasked to participate in conflicts at very high levels were men (AUPSC, 2019). Additionally, evidence gathered from 2012 up to 2016 suggested that in Africa, peace agreements and processes continued to occur in a context strongly dominated by men (AUPSC, 2019). However, females are understood to influence disputing parties in their societies and can informally

intervene and have an impact (AU, 2023). Nonetheless, the recognition of women's contribution and involvement at all levels of preventing conflict is lacking in Africa (AUPSC, 2019). This is due to the stereotypes about women's roles in mediation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding. The slow implementation of global, continental, regional, and national commitments, protocols and resolutions on women's participation and gender equality remains a challenge in Africa.

In 2017, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) sessions showed that the AU's priority was the implementation of the WPS agenda (AUPSC, 2019). The council emphasises in all its communiqués that women's meaningful involvement is a *sine qua non* condition for building durable peace and security in Africa (AUPSC, 2019). The council further highlights the



importance of women's inclusion as equal actors in conflict management, prevention and resolution, development, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Regardless of these commitments, the progress concerning the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa is lagging. For example, the AUPSC (2018) conveyed a concern despite the availability of well-enunciated strategies, action plans and policies on WPS. Nonetheless, women continued to endure the effects of conflicts in the continent and fall victim to abuses, including sexual violence. As women remain underrepresented in peace activities, member states call for the involvement of women in all peace processes (AU, 2023; AUPSC, 2018). The AUPSC (2019) developed the Continental Results Framework (CRF) on WPS (2018-2028) in Africa to advance the implementation of

the WPS agenda. Launched officially in February 2019, the framework seeks to monitor AU member states in implementing the WPS agenda and other stakeholders' implementation of different international and African commitments and instruments on WPS across Africa (AUPSC, 2019).

Parallel to this framework, the AU also launched the "Strategy on Gender and Women's Empowerment" at the organisational level (AUPSC, 2019). This strategy could expedite the AU-wide execution if complemented by a gender strategy of peace and security (AUC, 2023). The principle of gender equality and the normative WPS agenda framework have significant national and regional visibility, especially when regional institutions adopt policies that support the WPS agenda (AUC, 2023). Most of the sub-regional



and regional African organisations adopted a broad framework of gender equality policy (AUC, 2023). For example, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) developed a gender policy, while most SADC member states adopted national gender policies (Anon, 2021). In addition, IGAD in East Africa employs a Regional Action Plan to implement the 2000 UNSC 1325 and the subsequent resolutions. The East African Community (EAC) agreed to adopt the UNSCR 1325 regional strategy. In 2018, the SADC embraced the WPS regional strategy (2018-2022), which exhorts member states to take on the National Action Plans (NAPs) (AUPSC, 2019).

Beyond strong political will and all these normative instruments, significant progress has been observed in the development mechanisms (AUPSC, 2019; AUC, 2023).

Remarkably, this incorporates the nomination in 2014 of the AU Special Envoy on WPS, the introduction of the programme on Gender, Peace and Security in 2015, and the unveiling of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (Fem-Wise) that took place in 2017. In November 2015, informed by the mandate of the Special Envoys, the Peace and Security Department introduced a work plan of five years (2015–2020) based on gender, peace, and security whose main goal was to speed up the WPS agenda implementation in Africa, mainly within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020; AUC, 2023; AU, 2023). The Fem-Wise was a creation of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State in the purview of APSA as a supplementary structure for the Panel of the Wise (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020). However, regardless of the



noteworthy progress, the AU admits that more effort is needed to support the execution of the WPS agenda (AUPSC, 2019). This explains why the AU Chairperson made a clarion call to the RECs, the member states, and international partners to deploy unswerving political will, expertise, resources, attitudinal change and accountability to guarantee the full execution of the WPS agenda (AUC, 2023; AUPSC, 2019).

Discussion of Main Findings

The findings reveal that although the current PKOs are implemented on the African continent based on multifaceted mandates, they reflect different levels of the obligations entrenched in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000. Most peacekeeping missions in Africa are hinged on particular resolutions, including the obligations to implement the WPS agenda and 1325. Although

a thrust on advancing female participation could also be ascertained for all, including local women and female peacekeepers, concern for the prevention pillar remains at the middle level in certain resolutions like the UNAMID operation. This leads to only some PKOs fully reflecting the spirit of equality in the WPS agenda. For some, there is still an opportunity for greater reflection on the implementation of the WPS agenda.

UNAMID, whose mandate was already somewhat absent from the prevention pillar, accounts for only about half of the cases dealing with protection and perhaps refers to and restates the WPS agenda in general. A further analysis shows that it is the UNAMID's first resolution, which underscores women's protection and calls for the UN Secretary-General to apply the policy of zero-tolerance against sexual violence perpetrated by



peacekeepers in the UNAMID's exercise. Meanwhile, MINUSCA involves mechanisms to ensure some degree of protection from SGBV perpetrated by peacekeepers through the implementation of the UN zero-tolerance policy and women's protection from SGBV in violent conflict. This study leads to the belief that the WPS agenda has affected the first PKO in terms of women's consideration in Africa, but not necessarily of gender. Blending this finding with the evolution of the feminist theory, which for a long time did not have the perspective of gender-as-diversity and was somewhat engaged in the equality-difference discourse, implies that the PKOs lack a diversity perspective.

This discussion and analysis illustrate that gender perspective is indeed implemented through the WPS agenda as reflected in the current PKOs in Africa. While

the UN's Resolution 1325 has laid the foundational mechanisms, the WPS agenda in Africa leads the PKOs process in the 21st century. The four pillars in Resolution 1325, namely, relief and recovery, participation, protection and prevention, and the consequent resolutions, continue to affect peacekeeping for women in the continent significantly. As opposed to most research, this study focuses on the implementation of the WPS agenda in peacekeeping in Africa. This study reveals that gender was employed in different contexts, mainly in the form of SGBV protection, then training and gender analysis, and more theoretically in gender as a converging issue across the implementation of WPS. This showed that a perspective of gender exists in some peace agreements. However, the WPS agenda in Africa could show more diversity, and there is a



need to analyse other resolutions. It was striking that UNAMID, one of Africa's most extended missions, revealed the most minor WPS agenda consideration, although MINUSCA significantly reflected it.

The AU and its member states have been able to develop policies and frameworks to ensure that the WPS agenda is realised in Africa. The main challenge is that most adopted a vision of WPS from a state-centric perspective focused more on militaries 'silencing the guns' and deploying peacekeepers to battlefields. Even if the AU is encouraging a new paradigm that narrates African solutions to African problems, this appears not to have effectively transformed into the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa.

The commonality of all these frameworks is the motivation to

gauge women's participation by determining how many women occupy decision-making positions. Notably, most countries with more prominent figures of women in positions of decision-making, especially in parliament, are those convalescing from conflict, for example, South Africa, Uganda, and Rwanda. However, this improved participation has failed to decrease gender-based violence (GBV), nor has it bettered women's socioeconomic status. This focus on figures only restricts the transformative implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa. The concept of increasing the participation of women in decision-making is meant to ensure that the perspectives and needs of women are addressed adequately in the decision-making processes.

However, in most African countries, an appointment in any



decision-making position should be affiliated with a political party. Political parties in Africa may not be an integral part of the communities except during campaigns. Therefore, their candidate only reflects the views of the party and not the views of women or the community they purport to represent. The feminist movements have been pressing for clearer parameters of what constitutes participation, but this advocacy effort appears not to have been fully addressed by scientists.

Meanwhile, instead of focusing on the implementation of the WPS agenda, some women in politics see women activists for WPS as potential competitors and wish them away. Although many African countries with NAPs execute UNSCR 1325, emerging and protracted conflicts remain obstacles to effectively implementing the WPS agenda in Africa. As a result,

the participation of women in peacebuilding and the protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence remains lagging. All the initiatives signify the AU's commitment to wholly implement the ongoing commitments and normative instruments in Africa on the WPS agenda. What is required is persistent and consistent activism for political will and transformation of mindsets.

Challenges to implementation remain prevalent. Aside from regional and country-specific challenges, RECs and member states share some cross-cutting challenges and issues. The major issue is adequate and sustainable financing for both WPS implementation and monitoring. Other challenges noted in this study include the lack of statistical capacity and knowledge management for improved accountability and reporting, leadership, and



coordination at the national level. This includes the obligation to bring the Ministries of Defence and gender-relevant bodies close together and address developing issues like violent extremism, irregular displacement and migration, and climate change as a broader agenda for WPS.

There are also deep-seated stereotypes and attitudes around gender roles in Africa. Even with the institutional and normative measures developed by member states, persistent cultural beliefs, attitudes and structural settings (such as social norms and values) hinder the execution of the WPS agenda, hence perpetuating the vulnerability of women. While the need to engage men is increasingly recognised, there is not much in terms of broadening the WPS agenda to discuss and tackle masculinity issues, deeply entrenched patriarchal mindsets, and institutional cultures. Some of

these have been deeply embedded during the colonial and continue to date.

The UN (2022) revealed that the impact of the WPS agenda on women's lives is ambiguous because there is a lack of monitoring of the progress, weaknesses, achievements, and NAP implementation of UNSCR 1325. African member states have limited efforts to include gender perspectives in any attempt to monitor and evaluate different peace and security sectors. They also have limited capacity to collect and report gender issues in areas affected by conflict. Women's participation in politics and peace processes is usually figurative and is frequently withstood by cultural norms. There is a lack of cooperation or coordination by various actors engaged in the WPS agenda at the national and regional levels. Civil society organisations



representing women working on gender equality, conflict prevention and peacebuilding remain underfinanced and not integrated into the prevailing WPS policy discourse on the continent.

Conclusion

Over the years, the AU and its member states have shown a dedication to the WPS agenda and have made reasonable progress, including creating diverse and robust continental mediators and women leadership networks. The use of gender-sensitive language increased in peace agreements. The number of women's groups, gender experts, and women appointed as official mediators, negotiators, witnesses, advisory bodies, and signatories has also increased in recent years. However, the participation of women in peace processes has been low, and the implementation of action plans and policies has been slow.

Financing, implementation and monitoring of policies, NAPs and laws remain feeble. The implementation of most national and regional NAPs on WPS is not budgeted; hence, this depends heavily on donor funding. Women continue to be targets of SGBV. In recent years, online violence against activists for women and women in politics has become pervasive in Africa. This has weakened the implementation of the WPS agenda due to disinformation communicated as an insult and hate speech, violating women's rights and their involvement in public affairs.

All in all, Africa has made significant and progressive normative advances to implement the WPS agenda at regional and continental levels. However, going further than the current progress remains an uphill task, given the myriad of structural challenges rooted in patriarchal mindsets, funding,

cultural beliefs, a lack of political will, and masculinity issues. However, the continent has been able to domesticate the UNSCR 1325 and further elaborate and develop it. As of 25 January 2022, thirty AU member states had designed NAPs to implement WPS.



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