



## Revitalizing governance based on local wisdom in Papua

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to analyze whether local wisdom can be the foundation in mobilizing contextual governance to stimulate the presence of governance arrangements towards Good Governance in Papua. This research is a qualitative descriptive research, using a literature review approach. The data are from literature reviews, book journals, documents or data sources related to research. Data analysis includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation and data interpretation. Validate data through member checks or examine findings using written interpretations from academics in the field. The results of the study indicate that governance adopts elements of the cultural values of the local community (tribes) which have been the reference for thinking and acting. Without it, the implementation of governance will not produce a significant overall impact. In the context of governance, the overall perspective of local values is very helpful in adjusting the implementation of local government in Papua.*

### 1. Introduction

Cultural patterns which contain noble values, known as local wisdom, are one of the things that are very vital in determining the pattern of life in society. Even though there has been a process of modernization, globalization, and cultural diffusion, this cultural style has not disappeared, but instead, is still alive in the minds of the people. In the context of the implementation of organizational and governance governance, at the individual or group level of employee personnel or apparatus, cultural values are still the main determining factor in mobilizing and responding to the roles assigned in accordance with the main tasks and roles of each person (Atahau, et al, 2020). Thus, the presence of local wisdom basically functions to facilitate these factors to influence the sustainability of management.

Studies have revealed that the inclusion of “the other” in an established social order with socio-cultural conditions undergoes an adjustment process which ultimately displays a pattern of meeting models of the two entities. This means that even though there is

acceptance of the governance mechanism in the order, there is a negotiation process by intertwining the existing values and growing in society, resulting in a distinctive pattern of governance with local characteristics, regardless of how the acculturation appears (Akhmad & Idris, 2020).

Some figures who emphasize the importance of these studies include Francis Fukuyama, Robert Kaplan, and Samuel P. Huntington. They view culture as one of the main influences on social, economic, and political behavior in a community. As Clifford Geertz said, culture is the whole way of life of a society related to values, practices, symbols, institutions, and human relationships. So that this culture is very central and becomes one of the many supporters in survival. Constructive efforts are the latest ways to be taken in various ways to deal with the necessities of life. One of them are looking for intersections or meeting points of local wisdom values and democratic values in relation to governance.

Local wisdom is the way people behave and act in response to changes in the physical and cultural environment. A conceptual idea that lives in society, grows and develops continuously in people's consciousness: from those related to sacred and to the daily part of life (Marfai, 2019). Local wisdom is good value, which is embedded and followed by members of the community. Local wisdom becomes the glue in the form of culture that already exists so that it is based on existence. Local wisdom is a culture created by local actors through an iterative process, through internalization and interpretation of cultural teachings that are socialized in the form of norms and used as guidelines in everyday life for the community (Kadir, et al, 2021; Hijjang, 2018).

Local wisdom is also called cultural identity, the cultural identity/personality of the nation that makes nation has an ability to absorb and process foreign cultures according to their own character and abilities (Ayatrohaedi, 1986; 83). Local wisdom is a cultural product of the past that should be continuously used as a guide for life. Although it has local value, the value contained in it is considered universal. Therefore, according to Hijjang (2018; 2016), these local wisdom values are a core part of culture, although there have been shifts, changes, and transformations in the life style of the community, the core of that culture still persists although at the practical level, commodification has occurred. It is interesting to highlight the study that discusses the meeting of the (modern) form of government order with the lifestyle of the people in Papua which has its own style and characteristics of leadership models and all forms of arrangement in ensuring their communal life (Mansoben, 1995).

Lack of respect for Papua's unique culture along with economic inequality and the division of state revenues are the biggest problems that stand against efforts to achieve true reconciliation. The modern paradigm of development focuses on growth and modern attributes are installed as rigid standards in measuring the level of civility of local communities in development. This rigid modern paradigm is the result of placing indigenous peoples as objects and not as subjects. The modern attributes that are imposed on the natives are regarded as cultural impoverishment. 'Retarded' is a common label often given to indigenous people who live the traditional way. Changes

in development and progress approaches that respect and accommodate local wisdom (local knowledge and values) are urgently needed.

The application of local wisdom values is an effort to instill a sense of concern for others, expand knowledge about the nation's culture, and is part of efforts to minimize the negative impacts of globalization which can no longer be avoided today (Dosinaen, 2020). Indeed, the cultural value of local wisdom is very important to be maintained and continuously transformed across generations. Local wisdom is the main foundation for shaping community, cultural, and national characters. Local wisdom becomes a guide in social life, not maintaining or properly socializing the cultural values of local wisdom can have a negative impact on the next generation of a particular society. The Papuans of Indonesia are no exception. It is known that the Papuans are highly respect their cultural values and take great care of their culture.

However, since the era of special autonomy in Papua, this region has given authority independently to manage its own area in accordance with the aspirations and interests for the welfare of the Papuans. Therefore, all forms of policies that are implemented are expected to be able to take sides in improving the standard of living and developing the quality of human resources without ignoring the identity of the Papuans (Rumansara, 2015). To achieve this, good governance is also needed. This is also supported by the changing governance format, from authoritarian-centralistic to decentralized-democratic. The strengthening of identity politics in the local sphere coincides with the politics of decentralization. After the enactment of Law no. 22 of 1999, the identity politics movement became crystal clear. In fact, many local and national political actors consciously use this issue in power sharing. For this reason, it is crucial to apply a government management system with adaptive principles through a contextual bureaucratic approach to accommodate the needs of the community, in accordance with the characteristics of each region (Silo, 2017).

All of the descriptions above are the basis for which we conducted studies to describe and formulate ideas. We try to accommodate whether local wisdom can be the foundation in moving contextual governance so as to stimulate the presence of governance arrangements towards good governance in Papua.

## **2. Methods**

We use the literature review by tracing the availability of literature related to the topic of study as a data source (Hamzah, 2020). In other words, this is a qualitative research with a literature review approach (Akhmad, et al, 2018; Marzali, 2016). The sources of data used are in the form of literature obtained from several sources such as related books, journal articles, and research reports related to the discussion in the article. The research and writing of this article focuses on exploring the research literature that discusses the correlation of culture and local wisdom in governance, to formulate whether there is a contextual cultural integration process in governance and create good governance based on local wisdom. The data analysis process is carried out during the data collection process and afterwards through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and data interpretation (Sugiyono, 2017; Moleong, 2009).

Checking the validity of the data is carried out by using member checking or checking findings with oral and written interpretations related to research to experts (Creswell, 2009; Hamzah, 2020; Moleong, 2009; Muttaqin, et al, 2021). The member checking in this research went through long and continuous discussions to test research data with Agustinus Fatem as an academician of Public Administration at Cenderawasih University who has broad insight related to administration and governance and J.R. Mansoben as Anthropology Academic who mastered the idea of local wisdom.

### **3. Result and discussion**

- **Local Wisdom in the Democratic Governance System in Papua**

The positioning of local cultural values which is reproduced as a symbol containing four important issues in the construction of formal government. First, the boundaries of cultural space affecting the formation of symbols and meanings that are inherited and integrated into governance. Various forms of local values in this case are in the cultural area whose boundaries are experiencing dynamic shifts. Second, the boundaries of local values that determine the construction of formal government are influenced by power relations involving several actors. Meaning in this case is built and even changed in a space with a series of choices of values and interests held by each agent with different levels of power. Third, this pattern of power relations produces group and institutional identities that make them an objective reality and determine the perspectives between groups. Fourth, the identity that is formed through a series of symbols is also accepted as an object of discussion, debate, and lawsuits that emphasize fundamental changes in cultural boundaries.

Therefore, there are several important aspects to see the extent to which the local wisdom possessed by the Papuan is adaptive to government governance. First, we focus on the leadership system. Leadership in this context can be interpreted as containing elements of the term honorable, smart, brave, and strong (Dosinaen, 2020). Each ethnic group in Papua has its own style of leadership, according to the leadership model and political system adopted. The leadership system is a construct of successive social units and is the result of social interaction. This leadership, which is constructed from cultural roots, characterizes the values of local wisdom in the bureaucratic leadership system in Papua.

Leadership is one of the most important parts in the governance of village governance in each region, the implementation of decentralization is the most important dynamic in building a sustainable development plan every year, of course, this authority is an opportunity for every village to implement development. Leadership is a collection of a series of abilities and personality traits including authority to serve as a means of convincing those who are led so that they are willing and able to carry out the tasks assigned to them willingly, enthusiastically, there is inner joy, and a sense of not being forced to the development process.

Leadership in the context of traditional local values is obtained through various ways according to the characteristics of the culture they have, because some adhere to the

principle of achieving status and position by being given and passed down through lineage, such as the condolence leadership system, tribal chiefs. However, there are also those who gain status and position by the achievement through war and possession of property, which is referred to as the “big man” leadership system (Sahlins; Mansoben 1995; Soponyono 2021). The characteristics of “big man” leadership are (1) the ability to gather and invite community members, especially youth, to work together on open garden land; (2) a leader usually vouches for group members; (3) able to resolve disputes between community members; (4) protect community members who are in the midst of life's problems; and (5) have wealth including gardens and pigs (Dosinaen, 2021).

Thus, the existence of a system of mechanisms for selecting leaders and leadership in governance that is regulated by the state cannot be immediately accepted by the Papua, because they already have their own mechanism regarding procedures for determining leaders (Akhmad & Idris 2020; Soponyono, 2021). This can be seen from the implementation of democratic parties at the regional level in determining leaders, using a contextual election system by incorporating cultural properties and the election distribution mechanism using the *noken* system to determine leaders, as a form of local wisdom by combining the system offered by the state and cultural styles by producing a model from the results of the meeting between the two (Akhmad & Idris, 2020; Soponyono, 2021; Ronsumbre, 2019). Therefore, the democratic party will take place well and the results will be accepted by the community. Even though this is a mechanism built by the state, there is cultural legitimacy in it by including cultural property in the election of its leader.

On the other hand, in the context of government at the village level, traditional leaders have a role and contribution in governance which is to determine the policy direction of the village development program (Aedah 2017). In addition Aronggear, et al (2020) claims the same result, that in terms of determining government leaders at the village level, traditional leaders have a hand, by determining leaders based on clans which are carried out alternately every period of a certain period, to prevent the distribution of leadership roles that are only to certain people. Saru (2021) argues that the management of government in the villages, especially in formulating and implementing development based on the traditional leaders who played a role in carrying out the supervisory function. This is intended so that the government apparatus at the village level works collaboratively with the *adat* (customary) leaders in carrying out government management and village development.

The explanation above emphasizes that there is a relation between implementation of governance with leadership in the bureaucratic structure, which is exemplified at the village level. The implementation of the democratic party above, showing that the local leadership system is so deeply rooted that it is integrated into the realm of governance. Therefore, we argue that the existence of a traditional leadership system owned by indigenous Papuans is a local wisdom, and cannot be seen as a partial part of local governance, but as a local wisdom that can synergize in creating good governance

without eliminating local characteristics by building the existing order for development and welfare as the goal of governance in Indonesia, especially in Papua.

The value of work which is interpreted by Papuans as the division of authority and the value of social relations which is interpreted as a division of roles are also important to consider in program preparation. Clarity on the division of roles and authorities of each stakeholder in the program that is in line with the division of authority and roles in society will ensure a more organized and orderly pattern of bureaucratic relations because the adoption of local values is a key factor for the success of the implementation stages of bureaucratic governance. Misunderstandings between stakeholders regarding socially existing roles and authorities which are then collided by a bureaucratic design that leaves the division of authority and roles behind will raise the risk of bureaucratic failure at the implementation stage.

The presence of local leaders in the government and bureaucracy will provide input and aspirations that come from various elements of society. The representation of the role of members of the *adat* unit must be a fundamental element in the government. The government cannot assume that it knows the needs of the people better than the people themselves. Even though government officials have a better level of education and understanding of social life and government processes since in real life, welfare is not only related to things that can be measured. In many cases, social life involves aspects that cannot be measured (intangible) related to habits and comfort. So that in this context, the party who understands the most is the apparatus who has a local community background.

- **Contextualization of Governance with Cultural Pattern in Papua**

Papua and the issue of local wisdom provide an important tendency in the continuity of life (social, economic, and political) in the land inhabited by the majority of Melanesian groups. Local wisdom is not only problem solving for ecological problems (see Hijjang, 2016a; 2016b; Hijjang, et al., 2018) but also political problems as well as matters related to governance. Recognition and development of local knowledge is not carried out without shifting the pattern of central and closed decision-making towards decentralization and transparency. With transparency and proportional recognition of local knowledge, the community can participate in regulating all aspects of life (Hijjang, et al., 2018; 24).

The presence of local wisdom certainly intersects and intertwines directly with democracy. Both local wisdom and democracy do not exist in their respective empty spaces, complementing each other in various settings or contexts. For example, in some cases of this research, a village head is not only determined based on genealogical considerations, but the inclusion of democratic ways of working makes it possible for everyone (with their power tools) to become a village head. Likewise with the sustainability of formal government, local wisdom has entered the coloring of various government role models. Broadly speaking, in Papua, various principles in the sustainability of governance are adopted from local terms. The slogans used are very representative of the local community.

The most important thing for the implementation of a democratic local government is the concept of self-government, government that most touches the community in the aspect of public services. Residents of an area, such as the Dani tribe in Puncak Jaya Regency, must have the right and responsibility to make decisions regarding issues that directly affect their lives. Matters such as security, welfare, and justice do affect their lives, but such issues are clearly too heavy to be handled by local governments alone, so the role of the central government also determines its success. There are at least two ways of understanding local democracy. First, within local government institutions and administrative services. Second, in the organization and activities of the community (civil society). Local government stakeholders and community movements should work together in mutually reinforcing and supportive relationships to identify existing problems and seek innovative solutions. The government is only one part of the whole picture, even though it has an important position. The idea of community activities in the form of community organizations, various associations, business activities, committees in the village, and the like also occupies an important position in the concept of local government.

Local governance becomes a process in which there is an expectation of government that depends on the interaction of a complex set of institutions and actors drawn from local government and from government outside local government. According to Stoker (1994) there are three main characteristics of governance, namely: (1) as a process not a destination state, thereby capturing the dynamics of existing change, (2) hinting towards the growth of networks, partnerships, and other organizations in civil society involved in government, (3) emphasize flexible and easy-to-develop networks, and partnerships in civil society that are able to govern themselves free from state control. These three characteristics are quite representative in the field findings of the Dani Tribe who play an active role in various government agendas. Sustainability of government goes hand in hand with community culture, such as government involvement in the Bakar Batu ritual, harvest ceremony, and various other rituals.

The role of local wisdom and democracy in dealing with various problems that arise in Papua due to changing times (such as globalization) is very important. So far, the role of the central government has been so dominant because not only this matter falls under the control of the central government but also offers an increasing number of activities among the population living in Papua in general. For example, some past empowerment programs were considered less targeted because the community was not involved in their formulation. Strengthening social norms will reduce social conflict because social norms are outside the individual, limits, and controls their behavior. The main element of a norm is social pressure to enforce the norm. However, no society can successfully practice or elaborate social norms in their behavior. The higher the level of success of members or community groups in obeying existing social norms, the higher the level of comfort and tranquility in people's lives and vice versa. Conflict management can be solved through exploring, strengthening, and utilizing community social norms, as well as minimizing the problem of social stratification which is a differentiation related to the different levels in which community members are in it.

#### 4. Conclusion

The model of government that refers a lot to the values of local wisdom positions the community to be very strategic and has the potential to voice aspirations. The meeting point of *adat* and formal governance bridges various problems and is resolved more cooperatively. In several cases, government political problems also involve traditional rituals in their efforts to solve them. The implications of the value of local wisdom on governance can produce a harmonious pattern of life between the community with local characteristics that bridge the wise governance in accordance with the style of the local community. The attitude of public openness and changes in self-government or local governance for the better and it is very contextual in accordance with what the community needs for the development. Issues such as security, welfare, and justice for their lives, have changed for the better after the reconstruction was carried out. This harmonization grows and continues to be maintained along with the seeding and integration of formal governance, which demands full community involvement since society is central.

Finally, it is crucial to implement the development of governance with the dimensions of collaborative governance. This harmonization is achieved through stages from planning, application, to supervision. The position of culture and governance in many literatures provides findings on how culture exerts a strong model influence on governance, and vice versa. Governance adopts elements of local community cultural values which have been the reference for brainstorming and action. Without it, the implementation of governance will not produce a significant impact. In the context of governance, the overall perspective of local values is very helpful in adjusting the implementation of local government.

#### Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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