



The Dynamics of the 2024 Legislative Elections in Election of Indigenous Papuans in Boven Digoel Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of the 2024 legislative elections in Boven Digoel Regency, evaluate the level of electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP), and identify determinant factors that affect their low representation in the legislature. The method used is a qualitative approach with a sociological perspective, which allows in-depth exploration of local socio-political phenomena. The location of this research is Boven Digoel Regency, with informants consisting of legislative candidates, OAP voters, traditional leaders, political parties, and election organizers. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, while data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the dynamics of the 2024 elections were characterized by the dominance of money politics, the weak capacity of political parties in developing OAP cadres, and public perceptions that are still biased towards the ability of OAP in political positions. The level of electability of OAP is still low, at 22.5%, due to unequal access to economic resources, lack of structural support from parties, and the influence of political clientelism. Research conclusions emphasize the importance of reforming party recruitment systems and culturally-based political education. Recommendations include strengthening the political capacity of native Papuans, strict monitoring of money politics, and the active role of traditional institutions and churches in building collective political awareness.

Keywords: Legislative Elections, Indigenous Papuans, Money Politics, Electability, Boven Digoel

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1. Introduction

Local democracy in Indonesia is still faced with serious problems related to high cost politics. Various studies have shown that money politics in local elections has a systemic impact on the quality of the election itself. Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) said that the impact of transactional politics not only damaged the joints of the election, but also became the root of political corruption in the government. Conceptually, money politics, which occurs massively and systematically in constituencies at the local level, forms a relationship of "symbiotic mutualism" that is dangerous for the democratic process and local governance.

In general, the costs that are legally required in the process (stages) of local elections are usually referred to as political costs. In an electoral democracy that involves all groups, these costs are required for the processes of registering with political parties, collecting community support (KTP) for independent candidates, organizing campaign teams and their various needs, and financing witnesses in the election. Syarif Hidayat's study states that to finance these expensive political processes, political contestants usually expect donations from

political donors who are often contractors, who have business interests in the regions. However, illegal political costs, which are money politics, can be much higher than the legal costs mentioned above.

Illegal costs include the amount of money that a candidate must prepare to get a recommendation as a participant in the regional election from a political party. Contestants usually refer to the cost to political parties as "political dowry." Likewise, the costs that must be incurred to influence the electorate usually take the form of "dawn attacks," which are movements carried out in the run-up to voting, by giving money, food packages, or other materials that are believed to influence voters when "voting" at the ballot box.

Money politics is one of the serious challenges to democracy that is still difficult to eliminate in the dynamics of electoral democracy in Indonesia. The process describes the use of money or other rewards to influence a person, group or institution in making political decisions. Ibrahim Z. Fahmy Badoh and Abdullah Dahlan define money politics as a practice in every stage of an election that can be influenced by money, resulting in the benefit of one political party or candidate or the disadvantage of another political party or candidate. Money politics in elections occurs in various forms and at many stages. Among them are political dowries at the nomination stage, vote buying at the campaign and voting stages. It also includes bribes to election organizers at the vote counting and recapitulation stages, and bribes in the settlement of disputes over election results.

The main criticism of money politics is its impact on sovereignty in decision-making. Where the decision to vote or not to vote for someone should be based on various objective criteria; such as vision, mission and work programs. However, money politics makes an objective election compromised because of money or other material rewards. Another problem is that money politics can make election contestation an unequal and unfair competition. Big investors control political contestation, because money politics must be high-cost and must be carried out with large capital, even though not all people, parties or political contestants involved in elections have large capital. At this point, money politics and political corruption have an inseparable relationship.

In addition to financially harming local communities with APBD corruption, the practice of money politics also drives the realization of democratic elections. A democratic, free and fair election is one that is free from violence, bribery, and various other fraudulent practices that will affect the election results. The proliferation of money politics also cannot be separated from the permissive perspective of the voting community towards money politics.

In the democratic process in Indonesia, including democracy at the grassroots level (pilkades), the practice of money politics thrives, because it is considered a normal thing, people are not sensitive to its dangers. They allow it because they do not feel that money politics is normatively a behavior that must be avoided. Ana's study (2001) in Suruh Subdistrict, for example, found that money politics was common in every pilkades in the past, and was seen by the local community as a symbol of compassion. Indeed, money politics is a minefield that must be avoided in an effort to improve the quality of democracy in Indonesia, from the village, district, provincial and national levels. Prospective leaders of the people who compete in elections or local elections must be forced to prioritize the contestation of programs, performance and individual track records, so that voters can get the best leaders. Political parties, which are the forum for recruitment of prospective politicians, must also

create a transparent and accountable recruitment system for prospective leaders (candidates) so that it is far from the process of money politics.

Likewise, election organizers, especially the Election Supervisory Body (BAWASLU) can be more consistent in enforcing various election regulations in a fair and transparent manner so as to close opportunities for the possibility of using money politics in its various forms. Of course, to achieve such ideal conditions is a steep road that must be realized. Even developed democracies such as the United States are still struggling to realize elections that are free from money politics. Two American political scientists, Mark Brewer and Sandi Maisel in their book entitled "Parties and Elections in America," also recognize that America is still struggling to prevent elections from the practice of money politics to this day. Developed countries like the United States do benefit from the high number of middle classes who have the independence to make political decisions for themselves (Rahawarin, 2022). They are usually less influenced by absurd political promises. However, candidates with deep pockets have the ability to design more massive campaigns, giving them a greater electoral advantage in elections than candidates with "thin pockets". This also happened in the 2020 legislative elections in several regencies and cities in Indonesia, which were informed to be filled with money politics. For example, in the Pilkada in South Buru Regency Maluku, where the wife of the Incumbent Regent named Safitri Malik Soulisa ran for and won the constituency in the district. Likewise, the election of the Regent of Maros, South Sulawesi, where the local Bawaslu received many reports related to money politics. Even regional head elections in the suburbs of the national capital such as the Municipality of South Tangerang Banten, which were followed by well-known figures, such as Siti Nur Azizah (Daughter of Vice President Ma'ruf Amien or Rahayu Saraswati (Nephew of Prabowo Subianto) were also reported to be colored by money politics (Rahawarin, 2022; Riskiyono, 2019).

Money politics that occurred in the simultaneous legislative elections in 2024 Important factors that encourage money politics in simultaneous legislative elections, by taking a sample in Digul Regency. The study of this is very important for two reasons: first, the incidence of money politics in legislative elections continues to occur in the local political landscape in its various forms, and seems increasingly difficult to avoid. Second, studies on political dynamics in the 2020 regional elections do not seem to have been carried out in the context of comparisons in several places at once. Therefore, a new study is needed to map how political practices are carried out in local political practices. By examining things like two other things, first, describing how legislative candidate contestants finance the election process, revealing the sources of finance owned that contribute to the practice of transactional politics. Second, revealing the determinant factors that cause money politics in the election of legislative members and how the election supervisory body, and the community oversee the problem. This research is expected to contribute theoretically and practically, in an effort to uphold quality democracy in Indonesia. In the nomination process for the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency, the political party acts as the main mediator coordinating the selection and endorsement of candidates through internal mechanisms involving strategic discussions, consultations with elements of the local community, and the establishment of representative criteria that reflect the aspirations of Indigenous Papuans in depth, thus ensuring proportional representation in the party structure. Political parties facilitate the nomination process by providing intensive training, logistical support, and access to wider political networks that enable candidates to develop their vision and mission comprehensively and integrate with

local political dynamics. Statistics from the General Election Commission (2024) show that out of a total of 200 legislative candidates nominated, 45 or 22.5% were representatives of indigenous Papuans, indicating an attempt to increase inclusivity through nominations based on ethnic identity. Nonetheless, the active participation of Indigenous Papuan candidates still faces structural constraints in the form of limited access to political resources and institutional support that sometimes hinder the optimization of their campaign potential. Therefore, the role of political parties is not only limited to administrative aspects, but also includes integrative strategies to accommodate the aspirations of indigenous peoples in the local political agenda in order to promote a more just and inclusive democracy (Kana, 2001; Rahawarin, 2022).

The promotion of DPRD candidates to voters is done through a series of integrated communication strategies, where candidates with a chance of winning make use of social media, face- to-face meetings, and intensive digital campaigns to thoroughly convey their work programs and integrity values. Elected legislative candidates often gain wider access to participation in public discussion forums, dissemination of local policies, and strengthening legitimacy through campaign success narratives supported by continuous outreach activities. On the other hand, unelected candidates promote themselves through community dialogues and social activities aimed at maintaining their credible reputation as potential candidates and garnering support for possible future campaigns. The intensive application of information technology in the campaign enabled both groups of candidates to reach a wider segment of the electorate, thereby increasing political participation and accelerating the dissemination of campaign messages through digital media. Observations from field studies show that the effectiveness of promotion depends not only on the intensity of social media use, but also on the quality of campaign messages delivered, which significantly affects public perceptions of the performance of legislative candidates (Riskiyono, 2019; Rahawarin, 2022).

In an effort to increase electability from the electorate, legislative candidates adopt a variety of strategies involving a combination of social media use, familial networks, and neighborhood support and sometimes utilize money politics practices as a response to traditional resource limitations, although pressure on such practices is increasingly suppressed by scrutiny. Campaign strategies include using digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to spread messages quickly and efficiently, while still integrating the family values and local wisdom synonymous with indigenous Papuans. Several studies have shown that although money politics still occurs, increased public awareness and monitoring by election supervisory agencies have reduced its intensity, with candidates relying more on personal approaches and neighborhood networks as a base of support. In addition, the use of community-based campaign strategies allows candidates to hold regular meetings and direct dialogues with voters, which strengthens public trust through a humane and transparent approach. This indicates that innovation in promotion that combines digital, social and cultural aspects is a crucial factor in increasing electability, as supported by empirical findings in contemporary studies (Brewer & Maisel, 2022; Riskiyono, 2019).

In Indonesia's electoral democracy system, legislative elections often present complexities that involve not only programmatic competition, but also pragmatic transactional practices, such as money politics. This dynamic becomes even more complicated when it comes to the electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP), especially in areas such as Boven Digoel Regency which has a distinctive adat-based socio-political structure. Despite an

increase in OAP representation - recorded at 22.5% of the total legislative candidates in the 2024 elections in the area - the reality on the ground shows that many of these elections are not entirely separated from the practice of money politics. Money politics not only erodes democratic values and electoral justice, but also triggers the birth of patron-client relationships between legislative candidates and the voting public, which are driven by considerations of material incentives rather than programmatic or ideological considerations (Wahyu, 2018; Rahawarin, 2022). This phenomenon indicates that the cultural identity and representative aspirations of OAP have not been fully accommodated in a clean and fair democratic structure, but are still trapped in transactional political practices that reduce the essence of true political participation.

Conceptually, the practice of money politics in the context of the election of OAP can be analyzed through the approach of political clientelism and rational choice theory. In the framework of clientelism, voters act as clients who receive material compensation from legislative candidates who act as patrons, so that the electoral relationship that is established is more like a socio-economic exchange than autonomous political involvement (Darma, 2022). This is reinforced by the view of rational choice theory, which explains that in the context of limited access to education and the economy, voters tend to make decisions based on the calculation of short-term benefits that are materialistic (Becker, 1976; Elster, 1989). This condition is very relevant in Boven Digoel, where limited resources and access to information cause people to be easily influenced by momentary incentives offered by legislative candidates. Therefore, this study is important to reveal how the practice of money politics not only affects the electoral process, but also has the potential to hinder the realization of fair and inclusive political representation for Indigenous Papuans at the legislative level.

Research on the dynamics of the 2024 Legislative Election in the electability of Indigenous Papuans in Boven Digoel Regency is considered very urgent because the phenomenon of transactional politics and money politics practices that threaten the integrity of the electoral process has shown a significant impact on the creation of fair and representative elections. The need to examine in depth the role of political parties, candidate promotion strategies, and various efforts to increase electability amidst complex socio-political dynamics, reflects the academic and practical urgency in identifying factors that hinder inclusive political participation. Recent statistics show an increase in indigenous representation, where the percentage of Indigenous Papuans in Boven Digoel Regency reached 22.5% of the total legislative candidates, indicating a shift in local democratic trends if accompanied by appropriate supporting policies. In addition, this research is expected to provide comprehensive theoretical and empirical contributions to formulate strategies to prevent the practice of money politics and improve the quality of campaigns through more transparent and accountable mechanisms. Therefore, the title of this research was chosen as a response to the crucial problems faced by local democracy, with the hope of guiding policy reforms and creating a foundation for building a more inclusive and equitable democracy (Kana, 2001; Brewer & Maisel, 2022).

2. Methods

The research method used in the study of the Dynamics of the 2024 Legislative Elections in the Election of Indigenous Papuans in Boven Digoel Regency is qualitative research with a

sociological perspective. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows in-depth exploration of complex socio-political phenomena, including electoral dynamics, voter preferences, and structural and cultural barriers faced by Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in political contestation in the area (Creswell, 2014). The sociological perspective in this research is used to understand how social, economic and cultural factors interact in influencing the electability of OAP in legislative elections, by examining the social structure of the Boven Digoel community, political patronage, and the mechanisms of political representation that develop (Giddens, 1984). This method will use a phenomenological approach to explore community experiences and perceptions related to elections, as well as in-depth interview techniques with legislative candidates, voters, and local political actors to gain a contextual understanding of the factors that influence the electability of native Papuans (Bryman, 2016).

Boven Digoel Regency was chosen as the research location because of its unique geographical and demographic characteristics, where the presence of OAP has a significant role in regional socio-political dynamics, and because of the high relevance of the local context to mechanisms of political patronage and political representation (Giddens, 1984). The research location in Boven Digoel provided an opportunity to observe first-hand how cultural values, social norms and infrastructure conditions influence political participation and the selection of legislative candidates by native Papuans.

Qualitative research instruments play an important role in obtaining in-depth and authentic data. Interview guidelines were systematically designed to explore participants' views, perceptions and experiences in detail, enabling researchers to explore the cultural, social and political nuances that influence their political participation.

The data collection techniques applied included in-depth interviews, structured questionnaires, participatory observation and documentation in an effort to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data. Participatory observation is conducted by attending campaign activities, community meetings, and social activities related to the electoral process, so that researchers can observe social interactions directly and capture non-verbal nuances, such as body language and expressions that reflect political dynamics in the field (Flick, 2018). Through this approach, researchers do not only rely on verbal data, but also integrate contextual data that emerges from the actual environment and situation, thus enriching the interpretation of social and cultural phenomena in Boven Digoel Regency. The use of documentation as secondary data serves to triangulate data in order to increase the validity and reliability of findings, as well as help trace changes in political dynamics in historical and contextual perspectives (Yin, 2018).

The determination of informants was carried out using the snowball sampling method, which is a strategic approach to explore in-depth perspectives from people who are hidden or difficult to reach directly. This technique begins with the selection of initial informants who are known to be associated with the target community, who are then recruited to recommend other members who have relevant characteristics and experiences related to political participation and socio-cultural dynamics in their neighborhood. This approach also allows researchers to approach the phenomenon of selectivity holistically, taking into account the complexity of relational networks and interpersonal dynamics that reflect the social reality of Indigenous Papuans, while providing space for cross-validation between informants to increase the credibility of research findings (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Sadler, et.al., 2010).

The data analysis technique in this study consists of data reduction techniques, data display or data presentation, and verification or conclusion drawing stages.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Dynamics of the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency

The 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency reflects the complex dynamics of local democracy, characterized by administrative and legal challenges that affect the integrity of the electoral process. One crucial issue was the disqualification of district head candidate number 3, Petrus

Ricolombus Omba, by the Constitutional Court due to dishonesty in disclosing his legal status as a former military convict, which led to a re-vote (PSU) having to be conducted without his participation (Constitutional Court, 2025). This decision highlights the importance of transparency and honesty in the nomination process, as well as the active role of oversight institutions in upholding democratic principles. In addition, the General Election Commission (KPU) of Boven Digoel Regency faced challenges in ensuring the validity of nomination documents, especially when there was no public response that could be used as a basis for further verification (Metro TV, 2025). Overall, these dynamics reflect the challenges in realizing fair and transparent elections in areas with high socio-political complexity such as Boven Digoel.

Thus, the dynamics of the 2024 legislative elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflect the complexity of the relationship between power structures, social identity, and political-economic domination in the context of local democracy. The grand theory of political sociology, as explained by Weber (1978) and Habermas (1989), emphasizes that political practices cannot be separated from the value system and power relations inherent in society. In this context, the marginalization of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the electoral process shows their weak socio-political position in a structure dominated by elites who have economic capital and strong political networks. Therefore, the involvement of OAP in elections is influenced more by pragmatic incentives than ideological or representative considerations, which has an impact on their low electability. In addition, the distribution of votes shifting to candidates with large logistical capacities indicates that electoral democracy has been commodified by money, not ideas or integrity. The electoral map that is formed shows structural inequality, where legislative candidates from the OAP group who lack financial support experience significant obstacles in achieving victory. Thus, the electability of OAP is not only influenced by political preferences, but also by the structure of socio-economic relations that have been formed in the local political system.

3.1.1. The Nomination Process and the Role of Political Parties

The nomination process and the role of political parties in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency show complex and strategic local political dynamics. The Boven Digoel Regional General Election Commission (KPUD) also actively coordinates the nomination stage with political parties to ensure understanding of the administrative and legal requirements (Papua Selatan Pos, 2024). Thus, the dynamics of legislative elections in Boven Digoel not only reflect the formal democratic process, but also show how political parties and EMBs interact in a unique local context.

The process of nominating legislative members in the 2024 elections in Boven Digoel Regency shows that political parties play a strategic role in organizing political recruitment, especially through an open but pragmatic selection process. Parties tend to prioritize candidates who have strong electoral support over ideological or programmatic capacity-based selection. In this context, the nomination process reflects how local political contestation takes place between the pull of electability interests, organizational pragmatism, and the strength of the social support base.

Parties are often no longer actively involved in organizing campaigns or strengthening the capacity of candidates, leaving the responsibility for field activities entirely to individual candidates. This phenomenon shows the institutional weakness of political parties as democratic instruments that should provide systematic support for candidates, including in terms of logistics, political communication, and mass mobilization (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). Such party behavior also reflects the imbalance between formal power and informal practices in the local political system, where actors close to the power elite tend to have greater access to resources and support. As a result, relationships between parties and candidates are often transactional and short-term, rather than long-term regeneration relationships that strengthen the political system as a whole. Therefore, to improve the quality of elections in Boven Digoel, structural reforms in the management of political parties are needed so that they function not only as electoral vehicles, but also as actors strengthening inclusive and participatory local democracy.

3.1.2. Dominant Campaign Issues

The 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency was colored by a number of campaign issues that reflected the complexity of local political dynamics, especially after the Constitutional Court decided to conduct a re-voting (PSU) due to the disqualification of one of the candidates due to inconsistencies in the legal documents submitted (Metro TV, 2025). This decision sparked concerns over the potential misuse of the campaign pause period by the incumbent, which could lead to conflicts of interest and tensions between candidate pairs, as expressed by the Chairman of Bawaslu Boven Digoel, Bernadus Warumap (Kabar Digoel, 2025). In addition, Bawaslu highlighted the importance of maintaining neutrality and avoiding provocations on social media, given the reports of violations during previous elections (Fajar Papua, 2025). In an effort to create a conducive atmosphere, the KPU of Boven Digoel organized a public debate facilitated by a local broadcasting institution, to provide space for the community to get to know the vision and mission of the candidates (InfoPublik, 2024). These steps are expected to increase community political participation and ensure the implementation of honest, fair, and democratic elections in Boven Digoel.

In the context of the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency, the dominant campaign issues reflect the complexity of local political dynamics that are not only related to programmatic competition between legislative candidates, but also reflect power relations and social tensions rooted in ethnic and religious identities. The decision of the Constitutional Court regarding the PSU due to the disqualification of candidates due to administrative issues has triggered new dynamics in the campaign period, which are utilized by political actors to build legitimacy through approaches that are not always based on public policy, but identity strategies.

In the context of Boven Digoel, this dynamic is exacerbated by information inequality and low political literacy, which causes people to be more easily attracted to instant promises rather than critically assessing the competence and integrity of candidates. The dominant issues in the 2024 legislative campaign in Boven Digoel also show problems of political ethics, especially in the practice of negative campaigning and the use of social media as a means of provocation. In this framework, the election should not only be an electoral procedure, but also a momentum for political education that is able to build citizens' critical awareness of the quality of representation and public policy agenda offered by legislative candidates.

3.1.3. Political Conflict

The 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency reflects the complexity of local democracy colored by significant political conflicts. One of the peaks of tension occurred when the Constitutional Court ruled on the disqualification of a regent candidate due to his problematic legal status, which then triggered a re-vote (PSU) and disrupted the political stability of the region (Constitutional Court, 2025). The local Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) recorded various violations during the election process, including an extended campaign period that could potentially be abused by the incumbent (Bawaslu Boven Digoel, 2024). This phenomenon is in line with Public Virtue Research Institute's findings that fraud in the 2024 elections could trigger serious electoral conflict. Theoretically, this kind of political conflict can be explained through Dahrendorf's perspective, which emphasizes that differences in interests between groups in society can be the main source of social and political conflict.

The political conflicts that emerged in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflect the fragility of local democratic governance that has not been fully institutionalized properly. The disqualification of one of the candidates due to controversial legal status and the Constitutional Court's decision to conduct a re-voting (PSU) showed serious problems in the enforcement of electoral law and institutional integrity (Constitutional Court, 2025). In this context, conflicts are not only vertical between the organizing institutions and election participants, but also spread to the horizontal realm between supporters who compete for influence in the field. According to Dahrendorf, social conflicts in modern societies arise because of conflicts between groups that have authority and those that do not, especially in the struggle for resources such as power and legitimacy. In the case of Boven Digoel, this political

conflict reflects the failure of democratic institutions to create a fair, open and trusted competition arena for all local political actors.

This conflict condition was further exacerbated by the phenomenon of money politics, which became the dominant instrument in electoral battles. Bawaslu Boven Digoel (2024) noted violations in the form of "fajar attacks" and the distribution of social assistance in favor of certain candidates, which gave rise to perceptions of injustice and weakened the principle of equality in political contestation. This suggests that economic capital plays a large role in determining election outcomes, rather than simply the ideas or track records of candidates. Money politics has become an integral part of the electoral process in many parts of Indonesia, and often creates political jealousy that leads to social friction.

Sociologically, the political conflict that took place in Boven Digoel reflects the manifestation of power dynamics and exclusive political identities at the grassroots level. Tensions between political support bases, as observed by field informants, arose due to

negative campaigns and mutual attacks that worsened relations between villagers. Conflicts in the context of elections not only affect formal political stability, but also undermine previously harmonious social structures and community solidarity. For this reason, resolving political conflicts in regions like Boven Digoel requires an approach that is not only legalistic, but also based on social reconciliation and strengthening local institutional capacity.

3.1.4. Money Politics Practices

The practice of money politics remains a serious challenge in local democratic contestation in Indonesia, including in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency, South Papua. This phenomenon not only undermines the principles of democracy, but also creates community dependence on transactional politics, resulting in low quality political participation and strengthening transactional patterns in elections. In the context of Boven Digoel, the local Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) emphasized that money politics can destroy democracy, indicating that this phenomenon remains a major threat to democracy at the local level. The main factors driving the practice of money politics include poverty, permissive local culture, and low political literacy. Prevention efforts and solutions, such as political education, stricter monitoring, economic empowerment, and strict law enforcement, need to be enhanced to mitigate the negative impacts of money politics and improve the quality of democracy at the local level.

The practice of money politics remains a chronic disease in Indonesia's electoral democracy, especially in the context of remote and marginalized regions such as Boven Digoel Regency. As stated in the introduction, money politics creates a transactional relationship between voters and legislative candidates, which not only undermines the essence of deliberative democracy but also shapes a long-term political culture that is corrupt and clientelistic. The "dawn attack" phenomenon that occurs before voting day is the most vulgar form of money politics, which is carried out in a massive and structured manner. This practice also shows a pragmatic understanding among the voting public, who see elections as a once-in-five-years opportunity to get "direct benefits" from candidates. This shows low political literacy and a lack of trust in the function of political representation after candidates are elected. Therefore, instead of voting based on vision-mission or track record, people tend to vote based on how much "cash" they receive, as also explained by informants in this study.

The practice of money politics has indirectly limited the political space of OAP legislative candidates who do not have the financial strength to compete. In this context, procedural democracy turns into a competition for capital, not ideas or integrity. Local elections in Indonesia tend to produce politicians who are "elected because they are financially strong" rather than because of the popularity of ideas or leadership capacity. Consequently, people's voices are vulnerable to being co-opted by the interests of the capitalist elite, while the representation of minority groups, such as native Papuans, is marginalized in the local political arena. Therefore, strategies to overcome the dominance of money politics must not only be repressive through law enforcement, but also transformative through raising political awareness and empowering the economy of local communities to be able to make independent political choices.

3.1.5. Community Responses to Legislative Election Results

The community's response to the results of the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency reflects the complex dynamics of local politics, where voter participation has decreased compared to the previous election, indicating a challenge in raising citizens' political awareness (RRI, 2025). Although the local General Election Commission (KPU) has held various socialization activities, such as public debates and healthy walks, to increase participation, the results have not been optimal (Boven Digoel InfoPublik, 2024; RMOL Papua, 2024). The Constitutional Court's verdict ordering a re-voting (PSU) without the participation of one of the regent candidates added to the complexity of the political situation in this area (MKRI, 2025). The KPU of Boven Digoel stated that it had carried out its duties according to the rules, but the decision showed the need for further evaluation of the candidate verification process (Metro TV, 2025). Overall, these dynamics reflect the importance of transparency and active community participation in the democratic process to ensure the legitimacy of election results.

The community's response to the results of the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency shows a symptom of collective disappointment with the democratic process that is considered not fully fair and transparent, especially due to transactional political practices. Money politics has become an important instrument in mobilizing votes in peripheral areas of Indonesia, including Papua, as a form of modern patron-client relations. Political socialization is unable to overcome the dominance of economic relations in the electoral process, because the social structure of local communities is still dominated by patterns of dependence on political elites who have financial resources. Then, the community's response to the 2024 election results shows an ambivalence between the right to vote as an expression of popular sovereignty and a survival strategy in a political system that is considered to have failed to fulfill welfare expectations. When people prefer to receive money or goods as immediate compensation rather than long-term expectations from legislators' policies, it reflects the state's failure to provide a trustworthy and fairly accessible representation system. Transactional politics has become the norm in Indonesia's local democratic system, replacing idealized forms of political participation with material exchange relationships. Therefore, there needs to be systemic intervention from the state and civil society to strengthen electoral integrity and build public trust in the democratic system.

3.2. The Electability of Indigenous Papuans in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency

The electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency reflects the complex dynamics of local politics and requires serious attention to the representation of indigenous peoples in the democratic system. However, in the absence of transparent data and sustainable policies, concerns about the political marginalization of indigenous people remain a crucial issue that must be addressed to ensure fairness and inclusiveness in the local democratic system.

3.2.1. Number and Distribution of OAP Candidates

The number and distribution of Indigenous Papuan (OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 legislative elections in Boven Digoel Regency is an important indicator in assessing the political representation of indigenous peoples in the region. In the 2019 legislative election,

out of a total of 20 seats in the Boven Digoel DPRD, only 4 seats were filled by indigenous Papuans, indicating very minimal representation (DPR Papua, 2019). This condition raises concerns about the further marginalization of native Papuans in local political structures, which could lead to social inequality and the potential for horizontal conflict. To address this, Law Number 2 of 2021 concerning Papua Special Autonomy regulates the addition of DPRD members through a special appointment route for OAP, as much as one fourth of the number of members elected, with a minimum of 30% female representation. However, the implementation of this policy requires commitment from political parties and election organizers to

ensure that the distribution of OAP candidates is evenly distributed across electoral districts, so that their chances of being elected can increase significantly.

The number and distribution of Indigenous Papuan (OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflect the increasingly complex dynamics of political representation. In terms of quantity, the involvement of OAP is quite high in several electoral districts, especially Dapil 2 and 3, which are demographically dominated by indigenous Papuans. However, although the number of OAP candidates is significant, this is not necessarily directly proportional to their electability, especially in more heterogeneous electoral districts such as Dapil 1 and 4. In this context, political representation is not only influenced by the quantity of candidates, but also by the quality of political distribution that reflects affirmative justice as stipulated in Law No. 2 of 2021 concerning Papua Special Autonomy. This is in line with the opinion of Aspinall and Berenschot (2019), who emphasize that ethnic representation in local politics in Indonesia is strongly influenced by institutional design and exclusive electoral competition. The distribution strategy of native Papuan candidates needs to be strengthened by favorable party policies and political empowerment of local communities, so that the representation of native Papuans is not merely symbolic, but substantial and sustainable.

3.2.2. Political Support from the Party

Political support from parties plays a crucial role in determining the electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency, given the long history of political marginalization experienced by this group. Although the Papua Special Autonomy Law has provided affirmative space for OAP, the reality is that their representation in the DPRD is still very minimal; for example, in the 2019 elections, out of 20 seats in the Boven Digoel DPRD, only 4 were filled by OAP (DPR Papua, 2019). This situation raises concerns of further erosion of OAP political representation if political parties do not actively recruit and support legislative candidates from among them. Political parties have a responsibility to ensure that the nomination process is not only based on electoral considerations, but also pays attention to diversity and fairness of representation, including by providing training and mentoring to OAP candidates to increase their capacity. Without a real commitment from political parties in supporting the involvement of OAP, efforts to realize inclusive and representative democracy in Papua will be difficult to achieve.

Political support from parties is a determining factor in the success of the election of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency. Although normatively political parties play an important role in the nomination of legislative members, the reality on the ground shows that the party's support for OAP candidates is still symbolic

and lacks strategic follow-up. Party involvement is often limited to administrative aspects and initial campaigns, without substantial support in terms of logistics or strengthening the political capacity of OAP candidates.

This shows a gap between formal party commitments and their implementation in ensuring the representation of marginalized groups such as native Papuans, which should be a concern within the framework of inclusive democracy. This condition is further exacerbated by the inequality of resources between OAP and non-OAP candidates, especially in terms of political networks and campaign capital. Political parties, which are supposed to act as facilitators of democracy, allow this inequality to continue by not providing adequate support for candidates from historically marginalized groups. The oligarchy within Indonesian political parties means that the selection and endorsement of candidates tends to be determined by proximity to elites and the power of capital, rather than representation of marginalized groups. Parties are not only responsible for nominating native Papuans, but are also obliged to develop a winning strategy that favors and provides concrete support in the form of logistics, training, and political coaching. In the context of Boven Digoel, political parties should reorganize candidate selection mechanisms and resource distribution so that they are not only based on electability, but also on the principles of justice and strengthening local representation.

3.2.3. Strategy of OAP Candidates

The strategy of Indigenous Papuan (OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency is crucial in an effort to strengthen the political representation of indigenous peoples amid the increasing dominance of non-OAP candidates. In the 2019 elections, out of 20 seats in the Boven Digoel DPRD, only 4 were occupied by indigenous Papuans, reflecting a lack of representation that could threaten the political existence of indigenous Papuans in their own land (Papua House of Representatives, 2019). In response to this, the General Election Commission (KPU) of Boven Digoel Regency expanded the electoral districts from two to four, with the hope of increasing the chances of OAP electability through a more equitable distribution of seats (Suara Perempuan Papua, 2025). In addition, support from institutions such as the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) that encourage political affirmation for native Papuans, as well as encouragement for the formation of local political parties, are strategic steps in strengthening the political bargaining position of native Papuans in Boven Digoel (Media Pro Rakyat, 2023).

The strategies applied by Indigenous Papuan (OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflect the dynamics of identity politics that are unique to the Papua region. Cultural and relational approaches are the main methods, with an emphasis on ethnic solidarity and social closeness as the main political capital in the struggle for votes. In the context of minority representation, this strategy reflects efforts to maintain political existence through strengthening collective identity and local social networks. Politics in remote areas of Indonesia are more often driven by community loyalties and local patronage than formal party programs.

In the context of indigenous peoples' political representation, this approach becomes a symbolic force that glues together indigenous peoples' political voices amid the hegemony of non-OAP candidates who have greater access to resources and power networks. This approach also functions as a form of symbolic resistance to an electoral system that tends to benefit political actors connected to formal state structures and major parties. Therefore, the

strategy adopted by native candidates is not just an electoral tactic, but also part of a cultural struggle to maintain an inclusive political space for indigenous peoples in Boven Digoel.

3.2.4. Obstacles to the Election of Indigenous Papuans

The electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency faces serious challenges that reflect the inequality of political representation in the region. Data shows that in the 2019 elections, out of 20 seats in the Boven Digoel DPRD, only 4 were filled by indigenous Papuans, indicating political dominance by non-OAPs and reinforcing concerns about the political marginalization of indigenous people. Therefore, it is necessary to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of affirmation policies and strengthen the political capacity of OAP so that they can become the main actors in determining the direction of development in their own land.

The electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency faces various structural and cultural barriers that hinder equal political representation. Systemic political exclusion of OAP legislative candidates, where they often face inequality of resources in the process of winning votes. Legislative candidates from among OAPs tend to come from ordinary community backgrounds who do not have large capital for campaign operations in geographically dispersed voter areas. The strength of non-OAP legislative candidates supported by business backgrounds and access to extensive economic and social networks makes political competition increasingly unbalanced.

This phenomenon confirms that local electoral politics in Papua is strongly influenced by economic capital as an instrument of power domination, which indirectly excludes candidates from indigenous groups who do not have similar resources. This domination has implications for the loss of a fair contestation space for native Papuans, where vision and cultural closeness to the community are no longer the main determinants of electability. Therefore, to create a representative democracy in Boven Digoel, regulations and policies are needed that actually protect and facilitate the political participation of OAP in an equal and sustainable manner.

3.2.5. Community Perception

Public perceptions of the electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflect the complex dynamics of identity politics and local representation. Therefore, to increase the electability of OAP in legislative elections, more systematic efforts are needed in political education, strengthening the capacity of OAP legislative candidates, and reforms in the recruitment system of political parties to be more inclusive and representative of the diversity of Papuan society.

Public perceptions of the electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency are inseparable from structural issues and local political culture that is still full of transactional practices. In the context of electoral democracy in this area, voters tend to judge candidates based on their financial ability to provide direct material benefits, thus reducing the importance of the representative capacity and track record of the struggle of OAP candidates. In addition, although affirmative policies through the Papua Special Autonomy Law have provided formal space for OAP participation in politics, the reality on the ground shows that these accesses and opportunities have not been fully internalized by the community. In addition to economic factors and political patronage, community perceptions of OAP candidates are also influenced by cultural identity- based preferences such

as tribal, religious, or hometown ties, but these preferences are increasingly displaced by the material incentives offered by non-OAP candidates.

As a result, while there is symbolic support for native candidates, it is not strong enough to secure electoral victory if it is not accompanied by adequate resources and campaign strategies. To bridge this gap, systematic efforts are needed to strengthen public political education, improve democratic literacy, and develop party recruitment systems that are more inclusive of the representation of marginalized groups such as native Papuans. In addition, strengthening the institutional capacity of OAP candidates through leadership training, political communication, and advocacy of local issues is also a strategic step to increase competitiveness in the local political arena. Thus, the electability of OAP is not only determined by the power of money or social closeness, but also by their representative capacity and commitment in fighting for the aspirations of the Papuan people as a whole. Thus, it can be understood that the low electability of native Papuans in the 2024 legislative elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflects structural inequality in the local political system.

From a political sociology perspective, Max Weber emphasizes the importance of legitimacy in power, which in this context, native Papuans experience marginalization due to their lack of access to the political and economic resources needed to gain such legitimacy (Weber, 1978). In the practice of clientelism, patron-client relationships are formed between legislative candidates and voters, where political support is exchanged for material rewards. From a rational choice perspective, voters tend to make decisions based on calculations of personal gain; in this context, they prefer candidates who offer direct material incentives, even if these candidates are not of native origin (Becker, 1976). OAP candidates who have limited economic resources are unable to compete with other candidates who are more financially capable of implementing this strategy.

3.3. Determinant Factors of the Low Election of Indigenous Papuans in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency

3.3.1 Internal Constraints of OAP Candidates

The low electability of Indigenous Papuan (OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 legislative elections in Boven Digoel Regency is not only caused by external factors such as the dominance of national political parties and weak structural support, but also by complex internal constraints. One of the main obstacles is the lack of political regeneration among OAP, which results in the lack of political readiness and experience of OAP candidates in facing intense competition. In addition, limited financial resources are a significant obstacle, given the high political costs that candidates have to bear, while many OAPs do not have adequate access to these resources. Another obstacle is a lack of self-confidence and sufficient political capacity, which makes it difficult for OAP candidates to build effective networks and campaign strategies. Although affirmative policies such as the appointment of DPRK members from the OAP element have been regulated in Law No. 2 of 2021, their implementation still faces challenges, including a lack of understanding and support from political parties and the wider community.

The low electability of Indigenous Papuan (OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency is not only influenced by external dynamics, but also by a number of significant internal obstacles. One of the main problems is the lack of a systematic political regeneration process among OAPs, which results in many candidates who

are not technically and strategically ready to fight in tough political competitions. In addition, limited financial resources are one of the most crucial determinant factors in reducing the competitiveness of OAP candidates compared to non-OAP competitors.

High political costs, both in the form of campaign logistics, mass mobilization, and responding to constituent requests, are often not met by OAP candidates who do not have financial support from sponsors or parties. This shows that money politics is still an inescapable reality in contestation at the local level, as well as a major obstacle for OAP candidates who rely on idealism and limited resources. Another internal constraint that contributes to low electability is the lack of political consolidation within the OAP community itself. On the other hand, the ability of some OAP candidates to read and adapt to the social dynamics in their communities is still low, causing them to lose support from the grassroots. This weakness reflects low political capacity in terms of social communication, strategic relationship building, and campaign management that is adaptive to local needs. This condition is further exacerbated by the dominance of party structures that are still controlled by non-OAP elites, which do not provide space for political actualization to OAP cadres in a fair and sustainable manner.

3.3.2 Lack of Political Education

The lack of political education among Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in Boven Digoel Regency is one of the factors determining their low electability in the 2024 Legislative Elections. Limited access to information and lack of political socialization have led to low active participation of OAP in the democratic process. Political education conducted by the KPU in Boven Digoel is still limited, especially for first-time voters, so it is unable to increase political awareness as a whole. In addition, ethnic rivalry between the Muyu and Wambon groups has also worsened the local political atmosphere, where the politicization of ethnic identity is often used by political elites for certain interests. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of representation of native Papuans in the structure of political parties and legislative bodies, which results in their aspirations being less accommodated in political decision-making.

The lack of political education is one of the key factors influencing the low electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency. Low access to political information, lack of socialization from election management institutions, and the absence of a systematic political education program have caused the community to not understand the importance of substantial political representation. The unaffordability of formal political education has a direct impact on pragmatic and symbolic political participation.

The dependence of the voting community on ethnic closeness and kinship relations in determining political choices is a reflection of the lack of political awareness based on rational considerations. Therefore, improving the quality of political education is an important prerequisite for creating substantive and inclusive elections for OAP.

3.3.3 The Influence of Logistics and Money

The low electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency cannot be separated from the influence of election logistics and money politics practices that are rooted in local political dynamics. Logistics distribution that faces extreme geographical challenges, such as in Yaniruma and Kombay Districts, requires air travel and walking for two days, potentially

causing delays and untimeliness in the implementation of elections (Seputar Papua, 2024). These conditions can hamper voter participation and reduce the chances of OAP candidates who often have limited resources. In addition, the widespread practice of money politics in economically challenged regions such as South Papua creates a dependency between voters and candidates, shifting the focus of elections from competence to financial transactions (Kompasiana, 2024). These social and economic inequalities are exploited by candidates with greater resources, who are often not of native Papuan origin, thus reinforcing their dominance in political contestation and further marginalizing native Papuan candidates.

Logistical factors play an important role in determining the success of elections, especially in areas with extreme geographical conditions such as Boven Digoel District. In this context, delays in the distribution of election logistics caused by difficult terrain and limited transportation access resulted in disruptions in voter participation and vote attainment of legislative candidates, especially those from marginalized groups such as Indigenous Papuans. The inaccessibility of remote areas such as Yaniruma and Kombay Districts to OAP legislative candidates, who generally have financial and logistical limitations, meant that they were outcompeted in field political campaigns. When logistics are inadequate and the distribution of campaign props and team presence is uneven, candidates from weak groups tend to be left out in a competition that is increasingly determined by logistical reach and capital.

In addition to logistical issues, the practice of money politics is another significant determinant in influencing the outcome of legislative elections, including in reducing the electability of candidates from the OAP group. Legislative candidates who have large financial resources tend to use a transactional approach in capturing votes, either through the distribution of cash, goods, or material promises, which are difficult to match by candidates with limited capital. Not only does this make it difficult to mobilize success teams and campaign logistics, budget limitations make OAP candidates unable to meet constituent expectations in the form of social assistance, which is now an integral part of local political practice.

3.3.4 Non-OAP Domination

The dominance of non-OAP voters and candidates in Boven Digoel Regency occurred due to transmigration and spontaneous migration since the 1990s which changed demographics. This makes the voice of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) divided and marginalized in the 2024 Legislative Election. The high-cost practices of patronage and "money politics", as described by Aspinall and Berenschot, give an advantage to non-OAP candidates who have capital networks, access to logistics, and the capacity to buy the support of local elites, while OAP candidates are generally resource-constrained. The Special Autonomy Law and the division of new autonomous regions designed to enlarge the space for representation, show that the affirmation of OAP seats is stalled by the dominance of non-OAP-based national parties and overlapping regulations, so that OAP electability remains structurally low.

The dominance of Non-Original Papuan (Non-OAP) legislative candidates in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency is the result of historical processes of migration and unequal access to political and economic resources. On the other hand, OAP candidates, the majority of whom come from ordinary communities, not only experience financial barriers, but also gaps in access to political training and communication media. Structural dependence on non-OAP political elites who have access to these resources deepens the marginalization

of OAP in the electoral process. Political-economic determinants are a crucial dimension in explaining why the electability of native Papuans remains low, despite their social and cultural affinity with local voters.

The ethnography shows that in the context of the Wambon indigenous community, economic penetration controlled by migrant and non-OAP elites has created a strong economic dependency, where political votes are mobilized through promises of access to resources such as jobs and social assistance. In this situation, native candidates who lack bargaining power in the local economy struggle to build a strong base of electoral support. This complexity suggests that the dominance of Non-OAP candidates is not simply the result of rational choices by voters, but is a reflection of social, economic and political structures that reinforce each other and hinder genuine representation of native Papuans.

3.3.5 Voter Preferences

Voter preferences in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency show complexities influenced by various factors, including ethnic identity, local political dynamics, and access to political information. Despite efforts to increase the political participation of Indigenous Papuans (OAP), their representation in the legislature remains low, reflecting challenges in integrating OAP political aspirations into the formal political system. Factors such as the dominance of national political parties, lack of support for legislative candidates from among OAPs, and limited access to political education contribute to the low turnout of OAPs in these elections. Furthermore, while voter turnout in Papua reached 71 percent, this did not directly increase the representation of OAPs in the legislature, suggesting that high turnout does not always go hand in hand with inclusive representation. Therefore, a more holistic and inclusive approach is needed in designing political policies that can accommodate the interests and aspirations of OAP in the democratic process in Papua.

Voter preferences in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency show that the orientation of people's political choices is more inclined to social identity factors such as ethnicity, cultural closeness, and community social networks. This phenomenon reinforces the view that in societies with strong communal social structures, such as in Papua, social capital based on ethnic identity is often more dominant than competency considerations. This situation causes legislative candidates from among Indigenous Papuans (OAP) who do not have strong access to tribal networks or solid social support to experience difficulties in obtaining sufficient votes. The electability of candidates from the OAP group is further threatened if they do not have sufficient financial capital to "compete" in the pragmatic political process.

The practice of money politics in peripheral regions such as Papua is often the main strategy in gaining voter support, especially amidst distrust of legislative institutions and low levels of political education. This shows that turnout is not a sufficient indicator of the success of democracy, without paying attention to the substance of the resulting political representation. More inclusive political policy reforms, including strengthening the political capacity of native Papuans, improving voter education, and monitoring money politics practices that undermine electoral integrity.

3.3.6 Future Improvement Efforts

The low electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency reflects a complexity of interrelated structural and cultural factors that need to be addressed systematically. One of the main determinants is the dominance of transactional politics that shifts voter orientation from ethnic identity to material incentives, making it difficult for OAP candidates with limited economic resources to compete with non-OAP candidates who are better able to mobilize campaign funds. In addition, perceptions of Papuan ethnicity rooted in kinship values, customary territories, and spiritual relationships with nature are often incompatible with modern electoral political mechanisms that emphasize individual competition and the logic of political parties. Inequality of representation is also exacerbated by the weak political participation of OAPs in party recruitment processes and local power structures, leading to their political aspirations being marginalized in the formal arena. Therefore, future improvement efforts must include strengthening the political capacity of indigenous peoples, reforming a more inclusive electoral system, and limiting the practice of money politics so that democracy in Papua truly reflects representative justice for indigenous peoples.

Future improvement efforts in responding to the low electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency need to start with internal political party reforms, especially in the legislative nomination process. This is even more complex in the Papuan context because OAP candidates are often placed not as the main candidates, but as complements who do not receive adequate logistical support from the party. The dominance of money politics also

exacerbates this condition, where candidates with large financial support are favored in the electoral structure, resulting in inequality in electoral opportunities (Mietzner, 2013). Future improvements must therefore ensure that each political party is obliged to nominate a proportionate number of OAP candidates who are given equal economic and political support.

In addition, the process of regeneration and candidate selection must be opened transparently to allow young and competent figures from among the native people to appear, without having to go through the path of closeness to the party elite. Therefore, support for special regional regulations (Perdasus) that guarantee OAP representation in the legislature must be strengthened through multi-level advocacy, both from local government and civil society. The low electability of native Papuans in the 2024 legislative elections in Boven Digoel Regency reflects structural inequality in the local political system.

From a political sociology perspective, Max Weber emphasizes the importance of legitimacy in power, which in this context, native Papuans experience marginalization due to a lack of access to the political and economic resources needed to gain such legitimacy (Weber, 1978). In addition, Jürgen Habermas highlighted the importance of a rational and inclusive public sphere in a democracy; however, the dominance of political elites and exclusionary practices inhibit the full participation of OAPs in the political process (Habermas, 1989). This unequal social structure makes it difficult for native Papuans to compete fairly in legislative elections. In the practice of clientelism, patron-client relationships are formed between legislative candidates and voters, where political support is exchanged for material rewards (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2015). Legislative candidates who have greater economic resources tend to be able to build extensive patronage networks, while economically limited native Papuans have difficulty forming similar networks. This explains why candidates from

OAP have less support, despite their cultural affinity with voters. Candidates from OAP who have limited economic resources are unable to compete with other candidates who are more financially capable of implementing this strategy.

4. Conclusion

First, the Dynamics of the 2024 Legislative Elections in Boven Digoel Regency. The local democratic process is still characterized by transactional political practices, especially in the form of systematic money politics. Although there are efforts to improve the quality of democracy through regulations and the role of supervisory institutions such as Bawaslu, the reality on the ground shows that the financial strength of legislative candidates is often the main determinant in obtaining votes. Money politics not only distorts the principles of fairness and healthy competition, but also creates a pragmatic patron-client relationship between candidates and voters. This phenomenon shows that electoral democracy is not yet fully free from the influence of economic interests, which ultimately hinders the realization of fair and substantive elections.

Second, the level of electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel still shows a proportionally low participation rate compared to the total population of OAP. Although there is representation of OAP at 22.5% of the total legislative candidates, structural barriers such as limited access to campaign funds, lack of political networks, and low support from mainstream political parties are serious obstacles. In this context, ethnic and cultural identities are not sufficiently recognized as added value in political contestation, as the existing political system prioritizes economic capital and pragmatic affiliations. This indicates that local political structures are not inclusive enough to provide equal participation space for indigenous communities in the legislative process.

Third, the determinants of the low electability of OAP can be analyzed through the perspective of clientelism and rational choice theories. Money politics plays a central role in influencing voter preferences, particularly among low-income communities who tend to prioritize material incentives over candidates' visions and programs. On the other hand, the weak economic and political capacity of OAPs means that they are unable to compete fairly with non-OAP candidates who have greater access to resources. This is further exacerbated by the weak participation of OAPs in the internal structure of political parties, which has an impact on the lack of regeneration and institutional support. Therefore, to encourage fair political representation, structural strategies such as political affirmation, campaign finance transparency, and strengthening the political capacity of native Papuans at the local level are needed.

The findings of this research confirm that the low electability of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Boven Digoel Regency is not just an ordinary electoral event, but a reflection of an unequal socio-political structure as explained in the grand theory of political sociology. The dominance of the political elite and unequal access to resources reinforce the exclusion of native groups from legitimate and democratic spaces of power (Weber, 1978; Habermas, 1989). At the level of middle theory, the practice of political clientelism and voter behavior driven by short-term economic rationality explain the tendency of communities to vote for non-OAP candidates who have greater logistical capacity (Becker, 1976). Operationally, factors such as money politics, material promises, and inequality in campaigns are real determinants that hinder the electability of native Papuans. Thus, the

integration of these three levels of theory confirms that the problem of OAP representation is a systemic issue that demands structural reform, cultural political education, and strengthening the political capacity of local communities as the main conditions for an inclusive and equitable democracy.

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