

## STRENGTHENING THE ORIGINAL DEMOCRACY OF THE VILLAGE IN NORTH BAUMATA VILLAGE, TAEBENU DISTRICT - KUPANG REGENCY

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### Abstract:

By strengthening local democracy, this community service project aims to promote all-encompassing village development. The program's main goals are to increase community involvement in village decision-making and local governments' capacity to uphold democratic norms. Through a range of activities, including as training, group discussions, and mentorship, the village community is encouraged to participate more actively in the creation and implementation of village Ensuring the participation of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and individuals with disabilities, is a crucial step in implementing an inclusive strategy. This approach is expected to result in more fair and sustainable village development through more accountability, transparency, and wider participation in the village government process. It is hoped that other villages in the region would be able to promote participatory democracy by taking a cue from this initiative. Several speakers from Cendana University's Political Science Study Program participated in this community service program, which was held in North Baumata Village, Taebenu District, Kupang Regency.

## INTRODUCTION

Village development is one of the main objectives for raising national resilience and improving community welfare. However, there are a number of barrier;/s that often stand in the way of village development, including a lack of community participation in decision-making and a lack of democratic implementation skills among village administrations. To create an inclusive and equitable village development, participatory democracy is essential, incorporating all segments of society, particularly vulnerable groups like women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Indonesia, as a country with thousands of villages, has a wide range of social, economic, and political diversity. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (2022), villages in Indonesia face disparities in access to resources and opportunities, especially for underrepresented groups. This is reinforced by research from the World Bank (2020) which shows that villages that implement an inclusive approach in the decision-making process have a higher level of development success. Therefore, strengthening village democracy by involving wider community participation is the key to creating sustainable development.

This community service activity is designed as an effort to strengthen village democracy by integrating the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. This program aims to increase the capacity of village governments in managing more participatory government, as well as encourage the community to be more actively involved in the village development process.

Democracy at the village level plays an important role in strengthening inclusive governance and responsive to the needs of local communities. Villages, as the smallest government units, play a



strategic role in development because this is where direct interaction between the community and the government takes place. Democracy in villages ensures that communities have access to be actively involved in decision-making, both in planning and implementing village policies.

According to a study from UNDP (2019), Villages that apply the principles of participatory democracy tend to be more effective in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. This is because the involvement of the community at large, including often marginalized groups, such as women and persons with disabilities, can enrich the planning and implementation process of development programs. In addition, village democracy serves as an important mechanism in increasing the transparency and accountability of village governments, thereby reducing the potential for corruption and abuse of authority (Prasetyo, 2020).

## METHODS

The method of implementing this community service is Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which literally can be interpreted as a participatory rural assessment. Participation is an important element in the implementation of government and development in the democratic era (Gaventa, 1980) And in that arena, an effective method is needed to foster high community participation. PRA is an extension and application of anthropological thinking, approaches, and methods, especially regarding the concept of flexible learning in the field, the importance of observation-participation, the distinction between ethical perspectives (researchers' perspectives) and emic (community members' perspectives), and the validity of local knowledge (Chambers, 1994).

In this method, the author plays the role of a facilitator and the community of North Baumata Village as an actor. Facilitators must be pleased to hear the community as the main resource person and be willing to learn from the community. Facilitators only facilitate the Community. The technique used in this service period is that the facilitator merges with group activities in the community where participants take turns to share ideas related to a topic or a question or it can be called a brainstorming technique. The facilitator encourages participants to react to a problem and be responded to by other participants. This technique is also followed by another technique, namely the existence of a Forum Group Discussion (FGD) to collect information, build consensus, clarify existing information and collect various opinions on certain issues.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

North Baumata Village is a village in Taebenu District, Kupang Regency. North Baumata Village is 5 Km from the center of Taebenu District and 25 Km from the center of Kupang Regency. North Baumata Village has an area of 1,151 hectares and is inhabited by more than 1,301 people, most of the population makes a living as farmers.

Village democratization is a separate phrase that is deliberately distinguished from democratization in the village. Village Democratization represents the spirit of the Village Law which recognizes the Village as a subject under the umbrella of the principles of recognition and subsidiarity. The choice of the phrase is also intended to show that the Village is not an empty geographical space that is far from the socio-culture of the people who live in it, as captured from the phrase democratization in the Village. On the other hand, the village is a territorial or territorial unity that is attached and tied to the human life on it along with the traditions and customs that move that life. Thus, the phrase or concept of village democratization means an effort to move democracy in the peculiarities of the village itself. Democracy is implemented and developed in the spirit of recognizing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of village traditions.





In general, democracy has the following principles:

1. the principle of universal citizenship; All people must have citizen status. There should be no restrictions on political rights as citizens.
2. The Principle of Freedom and Equality of Principles; All citizens must have the widest possible set of rights and political freedoms, in accordance with the principle of equality of rights for all citizens (i.e., there must be full equality and the widest possible freedom for all citizens).
3. The principle of people's sovereignty; Laws must reflect the principle of people's sovereignty. When and where legislation is needed, it must result from a process that involves the expression, interests, and preferences of all citizens.
4. Public Engagement: The legislation process should not only use considerations based on the preferences of a particular individual or group. In this capacity, the whole society has the same weight to be a source of consideration.
5. Legality Principles: Finally, a democratic society is a society that is completely subject to the rule of law: laws and not personal authorities that result in limits on individual freedoms, as well as laws that are neutral to the whole society.

For the community, democracy is a matter of justice. Without democracy in the village, there will be no justice in the village, namely justice related to equality or equality of rights, equal opportunities and equal access for all villagers to be involved in influencing, determining and even obtaining benefits from various village policies, especially those that concern the lives of many people.

For the village government, the involvement of all elements of society in governance and in the development, process makes the burden borne lighter. The existence of various aspirations that arise from the community makes the village government become richer in perspective (way of view) in looking at each problem and choosing alternative ways out of the problems and challenges faced by the village (Rozaki & Yulianto, 2015).

The significance or important value of village democratization is motivated by two things. First, in the village arena, democracy is an effort to redefine the relationship between the village community and the elite or the organizer of the Village Government (Village head along with the apparatus and BPD). Through democracy, the general definition of power also applies in the village, namely power comes from and is in the hands of the people. Based on this definition, it means that the community or village residents are the true owners of power (the village), not the elite or organizers of the Village Government. The Village Government Organizer is just the executor of the power of the village people, not the owner of power or let alone the owner of the village.

The second background is related to the progress marked by the Village Law in looking at the position of the Village. One of the most important parts of the Village Law is the State's recognition of the right of origin of the Village (called the principle of recognition) and the determination of authority on a local scale and local decision-making for the benefit of the Village community (called the principle of subsidiarity). With these two principles, the village has a very large authority to take care of itself.

The development of democracy that occurs in Indonesia society is very limited compared to the definition of democracy in the West. The basis of democracy in the Western mind is developed by the goals and means to achieve those goals. These goals are defined as social and economic justice and political freedom. This is the goal to be achieved in a society that economically, politically, and socially allows every citizen to improve his position without restrictions by others except through



fair competition. The goal of democracy in this kind of society is to achieve results that benefit as much as possible social welfare. (Tjiptoherijanto & Prijono, 1994)

The state of society like this is very mobile and dynamic with competition among people who are interested and have different opinions. An important way of democracy, namely participation, gives everyone the opportunity to express their wishes. As an example of the embodiment of democracy, it is the fact that almost all government policies are deliberately left open to receive views and opinions of the people (public opinion). Decisions are the result of a mixture of different opinions. People's opinion is not determined in advance, maybe it is only influenced. Decisions are not achieved only by consensus between a group of leaders in society.

The above picture is the ideal face of democracy. In this system, everyone has the right to have equal opportunities (equality of opportunity). But there is always a problem to achieve equality of results. This can destroy the democratic system mentioned above if the three aspects of democracy, namely social, economic, and political aspects, do not develop together. In other words, democracy can only be continued if there is a balance of power in everyone, both socially, politically, and economically. Meanwhile, this balance can only be achieved if everyone's activities are indeed directed to maintain equality.

To be able to measure the level of participation of the people of North Baumata Village, especially in the Village Deliberation, especially development planning, the participation ladder is measured. Arnstein in 1969 wrote an article titled A Ladder of Citizen Participation in the Journal of the American Institute Panners. Arnstein said that there are eight steps that are sorted from bottom to top as a form of participation, namely manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control.

Arnstein grouped the eight steps into three parts. The first part, non-participation (no participation) consists of Manipulation and Therapy. In this part, the ruler deliberately erases all forms of public participation. At the level of Manipulation, the ruler selects and educates several people as representatives of the public. Its function is that when the ruler proposes various programs and activities, the public representatives must always approve them. Meanwhile, the public was not informed about it at all.

**Table 1. Ladder of Democratic Participation**

8	Public Control
7	Delegation of Power
6	Partnership
5	Reassurance
4	Consultation
3	Information
2	Therapy
1	Manipulation

At the Therapy level, the ruler tells the public little about some of his programs that have been approved by public representatives. The public can only listen. The second part, Tokenism consists of Informing, Consultation and Placation. In Tokenism, the ruler creates an image, no longer hindering public participation. The reality may be different. Public participation exists, but often the rulers ignore it. The ruler still executed his original plan. When at the Inform level, the ruler informs various kinds of programs that will be and have been implemented.



However, it is only communicated in one direction, the public has not been able to communicate directly back and forth. For the Consultation level, the ruler discusses with many elements of the public about various issues and agendas. All suggestions and criticisms are listened to. But the ruler decides whether the advice and criticism from the public is used. Then at the Placacy level, the ruler promised to make various suggestions and criticisms from the public as a form of repression, even though what was decided was still the policy of the owner of power. In the third part, there are 3 (three forms), including partnership, delegated power and citizen control. This third part is included in the term citizen power. When public participation has reached citizen power, the ruler really prioritizes public participation in various matters. When they arrive at the partnership level, they treat the public like colleagues. They partner in designing and implementing various public policies. Rising to the level of delegated power, they delegate some of their authority to the public. For example, the public has veto rights in the decision-making process. The highest level is citizen control. The public is more dominating than them. Even to evaluate their performance. Ideal public participation is created at this level.

Democracy teaches deliberation, participation and equal access for all citizens to better discuss and determine the future direction of their village. Fellow residents in the village can dialogue with each other, and discuss the direction of policies, development programs and community empowerment in their villages, be it in the fields of education, health, employment, housing, facilities and other infrastructure that can support the improvement of the quality of residents' welfare.

## CONCLUSION

According to the author's analysis based on the various explanations above, it can be concluded that village deliberation is the peak of the decision-making system that applies in the village. The Village Meeting discusses matters that are strategic and must be attended by the Village community. Deliberation as a principle of village democracy is part of the recognition of local wisdom owned by the village community. This includes recognizing the characteristics of cooperation, togetherness, and collectivity. In the modern conception of democracy, deliberation is in line with the view of deliberative democracy that prioritizes debate in the public space. In deliberation, the intellect (not muscles) and clear minds typical of the village community guide the exchange of arguments. The difference is that if the debate in deliberative democracy departs from the experience space of the urban community, the exchange of arguments in deliberation takes place in the experience space of the village community in a smaller scope such as in North Baumata Village.

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