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Papuan Independence from a Natural Law Perspective: Between Self-Determination and State Sovereignty

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Abstract: *The demand for Papuan independence raises fundamental questions concerning the relationship between the right to self-determination, state sovereignty, and justice. This study aims to analyze the right to self-determination from the perspective of natural law philosophy, particularly John Locke's ideas, and to examine the demand for Papuan independence in relation to Indonesia's sovereignty. This research employs a normative legal method with philosophical, conceptual, and statutory approaches. Legal materials are collected through library research and analyzed qualitatively. The findings indicate that the right to self-determination is closely related to natural rights, individual freedom, and the legitimacy of political authority based on the consent of the governed. However, the exercise of this right does not automatically justify separation from an existing state. In the Papuan context, Indonesia possesses legal grounds for maintaining its territorial integrity, while its political authority must remain consistent with justice and the protection of fundamental rights. This study concludes that internal self-determination through meaningful autonomy, human rights protection, and public participation offers an approach to reconciling Papuan rights with Indonesian sovereignty.*

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of Papua remains a subject of ongoing debate concerning the relationship between state sovereignty, the protection of human rights, and demands for justice for the Papuan people. This issue is not limited to political and security matters but also concerns the state's obligation to guarantee and protect the fundamental rights of people under its jurisdiction. Within the United Nations' *Universal Periodic Review* (UPR) mechanism, human rights issues in Papua have been included in discussions on Indonesia's fulfillment of its human rights obligations, although attention to these issues continues to face several limitation.[1] This situation indicates that the issue of Papua has a human rights dimension that warrants further examination. From the perspective of legal philosophy, this issue raises questions concerning the relationship between the legitimacy of state power, the protection of people's rights, and the principle of justice underlying the exercise of governmental authority

One of the fundamental issues surrounding the demand for Papuan independence is the relationship between the right to self-determination and the principle of state sovereignty. The right to self-determination is a principle recognized under international law and is associated with the freedom of a people to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. In the context of Papua, the right to self-determination may be exercised through internal self-determination, without necessarily separating from the state.[2] Meanwhile, the exercise of external self-determination is subject to limitations under international law, particularly in relation to the

[1] Natalie Baird, "The Universal Periodic Review and West Papua: Beyond Invisibility?," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 32, no. 1 (2024): 24–60, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-bja10158.
[2] Indikum Nyamuk Wandikbo et al., "Hak Menentukan Nasib Sendiri (Right To Self Determination) Bagi Rakyat Papua Barat Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2005 Tentang Hak Sipil Dan Politik," *Jurnal Diskresi* 2, no. 2 (2023), https://doi.org/10.29303/diskresi.v2i2.3726.

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principle of the territorial integrity of states.[3] This distinction demonstrates that the recognition of the right to self-determination does not necessarily imply a right to establish an independent state.

The debate over Papua's political status cannot be separated from the history of its integration into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. One of the significant events in this process was the signing of the 1962 New York Agreement between Indonesia and the Netherlands, which regulated the transfer of administrative authority over Papua and the implementation of an act of self-determination. This process was subsequently followed by the 1969 Act of Free Choice (*Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat* or Pepera), which became a crucial part of the development of Papua's political status. Nevertheless, the implementation of Pepera continues to generate differing views regarding the legitimacy of Papua's integration into Indonesia. These differences concern how the history of integration is understood and invoked to establish political legitimacy by various parties holding divergent views on Papua's status.[4] This issue demonstrates that debates over Papua's integration concern not only legal recognition and political decisions but also questions of legitimacy and justice in the process of determining the status of a territory.

Questions surrounding the legitimacy of Papua's integration into Indonesia raise broader philosophical concerns about the relationship between the legality of state authority and the principle of justice. From a natural law perspective, the legal recognition of political power does not necessarily guarantee that its exercise conforms to the requirements of justice. John Locke's political philosophy provides a framework for understanding the relationship between political authority, natural law, and the public good, particularly in examining the limits and purposes of governmental power.[5] Through this perspective, the Papuan question can be examined not only in terms of its status under positive law but also by considering the extent to which the exercise of state authority reflects justice and safeguards the fundamental rights of the Papuan people.

Natural law is a school of legal philosophy that connects law with the principles of morality, rationality, and justice. Rather than understanding law solely as a set of rules established by the state, this perspective provides a basis for evaluating positive law against fundamental moral principles.[6] John Locke's political philosophy develops this perspective through the concept of natural rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and property, which individuals possess prior to the establishment of government.[7] These rights provide a moral foundation for examining the legitimacy of political authority and the obligations of government toward the people under its jurisdiction.

In Locke's political philosophy, the legitimacy of government is also associated with individual consent and the purpose of political authority. The concept of consent is relevant to understanding the relationship between individuals, political membership, and governmental power,[8] while the pursuit of the public good provides a basis for examining the purposes and limits of government.[9] Applied to the Papuan question, this philosophical perspective offers a framework for examining the relationship between state sovereignty, the right to self-determination, and the protection of fundamental rights. These concepts do not independently establish a right to secession but provide a basis for evaluating the

[3] Helena Torroja Mateu, "Self-Determination and Access to Independence under Current International Law: From Language to Concept," *Spanish Yearbook of International Law*, no. 27 (February 2024): 29–72, https://doi.org/10.36151/SYBIL.2024.002.
[4] Nino Viartasiwi, "The Politics of History in West Papua - Indonesia Conflict," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 26, no. 1 (2018): 141–59, https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2018.1445535.
[5] Philipp Schönegger, "The Lockean Prerogative, Natural Law, and Political Power," *Locke Studies* 20 (September 2020): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.5206/ls.2020.8056.
[6] John Finnis, "Natural Law: Practical Reason and Creative Information," *Frontiers of Law in China-Selected Publications from Chinese Universities* 15, no. 4 (2020): 373, https://doi.org/10.3868/s050-009-020-0022-2.
[7] John Locke, *John Locke Two Treatises of Government*, 1st ed., ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge University Press, 1988), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511810268.
[8] Jk Numao, "Locke on Consent, Membership and Emigration: A Reconsideration," *European Journal of Political Theory* 21, no. 2 (2022): 211–29, https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885119852709.
[9] Schönegger, "The Lockean Prerogative, Natural Law, and Political Power."

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legitimacy and exercise of political authority in relation to justice and the fundamental rights of the Papuan people.

Several previous studies have examined the Papua issue through various legal and political approaches. Research on the conflict between Papua and Indonesia has demonstrated that competing historical narratives play an important role in shaping political legitimacy and perceptions of Papua's integration process.[10] Another study examines the right to self-determination of the people of West Papua based on international human rights instruments concerning civil and political rights, emphasizing the possibility of exercising this right through internal self-determination.[11] Meanwhile, research on the theory of *remedial secession* highlights the issue of secession and its implications for the principle of Indonesia's territorial integrity.[12] In contrast to these studies, this article seeks to examine the demand for Papuan independence from the perspective of John Locke's natural law philosophy, particularly concerning the relationship between natural rights, the legitimacy of political authority, and justice. This approach is employed to provide a philosophical assessment of the relationship between the right to self-determination and the principle of state sovereignty.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the issue of Papuan independence warrants examination from the perspective of natural law philosophy to understand the relationship between the right to self-determination, the legitimacy of political authority, and the principle of state sovereignty. Accordingly, this study seeks to address two main research questions: how is the right to self-determination understood from the perspective of natural law philosophy, and how does natural law philosophy assess the demand for Papuan independence in relation to the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia? In line with these questions, this study aims to analyze the right to self-determination based on the principles of natural law, particularly through John Locke's political philosophy, and to examine the relationship between the demand for Papuan independence and state sovereignty in light of the principles of justice, natural rights, and the legitimacy of political authority.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs normative legal research with a descriptive-analytical design. It examines legal norms, principles, doctrines, and scholarly literature relevant to the relationship between the right to self-determination and state sovereignty from the perspective of natural law philosophy. The study uses philosophical, conceptual, and statutory approaches. The philosophical approach examines John Locke's ideas on natural law, natural rights, and the legitimacy of political authority. The conceptual approach explores the right to self-determination, state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and collective rights. The statutory approach examines relevant legal instruments, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Charter of the United Nations, and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), ratified by Indonesia through Law No. 12 of 2005. As this is a normative legal study, it does not involve a human population or respondent sample. Instead, the research focuses on legal materials selected purposively according to their relevance to the research questions. Primary legal materials consist of relevant legislation and international legal instruments governing self-determination and state sovereignty. Secondary legal materials include scholarly books, journal articles, and previous studies addressing natural law philosophy, John Locke's political thought, and self-

10 Viartasiwi, "The Politics of History in West Papua - Indonesia Conflict."

11 Indikum Nyamuk Wandikbo et al., "Hak Menentukan Nasib Sendiri (Right To Self Determination) Bagi Rakyat Papua Barat Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2005 Tentang Hak Sipil Dan Politik."

12 Heribertus Jaka Triyana, "Relevance of the Remedial Secession Theory for Indonesia's Territorial Integrity," *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 21, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol21.1.5.

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determination in the context of Papua. Tertiary legal materials, including legal dictionaries and encyclopedias, are used to clarify relevant legal terms and concepts.

Legal materials are collected through library research and document study by identifying, gathering, and examining relevant legal and scholarly sources. The collected materials are classified according to their relevance to the research questions and organized into analytical categories concerning natural law, the right to self-determination, state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the protection of collective rights. Since the study relies on documentary materials, it does not employ survey or interview instruments. Instead, a systematic classification of legal materials is used to support the examination and interpretation of the sources.

The collected materials are analyzed qualitatively through legal interpretation and conceptual analysis. The analysis examines the relevant legal provisions and doctrines in conjunction with the principles of natural law, particularly Locke's ideas on natural rights, political authority, and justice. The findings are then used to assess the relationship between the demand for Papuan independence and the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, with particular attention to the right to self-determination, the legitimacy of state authority, and the protection of fundamental rights.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. The Right to Self-Determination from the Perspective of Natural Law Philosophy

The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle of international law that recognizes the right of peoples to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. This principle has played a significant role in the decolonization process and is recognized in international legal instruments, including the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR).[13] Indonesia ratified the ICCPR through Law No. 12 of 2005 on the Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[14] Accordingly, self-determination provides a legal basis for examining the relationship between collective political freedom, state sovereignty, and the protection of fundamental rights.

From the perspective of natural law philosophy, the legitimacy of legal norms may be evaluated against principles of morality, rationality, and justice. Natural law provides a framework for assessing positive law according to fundamental moral principles that serve as standards for evaluating the exercise of political authority.[15] John Locke's political philosophy offers a relevant basis for this analysis through his conception of natural rights, particularly the rights to life, liberty, and property, which precede the establishment of government.[16] Within this framework, political authority must be examined not merely in terms of its formal legal recognition but also in relation to the protection of individual rights and the legitimacy of tis exercise. Applied to the right self-determination, this perspective raises questions about the relationship between the political aspirations of a community, the authority of the state, and the moral justification for governing a population.

The international legal framework for self-determination is reflected in the Charter of the United Nations and ICCPR. Article 1(2) of the UN Charter identifies the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people as a basis for developing friendly relations among nations. Article 73(b) addresses the development of self-government and the considerations of the political aspirations of

[13] Thontowi and Iskandar, *Hukum Internasional Kontemporer* (PT Refika Aditama, 2016).
[14] Republic of Indonesia, Law No.12 of 2005 concerning the Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2005 tentang Pengesahan International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Kovenan Internasional tentang Hak-Hak Sipil dan Politik)), Pub. L. No. 12 Tahun 2005, 119 Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia (2005), https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/40261/uu-no-12-tahun-2005.
[15] H. Lili Rasjidi and Ira Thania Rasjidi, *Dasar- Dasar Filasafat Dan Teori Hukum* (Penerbit PT Citra Aditya Bakti, 2004).
[16] Locke, *John Locke Two Treatises of Government*.

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peoples in Non-Self-Governing Territories administered by UN member states.[17] Article 1(1) of the ICCPR further provides that all peoples have the right to self-determination and may freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.[18] These provisions demonstrate the significance of self-determination in international law, although the applicability of particular provisions depends on the legal status and circumstances of the people or territory concerned.

The development of self-determination is closely associated with the decolonization process. The United Nations General Assembly's 1960 *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, adopted through Resolution 1514 (XV), affirmed the right of all peoples to self-determination and called for an end to colonialism. The Declaration also addresses the relationship between the exercise of this right and territorial integrity.[19] Its significance lies in recognizing the political aspirations of peoples under colonial domination while situating decolonization within the broader principles of international law. However, its historical role in decolonization does not, by itself, establish that every community within an existing state possesses an unrestricted right to secede.

In international law, the right to self-determination is commonly examined through its internal and external dimensions. Internal self-determination concerns the ability of a people to participate meaningfully in political affairs and pursue its economic, social, and cultural development within an existing state. External self-determination concerns the determination of a people's international political status and, in the context of decolonization, may include independence, free association, or integration with another state. The relationship between self-determination, non-intervention, and territorial integrity remains an important issue in international legal discourse.[20] Consequently, the recognition of self-determination must be distinguished from the separate question of whether a particular people possesses a legal entitlement to establish an independent state.

The philosophical dimension of this issue can be further examined through the relationship between territorial rights and political authority. Research on territory and self-determination highlights the importance of examining the justification for political authority over a territory and the claims of the communities inhabiting it.[21] This perspective demonstrates that territorial sovereignty involves not only the state's formal authority over a geographical area but also questions concerning the moral justification for exercising that authority. When considered alongside Locke's conception of natural rights, territorial authority can be examined in relation to the rights and interests of the people subject to governmental power. Nevertheless, a philosophical assessment of territorial legitimacy does not automatically determine the legal status of a territory under international law; that question must also be examined through the applicable legal instruments and historical circumstances.

The right to self-determination is also relevant to the collective rights of Indigenous peoples. The concept of *Indigenous sovereignty* provides a framework for examining Indigenous communities' claims concerning political participation, cultural preservation, collective identity, and self-government. Shrinkhal examines the relationship between Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, highlighting the importance of recognizing Indigenous peoples' rights within the broader framework of international law.[22] This perspective is relevant to Papua insofar as the protection of collective rights and the meaningful participation of Indigenous communities are important considerations in assessing

[17] *Charter of the United Nations* (United Nations, 1945), https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text.
[18] *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (United Nations, 1966).
[19] United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, 1514 (XV) (1960).
[20] Charles Okeke, *In Search of Consistency in International Law on the Right to Self-Determination, Non-Interference, and Territorial Integrity*, 34 (2022).
[21] Anna Stilz, "Territory and Self-Determination," *Annual Review of Political Science* 27, no. 1 (2024): 337–54, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-045000.
[22] Rashwet Shrinkhal, "'Indigenous Sovereignty' and Right to Self-Determination in International Law: A Critical Appraisal," *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 17, no. 1 (2021): 71–82, https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180121994681.

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the exercise of state authority. However, recognition of Indigenous collective rights does not automatically establish a right to secession. Rather, it provides a basis for examining how collective political, social, and cultural interests can be protected within the relevant legal and political framework.

In the context of West Papua, internal self-determination offers one approach to understanding how this right may be realized without necessarily requiring separation from Indonesia. Wandikbo and his co-authors discuss the possibility of realizing self-determination through arrangements that allow the Papuan people to exercise greater authority over their political, economic, social, and cultural development.[23] This approach emphasizes that self-determination extends beyond the establishment of an independent state and also concerns meaningful political participation and the ability of a community to influence decisions affecting its collective future.

The Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly its first paragraph, recognizes that independence is the right of all peoples.[24] This principle reflects an understanding of independence as a fundamental right rather than a privilege granted by colonial powers. However, its application to Papua's present political status must be examined alongside the relevant historical circumstances and applicable legal provisions. The constitutional principle does not, by itself, resolve the separate legal question of whether a particular group within an existing state possesses a right to external self-determination or secession.

Taken together, natural law philosophy and international law provide complementary perspectives for assessing the demand for Papuan independence. Locke's conception of natural rights offers a philosophical basis for examining the legitimacy of political authority and its relationship to the rights of the people. International law provides the framework for evaluating self-determination alongside state sovereignty and territorial integrity, while the perspectives of Okeke, Stilz, and Shrinkhal help clarify the relationship between these principles, territorial authority, and collective rights. Accordingly, the demand for Papuan independence must be examined by distinguishing the moral legitimacy of political authority from the separate legal question of whether a right to external self-determination or secession exists in the circumstances concerned. This approach also enables an assessment of internal self-determination, political participation, and the protection of fundamental and collective rights as relevant considerations in reconciling the aspirations of the Papuan people with Indonesia's sovereignty.

b. A Natural Law Perspective on Papuan Independence and the Sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia

Those advocating Papuan independence generally question the legitimacy of the 1969 Act of Free Choice (Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat or Pepera). The 1962 New York Agreement stipulated that all adult inhabitants, both male and female, were entitled to participate in the act of self-determination in accordance with international practice (Agreement Between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands Concerning West New Guinea.[25] In practice, the Act of Free Choice was conducted between July 14 and August 2, 1969, through a system of deliberation involving 1,026 members of the Act of Free Choice Consultative Council across eight regencies, rather than through a direct, one-person-one-vote referendum. Papuan nationalists argue that the representatives involved in the process were selected by the Indonesian military and that the New York Agreement itself was

23 Indikum Nyamuk Wandikbo et al., "Hak Menentukan Nasib Sendiri (Right To Self Determination) Bagi Rakyat Papua Barat Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2005 Tentang Hak Sipil Dan Politik."
[24] Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945 (Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945), https://www.mkri.id.
[25] Agreement Between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands Concerning West New Guinea (West Irian), United Nations Treaty Series 273 (1962).

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concluded without the participation of Indigenous Papuans.[26] The process has consequently been criticized for failing to reflect the free choice of the Papuan people.[27] From the perspective of natural law, this argument raises a fundamental question concerning whether the consent of the people concerned was genuinely expressed. If such consent was compromised, the legitimacy of Papua's integration could be questioned on moral grounds even if it was formally recognized as legally valid. Furthermore, allegations of continuing human rights violations in Papua may, within Locke's philosophical framework, be interpreted as indications of the state's failure to protect the natural rights of its people.

The Indonesian government, by contrast, relies on substantial grounds under positive law and international law. On November 19, 1969, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2504 (XXIV), which took note of the results of the Act of Free Choice and expressed appreciation for the role of the Secretary-General and his representative. The Indonesian government interprets this resolution as international recognition of Papua's integration into Indonesia. In addition, the Indonesian Constitutional Court, through Decision No. 35/PUU-XVII/2019, rejected a petition that essentially sought to challenge the 1969 Act of Free Choice as an international legal event that had been recognized through Resolution 2504. The principle of *uti possidetis juris*, applied in the context of decolonization, provides that the boundaries of a newly independent state generally follow those of its preceding colonial territory. Under this principle, Papua, as part of the former Netherlands East Indies, falls within the territorial boundaries inherited by Indonesia. Recent journal scholarship further argues that, following the adoption of Resolution 2504, Papua ceased to be an official agenda item at the United Nations, unlike Timor-Leste, whose status remained an international issue until its independence. Constitutionally, Article 1(1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia establishes Indonesia as a unitary state, while Article 25A defines the country's character as an archipelagic state. The Indonesian government has also pursued internal self-determination through Law No. 21 of 2001 on Special Autonomy for the Province of Papua,[28] as subsequently amended by Law No. 2 of 2021.[29] Indonesian legal scholarship has likewise rejected the existence of a right for Papua to establish an independent state under the applicable criteria of international law.

From the perspective of natural law, these legal and historical foundations cannot be disregarded. The principle of bonum commune, or the common good, encompasses stability, peace, and the integrity of an established political community. Accordingly, secession undertaken without careful consideration of its consequences, particularly where it risks causing greater suffering, may conflict with the purposes of law itself.

Contemporary international law does not recognize a general unilateral right of secession for groups within independent states, although it does not expressly prohibit every instance of secession. Secession may be considered a remedy of last resort when a people is subjected to colonial rule, severe oppression, or meaningful exclusion from governmental participation that prevents the realization of internal self-determination.[30] This doctrine is particularly relevant to natural law because it reflects a modern interpretation of the principle that severe tyranny may justify resistance to political authority.

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[26] Untung Suropati, "Solusi Komprehensif Menuju Papua Baru: Penyelesaian Konflik Papua Secara Damai, Adil Dan Bermartabat," *Jurnal Lemhannas RI* 7, no. 1 (2020): 73–89, https://doi.org/10.55960/jlri.v7i1.52.

[27] Pieter Drooglever, *Tindakan Pilihan Bebas!: Orang Papua dan Penentuan Nasib Sendiri* (Penerbit Kanisius, 2010).

28 Republic of Indonesia, Law No.21 of 2001 on Special Autonomy for the Province of Papua (Undang-Undang tentang Otonomi Khusus bagi Provinsi Papua).,Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2001 Nomor 135, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 4151 https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/44901/uu-no-21-tahun-2001.

29 Republic of Indonesia, (Law No. 2 of 2021 on the Second Amendment to Law No. 21 of 2001 on Special Autonomy for the Province of Papua (Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2021 tentang Perubahan Kedua atas Undang-Undang Nomor 21 Tahun 2001)., Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2021 Nomor 155, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 6697 https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/172403/uu-no-2-tahun-2021.

[30] Reference Re Secession of Quebec, 2 S.C.R 217 (Supreme Court of Canada 1998).

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Both Aquinas and Locke establish demanding thresholds for such resistance. Aquinas allows resistance to unjust laws while emphasizing the need to consider the consequences for public order, whereas Locke maintains that people do not readily abandon an established government unless abuses are prolonged, severe, and affect a substantial part of the population.

A natural law perspective therefore neither automatically validates the demand for Papuan independence nor automatically justifies its rejection. Normatively, Indonesia's sovereignty over Papua has substantial legal foundations. Nevertheless, natural law requires sovereignty to be exercised consistently with justice. Its legitimacy must therefore be continually strengthened through the protection of the fundamental rights of Indigenous Papuans, the resolution of alleged human rights violations, the fulfillment of welfare needs, and meaningful participation in decision-making. As long as these conditions are fulfilled, the right to self-determination may be realized internally within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Conversely, if severe injustice persists and internal avenues for self-determination become inaccessible, natural law may provide a basis for considering more far-reaching claims. A study by the National Resilience Institute of the Republic of Indonesia (Lemhannas) identifies five underlying issues in Papua: the history of integration, violence and human rights violations, failures in development, inconsistencies in special autonomy policies, and security-oriented approaches. The study considers dialogue to be the most effective means of addressing these issues.[31]

CONCLUSION

1. The right to self-determination is grounded in human freedom, equality, and dignity. From John Locke's natural law perspective, legitimate government must obtain the consent of the governed and protect their natural rights.
2. Under international law, self-determination encompasses both external self-determination, which may involve independence, and internal self-determination, which allows peoples to determine their political, economic, social, and cultural development within an existing state.
3. The demand for Papuan independence raises questions about the legitimacy of the 1969 Act of Free Choice (*Pepera*). Nevertheless, Indonesia maintains legal grounds for its sovereignty over Papua, including United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2504 (XXIV), the principle of *uti possidetis juris*, and its constitutional framework.
4. Natural law neither automatically justifies nor rejects Papuan independence. Instead, it requires state sovereignty to be exercised consistently with justice, human rights, and the protection of Indigenous Papuans.
5. Internal self-determination through meaningful autonomy, equitable development, human rights protection, and public participation offers a potential approach to reconciling the rights of the Papuan people with Indonesia's territorial integrity and the common good (*bonum commune*).

SUGGESTION

1. For the Indonesian Government: The government should implement Papua's Special Autonomy consistently and comprehensively while improving public welfare in the economic, educational, healthcare, social, and cultural sectors, with the participation of Indigenous Papuans in decision-making.

[31] Suropati, "Solusi Komprehensif Menuju Papua Baru."

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2. Regarding Human Rights Protection: The government should address allegations of human rights violations in Papua fairly, transparently, and accountably as an expression of justice and the protection of fundamental human rights.
3. For the Government and Relevant Stakeholders: Open and continuous dialogue involving Indigenous communities, religious leaders, and various elements of Papuan society is necessary to resolve conflicts and differences of opinion peacefully.
4. For the Public and Academic Community: Further research on the right to self-determination from the perspectives of natural law philosophy and international law is needed to promote an objective understanding of the balance between the rights of the Papuan people and the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

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