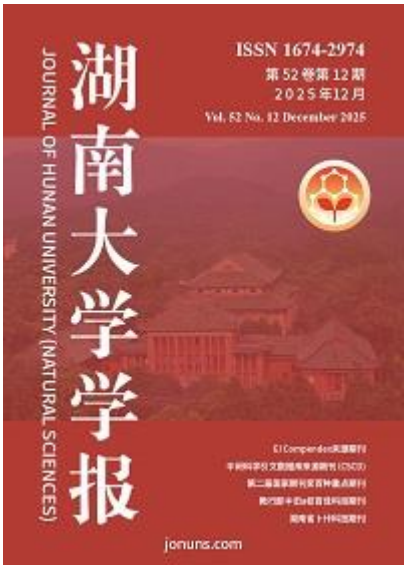

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Determinants of Separatism Vulnerability in Papua: Developing an Index for National Security Early Warning and Decision-Making

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Abstract: The article aims to identify determinants of a Papua Separatism Vulnerability Index and to outline foundations for a predictive National Security Early Warning System rooted in local realities. The article describes a context-based Separatism Vulnerability Index (SVI) integrating governance, identity politics, and early warning functions, based on qualitative field evidence and review of regulations and early warning frameworks, enabling risk mapping for early detection and response. Using a descriptive qualitative design with interviews (n=9), observations in Jayapura and Manokwari, and NVivo 12 coding, the authors found that vulnerability is driven by development gaps, structural inequality, governance failures, Melanesian identity politics, digital disinformation, and intergenerational ideological reproduction. The results illustrate that limited healthcare access, weak local food security, and inadequate dissemination of the uti possidetis juris principle further deepen distrust and instability. The method for effectiveness evaluation is confirmed by triangulating interviews, observations, and documents within risk assessment, monitoring, analysis and communication, and response capability. New research results support building an SVI and can be used by national and local authorities to strengthen proactive early warning and conflict

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prevention. This paper is novel because it operationalizes a Papua-specific SVI by consolidating governance, identity, and early warning determinants into one context-sensitive framework.

Keywords: Papua; separatism; vulnerability index; early warning system; national security; governance; identity politics; digital disinformation; structural inequality; social stability; conflict prevention; public trust.

巴布亚分离主义脆弱性的决定因素：构建面向国家安全早期预警与决策的脆弱性指数

摘要：

本文旨在识别“巴布亚分离主义脆弱性指数”（Separatism Vulnerability Index, SVI）的决定因素，并提出以地方现实为基础的国家安全预测性早期预警系统的构建思路。本文提出 种情境化的SVI框架，将治理、身份政治与预警功能整合于同 指标体系之中；该框架基于定性田野证据，并结合相关法规及早期预警框架的文献梳理，从而支持风险制图与早期识别及响应。研究采用描述性质性研究设计，通过访谈（n=9）、在查亚普拉（Jayapura）与马诺夸里（Manokwari）的现场观察，并运用NVivo 12进行编码分析。研究发现，脆弱性主要由发展差距、结构性不平等、治理失灵、梅拉尼西亚身份政治、数字虚假信息传播以及意识形态的代际再生产所驱动。结果进 步表明，医疗服务可及性不足、地方粮食安全政策支持薄弱，以及对“既得疆界原则”（uti possidetis juris）传播不充分，会加深不信任与不稳定。通过在风险评估、监测、分析与沟通以及响应能力等环节对访谈、观察与文献资料进行三角互证，本文的方法有效性得到确认。研究结果为构建SVI提供了经验基础，可为国家与地方主管部门强化前瞻性预警与冲突预防提供依据。本文的创新性在于，将治理、身份与预警相关的关键决定因素整合为一个面向巴布亚情境的、敏感且可操作的SVI框架。

关键词：

巴布亚；分离主义；脆弱性指数；早期预警系统；国家安全；治理；身份政治；数字虚假信息；结构性不平等；社会稳定；冲突预防；公共信任。

1. Introduction

The dynamics of separatism in Indonesia, particularly in Papua, indicate that threats to national integrity are no longer singular or purely military in nature, but multidimensional and cross-domain [1]. Vulnerability emerges through interacting social, political, economic, cultural, and identity-based conditions and is further shaped by developments in the contemporary information environment [2]. Escalating violence, resistance to state policies, strategic manipulation of ethnic identity, persistent social inequality, and the proliferation of hoaxes and digitally mediated disinformation underscore an urgent governance need: an objective, integrated, and data-driven measurement instrument capable of mapping separatism vulnerability with sufficient granularity to support prevention, mitigation, and strategic decision-making [3].

A growing body of evidence from various national contexts suggests that standardized composite indexes can strengthen Early Warning Systems (EWS) by enabling earlier recognition of destabilizing trajectories, facilitating interagency coordination, and supporting consistent prioritization across regions [4]. Yet Indonesia currently lacks a standardized Separatism Vulnerability Index that can serve as a shared analytical foundation for national security planning—despite the operational importance of translating heterogeneous signals (e.g., grievances, inequality, identity polarization, service gaps, and information disorders) into an interpretable risk picture. In the absence of such a common framework, policy responses tend to remain reactive, fragmented, and delayed in anticipating emerging tensions, particularly when escalation dynamics unfold simultaneously across domains [5]. The need is therefore not merely conceptual; it is practical and time-sensitive: without a standardized vulnerability instrument, early warning architectures lack a core component for consistent monitoring and decision triggers [5,6].

Empirical observations in Papua further motivate this agenda. Indonesia has yet to institutionalize an official index to measure separatism vulnerability, and existing policy responses are not consistently embedded within an integrated early warning architecture [7]. Violent incidents persist, alongside resistance to development initiatives and sustained disinformation dynamics in digital spaces [8]. Identity-based sentiment particularly narratives linked to Melanesian affiliation continues to function as a vehicle for social and political mobilization in specific localities, while persistent disparities and limited access to education, healthcare, and food security may deepen perceptions of injustice among local communities. [8,9] Coordination between security institutions and local governments remains suboptimal, contributing to slow or insufficient early detection and weakening timely preventive intervention [9]. These conditions collectively imply that separatism vulnerability in Papua should be conceptualized as a multidimensional risk state, shaped by reinforcing interactions rather than single-factor causes. [1–3,8,9]

A key methodological and policy challenge concerns how to treat exogenous factors without over-claiming causality. In this study, *external influence* is not assumed as direct "intervention" by default; instead, it is treated operationally as observable exogenous informational and networked stimuli that may shape perceptions and mobilization dynamics particularly through narrative diffusion, digitally mediated campaigns, and cross-regional connectivity where measurable indicators exist [2,8]. This framing is designed to maintain empirical discipline and reduce interpretive overreach: the index and the accompanying analytical framework incorporate external influence only as operationalized signals in the information environment and network linkages, rather than as an a priori causal assertion [3,10].

The study adopts a multidisciplinary theoretical framework to explain why vulnerability may intensify under such interacting conditions.

Within this theoretical synthesis, the research problem arises from the complexity of separatism vulnerability in Papua as an interacting risk system. The study addresses four central questions: (1) what factors constitute separatism vulnerability in Papua; (2) how social, political, economic, cultural, health, food security, and geopolitical elements interact in reinforcing such vulnerability; (3) how the determinants of the Separatism Vulnerability Index can be formulated as an empirical instrument to guide strategic decision-making; and (4) how the vulnerability index can serve as a foundation for developing a predictive, responsive, and evidence-based Early Warning System to anticipate separatism escalation. [10] These questions reflect the core analytical requirement: moving from descriptive narratives toward a structured, measurable, and operational framework that can be used consistently by relevant institutions. [3–6]

Accordingly, this study aims to identify and analyze the principal determinants of separatism vulnerability in Papua-Indonesia; elucidate the interactions among variables influencing vulnerability levels; construct an empirically and theoretically grounded Separatism Vulnerability Index; develop a comprehensive national security Early Warning System model; and provide strategic policy recommendations enabling the government to design more targeted, humanistic, and effective interventions to strengthen social stability and national security [11]. Importantly, the intended contribution is not limited to producing a numerical index; rather, the index is designed to function as an operational layer in an early warning architecture. Conceptually, the index is positioned to support: (i) systematic multi-domain monitoring, (ii) transparent risk classification based on empirically justified thresholds (specified in the methodological section), and (iii) predefined interagency decision triggers linked to risk levels, thereby strengthening coordination and timeliness [5,6,10,11]. This positioning is intended to reduce fragmentation by providing a common measurement language that aligns detection, interpretation, and response across institutions. [6,9]

The novelty of this study lies in the development of a comprehensive Separatism Vulnerability Index that synthesizes social, political, health, food security, and security determinants into a single predictive framework that has not previously been formulated in the literature as an integrated, measurable instrument for early warning and national security decision-making [11]. By integrating multidomain determinants within a structured vulnerability framework, the study addresses a clear gap in the state of the art: the lack of a specific, operationalizable measurement tool to support proactive governance in the Indonesian context, particularly in Papua. [4,7,10,11]

This study makes four contributions. First, theoretical, it advances a multidimensional conceptualization of separatism vulnerability by integrating structural conflict drivers, social movement mobilization mechanisms, security dilemma dynamics, and ideological reproduction into a single explanatory frame appropriate for index construction. Second, methodological, it operationalizes these determinants into a standardized index architecture designed for comparability across space and time and suitable for integration into early warning systems. [3–5,10,11] Third, it provides a measurement-based foundation for proactive national security planning and interagency coordination, supporting earlier detection and more targeted, humanistic interventions. [6,9,11] Fourth, practical decision support, it links vulnerability measurement to an early warning logic risk classification and response triggers so that monitoring

outputs can be translated into actionable institutional routines rather than remaining purely descriptive. [5,6,10,11]

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section presents the methodological design, including indicator selection and operationalization, index construction procedures, and the proposed logic for embedding the index within an early warning architecture. The results section reports the empirical findings and the derived index structure, followed by a discussion of implications for policy, prevention, and national security governance. The paper concludes with limitations and directions for future research.

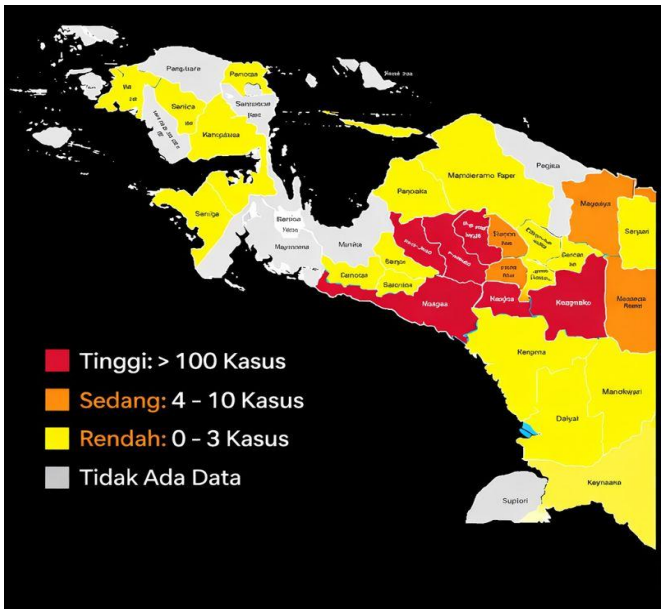
2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach [12]. Data source from the primary data were collected through in depth interviews with nine informants. Of these, five were key figures representing diverse social structures in Papua namely traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and local government officials. The remaining four informants were community members selected to capture grassroots perspectives on the dynamics of separatism, the circulation of hoaxes, and public perceptions of government policies[13]. The diversity of informants was intentionally designed to ensure broader representativeness so that the findings reflect the plurality of social experiences and interpretations observed in the field. In addition to interviews, primary data were also obtained through direct field observations to document actual social conditions, community interactions, infrastructural access, and local dynamics relevant to the research problem[12].

Next data source by the literature review draws on Law No. 3 of 2002 on State Defense, which mandates that national defense must be organized comprehensively to address both military and non-military threats through early detection and coordinated national preparedness. In addition, this study refers to the conceptual framework developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002) through its Early Warning and Response Handbook, which outlines four fundamental components of an effective early warning system: risk assessment, monitoring, analysis and communication, and response capability. These frameworks collectively provide the normative and methodological foundation for constructing a systematic and anticipatory security early warning mechanism.

The data analysis technique integrates theoretical interpretation, insights from prior studies, and analytic processing using NVivo 12. The NVivo based analysis began with data input, followed by systematic coding, categorization, thematic extraction, and interpretation to formulate the analytical narrative presented in the findings[14].

The research was conducted in two primary locations Jayapura City in *Papua* Province and Manokwari City in *Papua Barat* Province, *Indonesia* selected for their contextual relevance to the sociopolitical dynamics under study.



Data Source: Website, 2025.

Figure 1. Map of Indonesian Papua Vulnerable to Separatist Ideologies

The map illustrates that the areas highlighted in red, particularly within the Central Highlands of *Papua,* represent zones with a high level of separatism vulnerability, reflecting severe limitations in essential public services such as healthcare, education, food security, safety, and infrastructure[15]. These structural deficiencies are frequently exploited by separatist groups as instruments of propaganda to discredit the government and to advance separatist narratives that contradict national development efforts aimed at promoting progress and strengthening social resilience across Indonesia, especially in Papua[16]. Consequently, the red marked regions function as ideological hotspots, where separatist ideas tend to proliferate more rapidly and intensively compared with other areas in Papua[17].

3. Results and Discussion

In the Results and Discussion section of this study, the researcher will present the findings from interviews, field observations, and literature reviews, which are visualized through an NVivo 12 word cloud to analyze key themes emerging from the in depth interviews and reinforced by observational and documentary evidence[18].

Figure 2. Results of Interview and Observation Analysis Using NVivo 12 Word Cloud

3.1. Results

Field interviews, direct observations, literature reviews, and prior studies demonstrate that the dynamics of separatism in Papua cannot be separated from the region structural conditions, particularly in the Central Highlands, where severe limitations in basic public facilities persist. Separatist actions most often manifesting in forms of humanitarian violence largely occur in geographically remote areas with extremely limited transportation infrastructure and markedly inadequate access to education and health services compared with other regions. These circumstances reflect a persistent development gap that not only restricts physical accessibility but also shapes public perceptions that the state has not been present in an equitable and substantive manner[19].

Interviews with various participants reveal that segments of the population continue to be influenced by separatist narratives circulating in digital spaces, which frequently depict the conflict in simplistic and emotional terms, detached from factual realities. Such hoaxes reinforce distrust toward the government, particularly when combined with grievances about uneven development, discrimination, and alleged human rights violations by security forces issues systematically exploited by separatist actors as instruments to delegitimize the state[20].

The empirical findings further highlight the complex interplay between central government policies, local governance practices, and separatist propaganda strategies. Special Autonomy originally designed as an affirmative measure to improve the welfare of Papuans is generally acknowledged as providing broader fiscal and political space for the region. Nevertheless, its implementation is widely perceived as suboptimal due to mismanagement and lack of transparency among segments of the local elite. This situation produces a dual frustration: communities perceive that governmental development efforts have not materialized concretely, while local elites who should articulate and defend community aspirations are seen as prioritizing personal and group interests. Such conditions create fertile ground for separatist actors and their sympathizers to reinforce the narrative that the state and governance structures do not genuinely serve the interests of the Papuan[21].

Identity based propaganda rooted in Melanesian consciousness further amplifies the resonance of these narratives. Melanesian identity is deployed not only as a symbol of cultural distinctiveness but also as a political instrument for building regional solidarity with member states of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), thereby strengthening international legitimacy for separatist claims[22]. This phenomenon underscores that the Papua conflict is no longer a purely domestic issue of *Indonesia* but increasingly intertwined with the broader geopolitical configuration of the Pacific region[23].

In addition, the interviews emphasize the urgent need for a more inclusive dialogical approach that substantively involves customary leaders, religious figures, women's groups, youth leaders, and local communities as subjects rather than objects of conflict resolution. Participants consistently argue that addressing the varied social, political, and developmental issues in Papua requires structured, honest, and continuous dialogue between the government and the people. The government's limited dissemination of the uti possidetis juris principle which forms the legal foundation of Papua's integration into the Republic of Indonesia reflects a significant communication gap that separatist groups readily exploit to cultivate doubts regarding *Papua* political status[24].

Only a small portion of society understands the meaning, function, and relevance of uti possidetis juris within the framework of international law, leaving considerable room for information manipulation and the construction of negative perceptions. Furthermore, regional governments in Papua are widely viewed as having failed to fulfill their mandated role as extensions of the central government. Their lack of initiative in responding to separatism related issues reflects weak institutional capacity and insufficient synergy between central and local authorities in formulating coherent response strategies [25].

The findings also highlight the importance of improving health services in remote Papuan regions, enhancing maternal health, and strengthening local food systems particularly through commodities such as cassava, taro, and sago to accelerate community health, nutrition, and food sovereignty. Interviews further indicate that the persistence of separatist groups is

strongly influenced by the intergenerational transmission of separatist ideas, intentionally maintained as a strategy to sustain and expand separatist ideology in *Papua*[26].

Overall, the convergence of field interviews, direct observations, prior studies, and literature analysis demonstrates that separatism in Papua is the product of layered interactions among structural conditions, governance failures, identity dynamics, digital information flows, and misaligned communication between the state and society. This constellation demands policy approaches that are comprehensive, participatory, and highly sensitive to local socio-cultural contexts in order to manage and gradually de-escalate the conflict in a sustainable and socially legitimate manner[27].

3.2. Discussion

In this discussion, the study analyzes its findings by drawing on data obtained from interviews, field observations, and the literature review. These empirical results are then examined in relation to the theoretical frameworks employed in the research, both to provide a solid conceptual foundation and to strengthen the validity and interpretive depth of the research conclusions**.**

3.2.1. *Main of Findings of the Study*

The findings reveal that separatism vulnerability in *Papua* is shaped by an interconnected set of multidimensional determinants, encompassing structural underdevelopment, governance failures at both central and local levels, weak public service provision, and the influence of identity based propaganda and digital information flows. Deficiencies in transportation infrastructure, low quality education and healthcare including maternal health services and insufficient local food security constitute critical indicators that heighten social and economic vulnerability. Failures in the implementation of Special Autonomy, limited transparency among local elites, and weak governmental capacity have deepened public distrust, which separatist groups exploit through hoaxes, misinformation, politicization of Melanesian identity, and geopolitical linkages to the Pacific region. Moreover, inadequate dissemination of the uti possidetis juris principle has widened the space for delegitimizing the state[28].

3.2.2. Determinants of Vulnerability through the Lens of Conflict Theory

The study demonstrates that Papua's structural deprivation characterized by limited basic facilities, poor access to healthcare, education, transportation, and persistent development disparities constitutes a foundational source of separatism vulnerability consistent with Marxian analysis. Marx argues that conflict arises from structural inequality and unjust distribution of resources; thus, Papua chronic underdevelopment generates material deprivation, fostering alienation and deep mistrust toward the state. Inequalities in public service provision, the mismanagement of Special Autonomy funds, and the state's limited substantive presence exacerbate perceptions that the government has failed to meet fundamental societal needs. These conditions produce structural grievances collective feelings of injustice which become primary determinants within the Separatism Vulnerability Index, amplifying the potential for resistance and support for separatist ideas as expressions of structural dissatisfaction[29].

Through the perspectives of Lewis Coser and Ralf Dahrendorf both of whom view conflict as emerging from social tensions and power asymmetries the findings indicate that interactions among central government policies, local elite behavior, and separatist identity propaganda create a complex conflict landscape. Dahrendorf posits that conflict arises from misalignment between authority holders and groups excluded from decision making processes; this dynamic is visible in the misuse of Special Autonomy by local elites, who fail to represent public interests[30].

Coser emphasizes that conflict can be intensified through symbolic identity processes. In the *Papua* context, Melanesian identity functions as a political instrument for mobilization and regional solidarity, thereby deepening societal dissatisfaction vis a vis the state. Digital hoaxes, propaganda, and the dissemination of separatist narratives compounded by weak socialization of the uti possidetis juris principle strengthen perceived injustice and social disharmony. These elements form significant determinants within the Separatism Vulnerability Index as they create psychosocial conditions that separatist actors readily exploit, further exacerbating instability and posing serious implications for national security[31].

3.2.3.Determinants of the Vulnerability Index Based on Social Movement Theory

The findings indicate that separatism vulnerability in *Papua* is profoundly shaped by the capacity of separatist groups to mobilize social action through narratives of injustice, ethnic identity, and transnational networks of solidarity. Tilly asserts that social movements evolve through organized collective action anchored in structural grievances perceived as real by affected communities; in the Papuan context, chronic underdevelopment, inadequate basic services, and perceptions of discrimination serve as grievance reservoirs exploited by separatist actors to broaden their support base. McAdam further explains that mass mobilization strengthens when political opportunity structures emerge conditions observable in Papua through weak local governance, the non transparent implementation of Special Autonomy, and its misuse by

segments of the local elite, all of which increase societal susceptibility to separatist influence[32].

In *Papua* case, Melanesian identity and its political propagation function as a powerful cultural frame that reinforces internal solidarity while generating external legitimacy through Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) support. The unregulated flow of digital information including hoaxes and disinformation intensifies mobilization by producing emotional resonance that makes separatist narratives appear more legitimate and urgent. International networks through diaspora activists, foreign students studying in Indonesia, and individuals affiliated with separatist groups amplify the movement's capacity to frame allegations of human rights violations and structural injustice on a global stage[33].

3.2.4.Determinants of Vulnerability Based on Security Dilemma Theory

In the Papuan context, the study reveals that state security policies aimed at maintaining stability are often perceived negatively by segments of the local population, particularly in structurally marginalized and remote regions. The presence of large numbers of security personnel, law enforcement operations, and instances of coercive action are viewed not as protective measures but as instruments of control and intimidation. Such perceptions of threat generate a psychological distance between society and the state an opening that separatist actors exploit to construct the narrative that the Indonesian state does not side with the Papuan people. This form of social resistance becomes a critical determinant in the Separatism Vulnerability Index, illustrating that security responses lacking humanistic and dialogical approaches may inadvertently strengthen support for separatist movements and deepen national security instability[34].

3.2.5.Determinants of Vulnerability Based on National Security Theory

Separatism vulnerability is an accumulation of non-military factors, including structural underdevelopment, weak public service delivery, governance failures, politicized Melanesian identity, and the penetration of digital narratives that erode public trust in the state[35]. Public health dimensions particularly low access to maternal health, inadequate basic healthcare, and fragile local food security (sago, cassava, taro) further intensify vulnerability by directly affecting community well being and perceptions of state presence. Buzan and Baldwin argue that such factors constitute integral components of national security threats; thus, they must be incorporated as core determinants within the Separatism Vulnerability Index. From this multidimensional perspective, separatism cannot be addressed solely through military means or law enforcement by the police; instead, it requires comprehensive interventions encompassing human development, strengthened public services, improved governance, and inclusive national identity building as essential components of an effective National Security Early Warning System.

3.2.6.Determinants of Vulnerability Based on the Principle of Uti Possidetis Juris

One major determinant of separatism vulnerability in *Indonesia* is the public's limited understanding of the uti possidetis juris principle an international legal doctrine affirming that postcolonial states inherit territorial boundaries as they existed at the moment of independence. In the *Papu*a context, the study shows that the majority of the population is unfamiliar with the legal basis for *Papua* integration into the Republic of Indonesia, creating an informational vacuum exploited by separatist groups to advance narratives delegitimizing the state. The lack of systematic dissemination by central and local governments, as well as the security apparatus, has produced legal ambiguities at the community level and reinforced the perception that *Papua* political status remains contestable. This becomes a significant determinant within the Separatism Vulnerability Index, as gaps in public legal literacy enable manipulation, broaden support for separatist narratives, and weaken state legitimacy in the eyes of local communities.

The communication gap between the state and society, coupled with limited understanding of international legal principles, intensifies multidimensional separatism vulnerability. Sustained, community-based dissemination of the uti possidetis juris principle is essential for strengthening public comprehension of the legal legitimacy of Papua's integration and for countering separatist propaganda. Within the framework of the National Security Early Warning System, low legal awareness constitutes a critical vulnerability indicator that must be continuously monitored due to its potential to trigger ideological and political escalation if not addressed through effective legal education.

3.2.7.Determinants of Vulnerability Based on the Health Dimension

The study finds that poor health outcomes in remote Papuan regions particularly concerning maternal health, community nutrition, and limited access to medical services constitute an important determinant of separatism vulnerability. Weak health service provision and minimal state intervention in remote communities reinforce perceptions that the state is absent or inequitable in fulfilling basic needs.

3.2.8.Determinants of Vulnerability Based on Ideological Regeneration

The persistence of separatist ideology in Papua is reinforced through deliberate intergenerational transmission, functioning as a conscious strategy to ensure the longevity of the movement. The

strengthening of separatist ideas is achieved through the transfer of narratives of injustice, reproduction of identity symbols, and cultivation of collective memory about conflict systematically targeted at younger generations. This ideological regeneration demonstrates that separatism in Papua is not solely a structural issue but also a cultural and ideological phenomenon deeply rooted within community dynamics..

The continuation of separatist ideology is thus a critical determinant in constructing the Vulnerability Index, indicating a long term risk influenced not only by material conditions but also by psychological, identity based, and value laden factors at the community level. Within the perspective of the National Security Early Warning System, this phenomenon constitutes a strategic indicator requiring intensive monitoring, as it possesses significant potential to trigger conflict escalation and prolong the cycle of instability in Papua.

3.2.9.Analysis of Vulnerability Index Determinants Based on Food Security

This condition is exacerbated by weak food security, particularly the underutilization of local food resources such as cassava, taro, and sago, which in fact hold substantial potential to improve nutrition and strengthen community level food sovereignty in *Papua.* Deficits in public health and low levels of food security not only affect societal well being but also shape public perceptions of the state legitimacy. Within the framework of the Separatism Vulnerability Index, these factors constitute critical socio-economic indicators for assessing the risk level of conflict and instability.

3.2.10.Analysis of Vulnerability Index Determinants Based on Ideological Reproduction Theory.

The persistence of separatist ideology across generations reflects a deliberate strategy employed by separatist groups to ensure the continuity of the movement. The strengthening of separatist ideas is facilitated through the transmission of narratives of injustice, the reproduction of identity symbols, and the embedding of collective memories of conflict, systematically directed at younger generations. This process demonstrates that separatism in Papua is not solely a structural issue but also a cultural and ideological phenomenon deeply woven into the social fabric of Papuan communities. The durability of separatist ideology thus becomes a key determinant in constructing the Vulnerability Index, as it signifies long term risks shaped not only by material conditions but also by psychological dynamics, identity formation, and value reproduction within communities. From the perspective of the National Security Early Warning System, this phenomenon constitutes a strategic indicator that requires intensive monitoring due to its significant potential to trigger conflict escalation and prolong cycles of instability in Papua.

Drawing on Louis Althusser Ideological Reproduction Theory (1971), ideology does not develop solely through formal state structures but is continually reproduced through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) such as families, social groups, customary institutions, and local cultural systems. In the *Papua* context, the findings show that ideological regeneration occurs organically through family narratives, intergenerational conflict memories, and community solidarity around historical grievances. In remote areas where the state is rarely present in substantive form, families and local communities become the primary centers of political socialization for younger generations. Narratives of resistance, experiences of discrimination, and historical accounts framed as “oppression” are passed down as collective truths, creating the perception that opposition to the state forms an integral part of communal identity. This ideological reproduction becomes a critical determinant in the Separatism Vulnerability Index, as it reinforces the movement’s ideological foundations and produces a persistent cycle of support that is difficult to dismantle.

Althusser further asserts that ideology is reproduced through rituals, symbols, and cultural narratives that generate emotional resonance. In the case of Papua, Melanesian identity symbols, customary rituals, resistance songs, and narratives circulated in digital spaces function as systematic media for ideological reproduction. Alternative historical narratives questioning *Papua* political status, as well as symbols such as the Morning Star flag, serve as cultural devices that reinforce a resistance identity. Separatist propaganda strategies exploit these elements to cultivate an alternative sense of nationhood outside the Indonesian state, particularly among the youth. This creates a high risk environment for national security, as ideological regeneration is driven not only by structural factors but also by cultural mechanisms that are continuously renewed through collective memory and symbolic expression. These elements become strategic indicators within the Separatism Vulnerability Index, demonstrating that conflict is likely to persist as long as these symbols and narratives continue to be reproduced within Papuan social life.

Overall Analysis. Taken together, these determinants structural conditions, governance quality, identity politics, digital information flows, and the capacity of basic public services constitute the core indicators in the construction of the Separatism Vulnerability Index. When systematically mapped, these indicators form a crucial foundation for developing a National Security Early Warning System that is more predictive, responsive, and contextually attuned to the evolving dynamics in *Papua.*

3.2.1.Analysis of Determinants of the Vulnerability Index Based on Law No. 3 of 2002 on National Defense

Law No. 3 of 2002 on National Defense affirms that national defense is a comprehensive effort involving all components of the nation to confront both military and non-military threats that endanger the integrity and safety of the state. In the context of separatism in Papua, such threats fall under non-military threats originating from ideological, political, social, and cultural factors that erode state legitimacy. The law mandates that the state must build an integrated defense system encompassing early detection, prevention, and rapid response to potential threats. Accordingly, the principle of early detection embedded in this law aligns with the necessity of developing a Separatism Vulnerability Index as a scientific instrument for mapping risk levels across regions.

3.2.12.Analysis of Determinants of the Vulnerability Index Based on the Early Warning System.

Risk assessment plays a central role in identifying factors that heighten separatism vulnerability, as it enables systematic mapping of conditions that may trigger socio-political instability. In *Papua*, risk assessment reveals that chronic underdevelopment marked by inadequate infrastructure, limited access to health and education services, and weak food security forms the basis of public dissatisfaction with the state. Structural injustice, such as unequal resource distribution, mismanagement of Special Autonomy funds, and weak local governance capacity, further strengthens feelings of marginalization. Meanwhile, the ongoing reproduction of separatist ideology through familial narratives, Melanesian identity symbols, and digital propaganda introduces additional ideological and cultural risks. Thus, risk assessment must evaluate not only physical and material vulnerabilities but also social, political, and ideological risks that are essential for constructing the Separatism Vulnerability Index and the National Security Early Warning System.

Monitoring ensures that social, economic, and security dynamics are continuously observed so that emerging shifts can be detected before they develop into more serious threats. In *Papua,* sustained monitoring is needed to detect early signs of tension, such as rising public grievances, mass mobilization, dissemination of separatist hoaxes, or changes in the operational patterns of armed groups. In the economic sphere, monitoring captures welfare pressures, disparities in access to basic services, and disruptions in food availability. In the security domain, monitoring violent incidents, attack patterns, and propaganda intensity allows the state to assess escalation in real time. Thus, monitoring functions not merely as data collection but as a strategic mechanism enabling rapid, evidence based responses within the National Security Early Warning System.

Analysis and communication integrate field data with strategic decision making through systematic, objective, and interagency coordinated information processing. In Papua, analyzing structural, social, ideological, and security indicators allows the government to identify vulnerability patterns, sources of conflict, and potential escalation based on empirical evidence. This information must be effectively communicated to stakeholders such as the *TNI, Polri,* and local governments, and relevant ministries to produce accurate and targeted policy responses. Without comprehensive analysis and structured communication, field data remain passive information that cannot drive strategic action. Thus, this component ensures that every field finding is transformed into adaptive, measurable decision making that strengthens the National Security Early Warning System.

Response capability emphasizes institutional capacity to respond to threats swiftly and appropriately, preventing escalation before it reaches dangerous levels. In Papua, effective response requires readiness among security forces, local governments, and central agencies to act based on risk assessment, monitoring, and integrated analysis. A rapid response means addressing violent incidents, hoax dissemination, or separatist mobilization through proportional, evidence based measures. An appropriate response requires actions that consider not only security dimensions but also social, cultural, health, and welfare aspects such as improving public services in remote regions, facilitating dialogue with customary leaders, and strengthening local food systems. With strong response capability, the state can demonstrate substantive presence, reduce public distrust, and narrow the operational space of separatist actors. Therefore, response capability is a critical component of the National Security Early Warning System, ensuring that early warnings translate into strategic, effective, and sustainable actions.

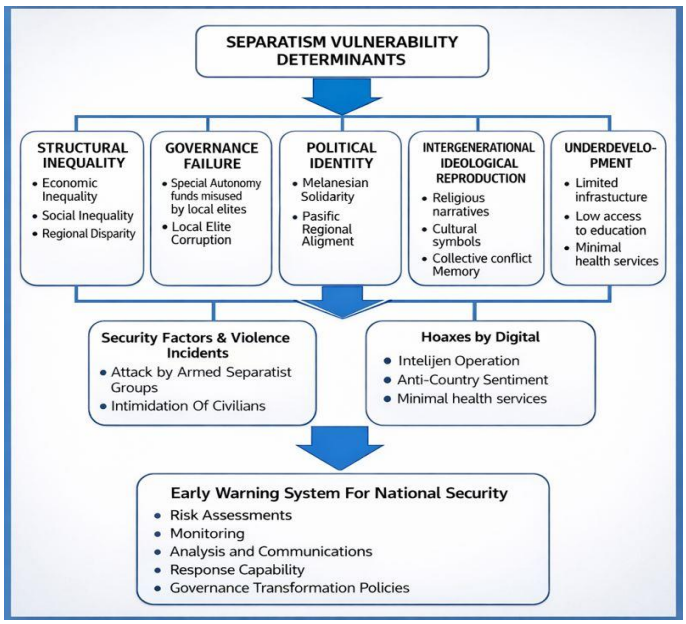


Figure 3. Mapping the Separatism Vulnerability Index in Papua

Figure 3 illustrates that the Separatism Vulnerability Index in Papua is shaped by a series of interconnected multidimensional determinants, ranging from structural deficiencies, governance failures, Melanesian identity politics, intergenerational reproduction of separatist ideology, to chronic developmental disparities. These factors collectively create a fragile socio-political environment, further exacerbated by various incidents of violence and digital propaganda, which intensify public distrust toward the government and the state.

The diagram demonstrates that these determinants ultimately converge on the urgent need to establish an Early Warning System aimed at strengthening social resilience in Papua and enhancing National Security within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Strengthening the components of risk assessment, monitoring, analysis and communication, and response capability is essential to ensure that the government and relevant stakeholders can detect potential separatist escalation more rapidly, accurately, and based on empirical evidence, thereby supporting informed decision making and adaptive policymaking toward a peaceful Papua and a more resilient national security posture.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that separatism vulnerability in Papua is shaped by mutually reinforcing, multidimensional determinants, including contested historical narratives surrounding Papua's reintegration into the Republic of Indonesia, uneven development outcomes, structural inequalities, and the ineffective implementation of Special Autonomy Plus. These conditions are further intensified by identity-based mobilization, the intergenerational reproduction of separatist ideology, and the circulation of hoaxes and digital disinformation. Vulnerability is additionally amplified by limited healthcare services, weak policy support for local food security, and insufficient public dissemination of the principle of the international legal basis invoked to justify Papua's integration into Indonesia.

The study affirms that reducing vulnerability to separatist mobilization in Papua requires a comprehensive, multidimensional approach that prioritizes addressing foundational issues, including the historical context of Papua as a former Dutch colony and clearer public communication of the positioning Papua as an integral part of Indonesia. These efforts should be accompanied by structural reforms; strengthened social, health, education, and food security infrastructure; and improved transparency and accountability in the management of Special Autonomy Plus funds. A dialogue-based approach should involve traditional leaders, religious figures, women, youth, and local communities as strategic partners in developing shared solutions. Equally important are systematic monitoring of digital hoaxes and sustained public education on national unity and the civic foundations of Indonesia's plural society (Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*).

The findings provide analytical and empirical contributions by offering a comprehensive framework for mapping multidimensional determinants of separatism vulnerability in Papua. This framework can support evidence-based strategic decision-making and policymaking that is more predictive, responsive, and empirically grounded, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of an Early Warning System and enhancing social resilience and national security.

This study is limited by its descriptive qualitative design, the relatively small number of informants, and geographically constrained research sites, which may not fully capture heterogeneity in separatism dynamics across Papua. Future research should expand geographical coverage, adopt mixed-method approaches, and develop quantitative models for measuring a Separatism Vulnerability Index to enable stronger empirical validation and broader generalizability.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Caecilia F. Harsono: Conceptualization; Writing—original draft. Marsetio: Formal analysis; Writing—review & editing; Supervision. Anton Nugroho: Investigation (data collection). I Nengah Putra Apriyanto: Investigation (data collection). Bambang Kustiawan: Resources. Faonaso Harefa: Resources.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

6.3. Funding

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Not applicable.

6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and participation was voluntary.

6.6. Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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