



# PEOPLE-CENTRED DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN PAPUA INDONESIA DURING THE SPECIAL AUTONOMY SYSTEM

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## Abstract

*In many developing countries, various development models have been used, but the results are far from expectations. This happens because this ideology only focuses on equitable development by focusing only on economic growth factors. Even so, we can assume developmental deviations are common because when applied in the field, we cannot study them completely thoroughly. However, based on the conditions above, we can take the most optimal approach to formulate an optimal mutually dependent and beneficial relationship between the community and the government as stipulated in legal policy. Therefore, this paper examines how the political economy and the role of the state shape the development of Papua in Special Autonomy System. With FGD data and research from the literature, we use a descriptive-qualitative strategy. According to the findings of the study, the background of economic exploitation in Papua and the sustainability of nature as a production space has a paradoxical relationship, where the result of increasing the economic value of mining activities is conducted by PT. Freeport which is inversely proportional to the loss of green open space. This results in damage to living ecosystems. As a result, the sustainability of the Papuan people's livelihood in the future is threatened. Based on this, the author provides the results of his study as a solution for government policy makers to provide recommendations so that the government prioritizes human-centered development strategies. This study concludes that "capacity building" is needed by humans in order to become the subject of development. With this framework in mind, the people of Papua can optimize development in their area more effectively because the process is carried out through social development that emphasizes education, knowledge, and skills.*

**Keywords:** *development projects, economic exploitation, people centered development, special autonomy region*

## Introduction

The government has a responsibility to provide infrastructure both in cities and villages as a form of community service (OECD, 2015). The structural framework and cultural background are the driving forces of the rural economy. Economic and political development policies that prioritize urban development over rural areas are referred to as structural contexts

(Turok & McGranahan, 2013). Implementation of a development strategy that favors urban areas, with the state as the dominant player, will cause development inequality, especially in rural areas, namely the development of transportation and infrastructure (Orenstein & Shach-Pinsley, 2017). A good development strategy must focus on solid policies and a country-centered approach, supported by the role of the state in taking on the role of initiator, implementer, and supervisor of the entire system (Turok, 2013).

One of the Indonesian provinces that has experienced a name change is Papua. This island was formerly named Irian Jaya. The name Irian Jaya was changed to Papua under the administration of Indonesia's fourth president, KH Abdurrahman Wahid by issuing Law Number 21 of 2001 concerning the creation of the Special Autonomy Region for Papua (Malaka, 2012). Papua has received special attention in line with the development of the mining industry as the main axis of its economy. Apart from Papua, other cities with Special Autonomy Region System include Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.

Some of these fields are referred to as specializations because many factors influence the uniqueness of the region. This privilege is based on cultural, social, economic, and political contexts. For Papua, the government has implemented a "Special Autonomy" government policy that is different from other Indonesian city-provinces. Efforts to streamline the public service sector can bring themselves closer to the public, guided by realizing people's welfare through policy arrangements (Parmar et al., 2022). Meanwhile, efforts to strengthen regional capacity and accountability in solving local problems with regional talent and creativity. This is done by encouraging the process of democracy and wider public involvement (Achmady, 2020). Development is the achievement of general welfare and the goals of a society that is aware of its rights and obligations in politics. This is because development refers to a planned quality change from one national situation to another, which is more valuable. The country's public policy in the development agenda determines qualitative changes in the level of social progress throughout the implementation process. Whatever development model is used, every political system must rely on the principles that are the context of the political community, namely the general welfare. Political power, on the other hand, gains legitimacy based on the principle of the common good (Loewe & Rippin, 2015).

Papua is one of the provinces that has become the main concern and priority for development under the Jokowi government (2019-2024). Various infrastructure improvements are being promoted as significant steps to boost the economy of the Papuan people. One of the major projects that is expected to improve the economy of the Papuan people is reducing income inequality and reducing high prices in each region. This is realized by the construction of the Trans Papua Highway mega project that connects the Provinces of West Papua and East Papua Provinces (Mambrasar, 2020).

Research on development in Papua has been carried out by many researchers before. Four interrelated factors—communication factors, resource factors, character or attitude factors, and social factors. They are directly involved in the implementation of the Special Autonomy policy in Papua (Edyanto et al., 2021). What's more, this research also raises complementary questions about the goals of development in Papua, whether due to politics or the economy. Nonetheless, this question at the end of the article remains one that readers cannot answer because the writing focuses too much on economic evidence rather than political evidence. In contrast to this, Adriana Elisabeth shows that the best way to improve communication in developing Papua is through peaceful dialogue, where this will help reduce misunderstandings and prejudices that have long caused tension, disputes, and conflicts in Papua (Elisabeth, 2012).

It is different again in research according to Ervianto (2017), which stated several conclusions drawn regarding the difficulties of infrastructure development in Papua, including: (a) the high problem of corruption or bribery in construction projects, which reached 9.1%; (b) the concept of sustainable development has not been formulated at a practical level; (c) various

knowledge of service providers regarding sustainability principles; and (d) capacity issues of stakeholders involved in construction projects (Ervianto, 2017).

However, these previous studies did not provide a practical solution for how development in Papua was established. They only focus on the explanation of root causes that disrupt the development process in Papua; but meanwhile, the solution remains untouched. At the same time, the term of government continues to run in a political contract, so that policy changes will be very difficult to implement because they have to go through a long bureaucratic process. As a result, the alleviation of people's suffering is getting longer. Therefore, the author provides a breakthrough through the emphasis on mandatory solutions for stakeholders so that sustainable development does not stop in such a way that it can threaten the prosperity of the people.

### *Research Problem*

The adoption of Special Autonomy for the province of Papua is based on Law no. 21 of 2001 and Law no. 35 of 2008, which was the result of a political agreement between the people of Papua and the central government to end the protracted period since 1962 (Office of Assistant to Deputy Cabinet Secretary for State Documents & Translation, 2021). The government is willing to make changes through political compromise to avoid repeating various development policies and strategies from the past, which usually did not benefit the Papuan people. Apart from that, it also has an impact on the marginalization and backwardness of the Papuan people in all fields of development thereby strengthening their desire to separate themselves from Indonesia.

Implicitly, the report also shows that the effectiveness of the implementation of Special Autonomy System in Papua for more than 8 years has not shown maximum results. This law provides a formal legal basis for the granting of special powers by the state to the government and the people of Papua Province. Furthermore, the law forces the government to commit to allocating a number of affirmative funding sources to spur the process of (1) accelerating development in various fields, (2) improving the quality of governance and public services, and (3) developing initiatives to accelerate development creatively and relevant to the uniqueness of superior social, economic, cultural, and geographical conditions as well as natural resource potential in Papua (Halmin, 2006).

Based on this, the authors refer to the range of development in Papua during the special autonomy period. This research also looks at the dimensions of human development and physical development to measure success, with or without special autonomy. Thus, a holistic analysis can be carried out to get a thorough portrait of the problem. In the next chapter, we explained the background of our choice of arguments in choosing a research focus.

### *Research Focus*

In establishing the research focus, the authors conducted an analysis of the impact of the realization of Special Autonomy in the economic and political sectors. This is done because the study of the sector is a performance indicator in analyzing development results. Based on research conducted by Mambrasar (2020), it was found that the cause of the failure of Special Autonomy System in Papua since 2001 was a development paradigm error that did not suit the needs of the Papuan people. The development carried out in Papua assumes that rationality and administrative behavior are universally human. As a result, society is considered homogeneous and not creative, so that the pattern of development in one area can be applied in the same way elsewhere. Because of this view, policy makers fail to see the uniqueness of human beings who tend to be different, and consequently fail to find solutions to the problems they want to solve. Based on the results of the above factual data spawning, the establishment of a Papua Special

Autonomy development solution must start from the paradigm of the uniqueness of humans as active actors (subjects) in regional development. If this has been implemented, there will be accelerated development with optimal results with the support of the role of environmental sustainability.

## Research Methodology

### *General Background*

A descriptive-qualitative method is used in this research. This study has used two types of data, namely, primary data and secondary data. Data was collected using the focus group discussion method with I Ngurah Suryawan as a lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Government, Warmadewa University, and Muhammad Azka Fahriza from the Institute for Community Studies and Advocacy. Yohanis Mambrasar, S.H., wrote "Portrait of the Infrastructure and Development Paradigm of Papua" during the Special Autonomy. FGD data was used to collect primary data. Secondary data was collected from relevant information to the research questions that came from book sources, the internet, official reports, and journals.

### *Instruments and Procedures*

The FGD was organized by the Center for the Study of Religion, Pluralism and Democracy (PusAPDem) and the Center for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS) of Satya Wacana Christian University. The theme of the FGD was a book review "Infrastructure, Portraits, and the Development Paradigm of Papua in the Special Autonomy Period. This event was held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, for two hours. The event was held via the Zoom Meeting platform.

### *Data Analysis*

In analyzing data, researchers collect relevant data. Then the data is sorted and selected according to the formulation of the problem. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using theory and concepts. In the end, this research was analyzed in the form of verbal descriptions and explanations which then came to conclusions.

## Research Results

### *Papua's Special Autonomy System (Otonomi Khusus)*

Special Autonomy for the Papua Province is a special authority that is recognized and given to the Papua Province to regulate and manage the interests of the local community according to their own initiative based on the aspirations and basic rights of the Papuan people. (Widjojo, 2012). The granting of this authority is carried out so that the administration of the government and the implementation of development in Papua Province can fulfill a sense of justice, accelerate the achievement of people's welfare, support the establishment of law enforcement, and show respect for human rights in Papua Province, especially indigenous Papuans. Law Number 21 of 2001 concerning Papua's Special Autonomy has three main policy principles regarding the meaning of "specificity" which is the focus of the law:

1. Alignment with Indigenous Papuans by creating opportunities to develop themselves and placing them on an equal footing with members of the Indonesian community or the world within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia and members of the world community.

2. Protection of the Indigenous Peoples of Papua through recognition and legal protection of Human Rights and Customary Rights as well as local wisdom.
3. Empowerment of indigenous Papuans, namely providing development based on: orientation to the real needs of the local community. (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomer 21 Tahun 2021 Tentang Otonomi Khusus Bagi Provinsi Papua [Law of The Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2021 Concerning Special Autonomy for the Papua Province], 2001)

In its commitment, the government of the Republic of Indonesia has carried out its function properly in terms of providing funds for the implementation of Special Autonomy. According to the Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency, the provision of Special Autonomy funds for the province of Papua is intended to support the acceleration of the implementation of the Special Autonomy for the province of Papua, in the framework of realizing justice, upholding the rule of law, upholding human rights, accelerating economic development, increasing the welfare and progress of the Papuan people in the framework of equity and balance with the progress of other provinces in Indonesia. In the field of Regional Finance, the specialties given to the Province of Papua related to the implementation of Special Autonomy are in the form of: Special Revenue Post for the Implementation of Special Autonomy which is equivalent to 2% of the National General Allocation Fund ceiling for 25 years, primarily intended for financing education and health posts. Additional funds are given to Infrastructure for the Implementation of Special Autonomy, the amount of which is determined between the Government and the House of Representatives based on the recommendation every fiscal year (bpkad.papua.go.id, 2017).

#### *State and Power*

Before entering into a further analysis of how the Indonesian state regulates development in Papua, we must position the relationship between the state's goals for the welfare of its people and politics as a medium. There, the author argues that the *Trias Politica* theory can be used as a basis for knowing the goals of the state from upstream to downstream. In the study conducted, the author explained the goals of the state, the separation of state powers, and contemporary political phenomena that have caused the people to lose their bargaining power with the state. This will explain the root causes of development problems in Papua today.

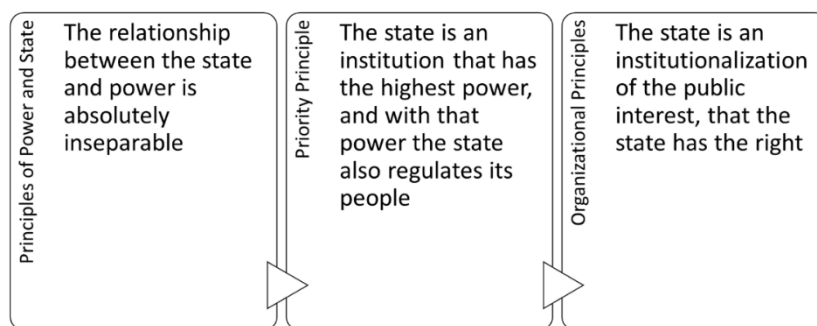
The state is a political organization that is empowered by the people as members of the state to regulate all matters relating to the achievement of state goals. The purpose of the state is to achieve prosperity, security and create order for its people, as well as other goals that are always related to the interests of the people of a country (Montesquieu with his teachings *Trias Politica*, separation of state powers). It is necessary to maintain the country so that the original purpose of the state is not dominated by one or a group of people (Montesquieu, 1989). The concept of representation in political science includes representative institutions consisting of people's representatives, political institutions such as political parties and interest groups, which are institutions that balance state power and guarantee that the state will always operate on the basis of interests and the needs of the community. Political parties and interest groups are channels for aggregating people's interests and representative institutions are channels for articulating these interests (Beyers et al., 2008).

Contemporary political phenomena are still dominated by the state. For example, it is becoming increasingly apparent that civil society movements are unable to bargain for interests and power with the state. While the state is increasingly demonstrating its power as an unchallengeable and uncontested center of power, the tendency to create statism is becoming stronger (Krasner, 1976). This is also because the state is considered as the only legitimate actor using certain powers over its people. Therefore, there is a big challenge for the people to reveal their needs and their important voice before the state.



David Korten criticizes the growth-centered development model because it pays less attention to the central position of humanity in development and has made the poorest layers of society dependent on government development services and programs. This criticism gave rise to an alternative development model, namely the human-centered development model. David Korten stated that it is possible that all basic human needs can be fulfilled, but that does not mean that they have given them an environment to become human. Korten went on to emphasize human-centered development, aimed at benefiting people, both in actions and results, as well as giving them the opportunity to develop creative intelligence for their own future and the future of society. A development model like this will reduce people's dependence on the bureaucracy and guarantee the growth of community self-help capabilities towards sustainable development (C. Korten, 2005) with the following explanation:

**Figure 1**  
*Institutionalization of Power*



Source:(C. Korten, 2005)

Organic State Theory states that the state is seen as always being able to act neutrally. The state inherently in itself has good goals for society and is unlikely to harm the lives of its citizens. In theory of Marxism-Leninism, the state is the embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this condition, the state functions as the realization of an egalitarian society toward an end of history, namely a classless communist society. This means that state absolutes are needed at the time of the transition from socialism to communism. If a society that has the same feeling has been created, then state institutions are no longer needed. However, often the state becomes a very autonomous institution and ignores the various interests of its people. The state has even always functioned as a tool and a justification machine for its apparatus in carrying out repression (Marx, 2004).

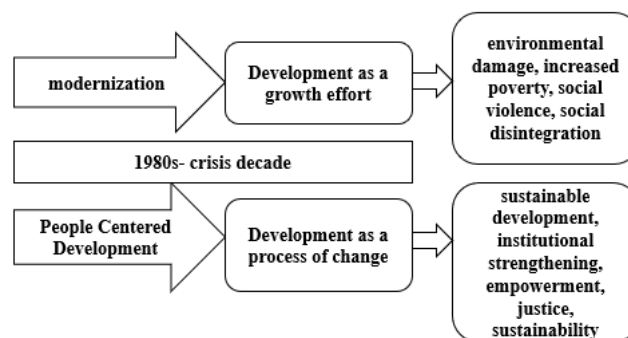
According to the findings of the focus group discussions, regional development in the Land of Papua has been influenced more by a centralized growth paradigm than a welfare paradigm that is pro-people. The people of Papua desire the management and Special Autonomy of Papua by carrying out the principles of compliance, supervision, and accountability for Special Autonomy funds in accordance with the mandate. These principles are coming to the surface because the annual accountability report on the management of the Special Autonomy funds demonstrates accountability in favor of the Papuan provincial government rather than priority programs and the community. It must side with the people of Papua when compiling and planning development programs. As a result, it is critical to apply the people-centered development approach in Papua, not only for people-centered development, but also for Papuans to actively participate in the development process.

## Discussion

### *People Centered Development for Papua Development*

The new perspective of development gives a special role to the government, which is clearly different from the role of the government in the previous development models. The role of the government in this case is to create a social environment that allows it to develop, namely, a social environment that encourages human development and the actualization of human potential in a larger way (Drewer, 1980). The creation of a social environment requires a self-organizing learning system, namely by orienting informal organizational networks and communication flows to local needs and variations as a complement to a more formal command system. The functioning of these structural arrangements is highly dependent on the people's initiative to be creative on sources of information that are never dry, both of which determine the main source inputs of the model. The following is the development paradigm.

**Figure 2**  
*Development Paradigm*

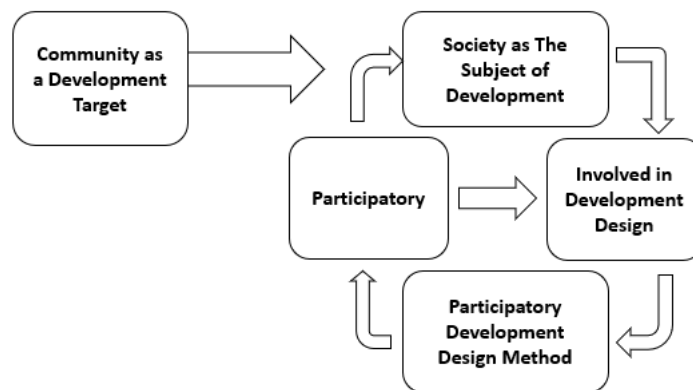


Source: Ife & Tesoriero, 2008

This development model positions community members as actors, not just subjects, who set their own goals, control the resources needed to achieve those goals, and direct the processes that affect their lives. Although human-centered development recognizes the importance of growth, the performance of a growth system is primarily measured by how broadly people are involved and how high the quality of their working conditions and access to development is for them. In this regard, one of the most important aspects that distinguishes the human-centered development model from the growth/production-oriented development model is that the former subordinates the interests of the production system to those of the human being, while the latter places human interests under the subordination of the interests of the production system.

Three important themes to define the concept of human-centered development planning, namely are: emphasis on support and development of self-help enterprises of the poor to address their own needs, the realization that although the modern sector is the main source of conventional economic growth, but traditionally, the main source of livelihood for the majority of poor households, the need for new institutional capacities to build the capacity of poor beneficiaries for productive and self-reliant management based on local resources. Humans and the environment are the main endogenous variables, namely as a starting point for development planning, so that the basic perspective and analysis method in this development approach is Human Ecology, which is the study of the interaction between human systems and their ecosystems (Njoh, 2002). This is the design community as a development target for Papuan.

**Figure 3**  
*Design Community as a Development Target*



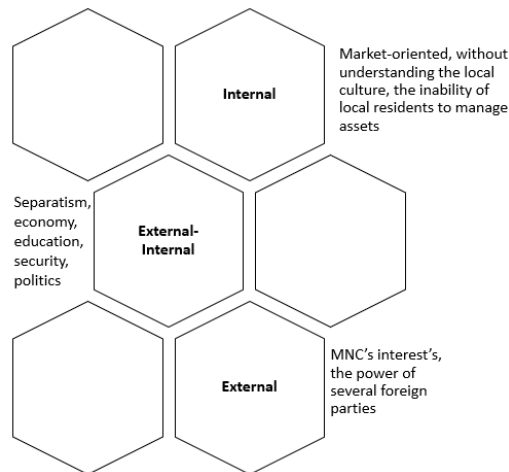
In a development model that is oriented toward equity, bottom-up planning strategies are applied, which are supported by service providers from the bureaucracy, then a human-centered development model requires transactive planning, which emphasizes planning in the context of community development through policies that are democratic, the bureaucracy conducts planning together with the community and is an enabler/facilitator. This type of planning emphasizes the process of personal and organizational development and not just the achievement of specific functional goals. The process is characterized by a mutual learning process and is related to interpersonal dialogue with people who are affected by decisions. The effectiveness of the resulting plans is measured not by the amount of goods or services provided to society, but by their impact on their dignity, sense of effectiveness, values, and behavior, as well as their ability to develop through cooperation. (Bower, 1974)

In the human-centered development model, there must be emphasis on a community-based approach to resource management, the characteristics of which are: (1) Gradually, the initiative and decision-making process, to meet the needs, must be placed on the community itself; (2) The ability of the community to manage and mobilize existing resources must be improved to meet their needs; (3) Paying attention to local variations, because it is very flexible, adapts to local conditions; (4) Emphasizing social learning between the bureaucracy and the community starting from the planning process to project evaluation based on mutual learning; (5) Forming networks between bureaucrats and non-governmental organizations as well as independent traditional organizational units. Through this networking process, it is hoped that there will be a symbiosis between development structures at the local level.

The lack of public facilities such as schools, basic health facilities, and village-city connecting roads is a problem in Papua Province. Teacher resources, both physical and non-physical, are also required. The implication of a lack of basic facilities is a reduction in quality of life. Since the enactment of Papua's special autonomy, development has only focused on growth. Problems that arise in Papua Province are as a result of the incorrect implementation of previous development policies and the future implementation of the Papuan development policy model that recognizes identity and strengthens competitive local resource capacity. However, community participation in development is still minimal. The following are the problem factors for Papua:

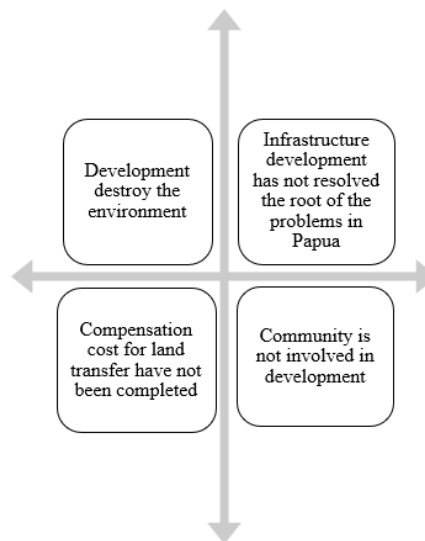


**Figure 4**  
*The Factor of Development Problems in Papua*



Based on the factors of development problems in Papua, it can be mapped as follows:

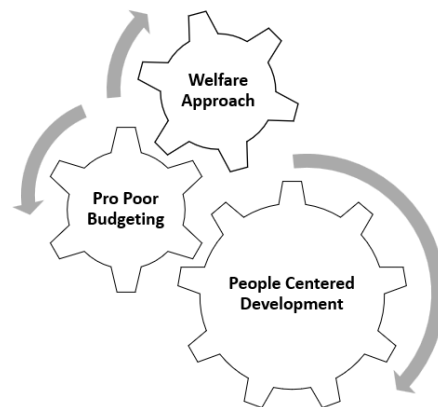
**Figure 5**  
*Mapping the Development Problem in Papua*



The weakness of the implementation of Special Autonomy in Papua Province is, first, at the policy level. This can be seen that there is no technical guideline as an elaboration of the Special Autonomy Law. Second, the problem lies in the level of policy implementation. This can be seen from the lack of understanding of the local government and the community regarding the implementation of Special Autonomy, as well as the limited quantity and quality of implementers, the efforts made by the Papua Provincial Government in implementing Special Autonomy are still not optimal.

From the results of the analysis, this study recommends a development approach in Papua, namely the welfare approach, human-centered development, and pro-poor based budgeting. This is the figure of the solution recommendation.

**Figure 6**  
*Solution Recommendation*



Three essential themes define the concept of human-centered development planning: the emphasis on supporting and developing the self-help businesses of the poor to cope with their own needs and the awareness that the modern sector is the primary source of conventional economic growth. Traditionally, it is the primary source of livelihood for most poor households. New institutional capacity is needed to build the abilities of the Papuan people. Humans and the environment are the main endogenous variables, namely as the starting point for development planning, so the fundamental perspective and analytical method in this development approach is people-centered development.

## Conclusions

The definition of modernization as a euphemism in economic parameters such as progressing product using physical and material factors was too narrow. Based on our research, we argue because it requires non-material aspects which include the formation and development of social attitudes in society. The capacity of the central and regional governments must be strengthened to advance the welfare of the Papuan people. This approach continues to be a problem because the orientation of growth is actually more focused on development but not on the factor of ensuring the needs of the community. In his book *State Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*, Francis Fukuyama reminds us that weak government institutions in formulating and implementing policies will cause problems that go one after another and never end.

Moreover, if there is weak government capacity, it will complicate the process of equalizing welfare. As a result, people will be more hampered in accessing health, education, and employment services, which can eventually lead to more conflict and violence. The practical solution is to change procedures and mechanisms through the regulation of a democratic political system. This process was then continued by making an exception policy, namely by setting parameters for calculating the number of House of Representatives which were not only based on the size of the population, but also taking into account the area, level of difficulty, and poverty score. This is called a proportional calculation.

Based on the rationale above, it can be concluded that the Special Autonomy Government System is not just a top-down program from the center. Based on the findings of this study, the government is expected to be wise in involving the Papuan people as a whole in the implementation of special autonomy. With this system, it is possible for the Papuan people to become actors who play an important role and have a sustainable development livelihood plan,

namely determining their own goals, controlling the resources needed to achieve these goals, and directing other influential livelihood processes.

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## Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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