

## Motif Politik Rencana Pemekaran Daerah Otonomi Baru di Tanah Papua

### *Political Motives for the Plan for the Expansion of New Autonomous Regions in Papua*

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#### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang motif politik rencana pemekaran daerah otonomi baru di tanah Papua. Sebab, pemekaran daerah otonomi baru tidak selamanya murni untuk kesejahteraan masyarakat, melainkan sangat lekat dengan kepentingan politik, yakni kekuasaan dan jabatan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Data yang digunakan berupa data sekunder yang diperoleh melalui media bereputasi dan dokumen berupa jurnal. Selanjutnya, dilakukan pemilahan data guna membentuk suatu kerangka yang sistematis. Untuk menganalisis data penelitian digunakan Nvivo plus 12. Dari analisis tersebut kemudian dideskripsikan dan ditarik suatu kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa motif politik rencana pemekaran daerah otonomi baru di tanah Papua sangat sarat dengan motif intensif materil, yakni kepentingan elit politik baik pusat maupun daerah guna mendapatkan imbalan, kedudukan, dan kekuasaan. Pada motif insentif idealisme terdapat narasi bahwa pemekaran daerah guna untuk kepentingan publik, yakni memberikan pelayanan, pembangunan infrastruktur, peningkatan sumber daya manusia, dan pengentasan kemiskinan. Namun, pada kenyataannya beberapa pemekaran di tanah Papua yang sedang berjalan belum memberikan dampak kepada masyarakat Papua.

**Kata kunci:** Motif politik, desentralisasi, daerah otonomi baru, Papua

#### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the political motives of the plan to expand the new autonomous region in Papua. This is because the expansion of new autonomous areas is not always purely for the welfare of the people but is very closely related to political interests, namely power, and position. This study used qualitative research methods. The data used in the form of secondary data was obtained through reputable media and documents in journals. Next, the data is sorted to form a systematic framework. To analyze the research data, Nvivo plus 12 was used. From the analysis, it was described, and a conclusion was drawn. The study results indicate that the political motives for the plan to expand the new*

*autonomous region in Papua are very material-intensive, namely the interests of the political elite, both central and local, to obtain rewards, position, and power. There is a narrative in the ideological incentive motive that regional expansion is for the public interest, namely providing services, developing infrastructure, increasing human resources, and alleviating poverty. However, in reality, some of the ongoing divisions in Papua have not yet impacted the Papuan people.*

**Keywords:** *Political motives, decentralization, new autonomous region, Papua*

## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Indonesian government system has undergone several changes. From the old order, the new order, to reforms with different styles of government. In the era of the old order and the new order, policymaking was top-down, where the central government had a central role in the implementation of government. However, the 1998 reform era led to a more democratic government, namely bottom-up policymaking. Thus, the government and local elites can play a role in influencing policy. Thus, the dynamics of local politics focus a lot of attention from various parties, especially regarding regional head elections and regional expansion (Agustino, 2020). Starting from the enactment of Law No. 22 of 1999, it was changed to Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government, giving local governments the freedom to regulate their affairs or known as regional autonomy.

Nevertheless, the implementation of regional autonomy cannot be separated from the relationship between the center and the regions. The authority possessed by the regions is a gift from the central government, and the President is the holder of the highest power as head of government. The objectives of regional autonomy include: as a political goal where regional autonomy is carried out to distribute power to the regional level, build regional communities, and maintain the national government's stability. An economic goal is to provide quality services to the community (R. Siti Zuhro, 2015).

With the concept of decentralization through regional autonomy, it is possible to create new autonomous regions (DOB). The importance of new autonomous regions is carried out to bring public services closer, overcome development inequality, and realize regional representative politics. Also, to absorb the central budget sourced from the APPBN, in this case, the General Fund Allocation (DAU) and the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) (Qodir & Sulaksono, 2012).

Regional expansion is believed to have a positive impact on the community through regional development and development. However, the expansion of new autonomous regions does not always run normally. The reason is, new conflicts between regions accompany the expansion of new autonomous regions. If the area is wider, the possibility of spatial conflicts due to population and territorial boundaries is getting bigger. Regional conflicts resulting from new autonomous regions have economic, political, and socio-cultural impacts (Muksin & Robo, 2021). Thus, the expansion plan must be accompanied by consideration of conflicts because it does not require the possibility. The regional expansion will become a source of conflict, especially spatial conflicts. If regional expansion is carried out, the number of sea and land boundaries between regions will increase. This is what will trigger inter-regional spatial conflicts (Harmantyo, 2010).

On the other hand, the regional expansion policy did not run optimally because political interests heavily dominated it (Muqoyyidin, 2013). The distribution of power in the local sphere opens up a new competition space for political actors to gain power. Politics at the local post-reformation level, with decentralization, has encouraged the birth of the practice of political dynasties. Political elites with social, economic, political, and socio-cultural capital tend to control power at the local level (Muksin, Purwaningsih, & Nurmandi, 2019). In the central and regional contexts, expansion is an attempt by local political

elites to seize power in the central government. The impression of expansion is only an arena of struggle and power-sharing (Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, 2007).

Based on the narrative above, it can be said that the expansion that occurred was not always based on the interests of the community but rather the interests of the power of the political elite. For this reason, the expansion plan always has pros and cons. This is as happened in the plan to expand new autonomous regions in Papua, which has sparked public debate. Some Papuan leaders are worried that the expansion of the new autonomous regions will lead to conflict, especially between the community and the military. The division of the region is also considered not to be enjoyed by indigenous Papuans (BBC News Indonesia, 2019).

As clear evidence, the ongoing division of the provinces, namely Papua and West Papua, has not been able to provide a maximum impact on the community's welfare. The division of Papua, for example, has been going on since 1969 for approximately 52 years but has not yet had an impact on the welfare of the Papuan people. This can be seen from the inadequate human development indicators and the increasing poverty rate. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) regarding the 2020 Human Development Index (IPM) between provinces, there has not been a major change. Papua Province is still at the lowest HDI with 60.44. Likewise, with the poverty rate, Papua is still in the list of the largest poverty rate categories. As in BPS data, the poor by island, September 2020, Maluku and Papua have the largest poor population at 20.65 percent.

This condition is often exploited by the central and local government, TNI/Polri, business groups, and political elites. So, it becomes natural if there is a rejection from the Papuan people towards the plan to expand the new autonomous regions in Papua (Brata, 2016). For this reason, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua cannot be seen as an aspiration of the people but is closely related to political interests. Political

elites, both central and local, continue to push for expansion in Papua by promising prosperity. That is by looking at the vast territory of Papua and bringing services closer to the community. However, in reality, the expansion only brought fresh air in the form of social and economic benefits for the elites, then the community's interests were neglected.

On the other hand, it widens the conflict between residents in fighting over the remnants of power from the elites. Borrowing the language of I Ngurah Suryawan's (2020) expansion is an elite strategy to steal power. As in the previous research above, regional divisions gave birth to political dynasties, political struggles and power sharing, and spatial conflicts between regions. However, ideally, regional expansion is to improve the community's welfare through regional development and development. Therefore, this study does not look at the impact of expansion but examines the motives or reasons behind the division of new autonomous regions. This prompted the author to research the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua, namely trying to examine the political motives of the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua. With the formulation of the problem: what are the political motives, and who is the most dominant actor in the plan to expand the new autonomous regions in Papua?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

After the Reformation, the expansion of new autonomous regions (DOB) became a strategic plan for some regions to organize a more effective government system. However, the mission for the expansion of new autonomous regions has also encountered public debate. Because reflecting on the experience of the expansion of new autonomous regions in several regions, there are many conflicts of interest which incidentally are the struggle for and distribution of power. The expansion is not always about the interests of the people's welfare. Still, it can also be for political motives, as in the previous

research that the author described in the background above. Thus, this study will examine the political motives of the new autonomous region expansion plan in Papua.

This research uses qualitative research methods. According to John W. Creswell (2013), qualitative research is a method used to explore or understand individuals or groups that are ascribed to a social problem. Furthermore, to examine political motives in this study, a case study strategy is used to investigate an event carefully. The data used in the form of secondary data was obtained through reputable media and documents in journals. Next, the data is sorted to form a systematic framework. To analyze the research data, Nvivo 12 plus was used. From this analysis, it is described, and a conclusion is drawn.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Political Dynamics of New DOB Expansion Plan**

Political dynamics in Papua are very dynamic, especially with the granting of special autonomy. This opens up a contested space for local elites to compete for power and political office. On the other hand, it opens up investment space for entrepreneurs to reap maximum profits. Local elites use identity politics and cultural approaches to gain public support in political contestation and regional expansion. However, in many cases, the local Papuan political elite uses identity and cultural politics not for the public interest but the interests of groups and individuals. In the end, special autonomy, election contestation, and regional expansion only fulfill the interests of the Papuan elite to control economic and political resources built based on tribal and clan networks (Suryawan, 2011).

The dynamics of identity politics and culture in Papua are still ongoing today. The contestation for regional elections and regional expansion is full of political interests, thus triggering conflicts between elites and elites and elites

and Papuan people. This is as seen in the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua. President Jokowi's visit to Papua in 2019 triggered the birth of a plan to expand new autonomous regions in Papua, namely the formation of the provinces of South Papua and Papua Mountains. In addition, the new DOB plan was also strengthened by the presence of several figures who claimed to be representatives of the Papuan people who came to the President to convey their aspirations for the need for expansion of the provinces of Papua and West Papua (Kompas.com, 2019). The expansion plan was brought up in the raging Papuan conflict, so it was considered not aspirational. The expansion plan did not involve the Papuan community but only certain elite groups (Kompas.com, 2019).

The need for expansion is actually to benefit the community's welfare, so in a true sense, the expansion must have strong legitimacy from the community. The expansion must be a shared aspiration far from the interests of groups, ethnic groups, and political elites. The existence of pros and cons indicates that there are conflicts in society that have not been resolved. For this reason, expansion cannot be seen as a distribution of power but also welfare to the community. Namely, the expansion must go through a special autonomy approach hoping that the division can touch the Papuan people as a whole (Republika.co.id).

The plan for the expansion of the Papua region has sparked public debate. Some Papuan leaders are worried that the expansion of the new autonomous regions will lead to conflict, especially between the community and the military. The division of the region is also considered not to be enjoyed by indigenous Papuans (BBC News Indonesia, 2019). The concerns of several Papuan leaders are very rational because the Human Resources in the Papua Province are not sufficient, so the expansion of the new autonomous regions may not be enjoyed by the Papuan people where the condition of the powerless people is often exploited by the central and local governments,



TNI/Polli, business groups, and political elites to realize political interests. So, it becomes natural if there is a rejection from the Papuan people towards the plan to expand the new autonomous regions in Papua (Brata, 2016).

For this reason, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua cannot be seen as an aspiration of the people but is closely related to political interests. Political elites, both central and local, continue to push for expansion in Papua by promising prosperity. That is by looking at the vast territory of Papua and bringing services closer to the community. However, in reality, the expansion only brought fresh air in the form of social and economic benefits for the elites, then the community's interests were neglected. On the other hand, it widens the conflict between residents in fighting over the remnants of power from the elites. This is very contrary to the spirit of regional autonomy, namely improving the community's welfare at the local level. It is very unlikely that poverty and unemployment can be eliminated if limited resources are only managed from an elite group and the elite's benefit.

### **Political Motives for the New New Guinea Expansion Plan**

In the history of decentralization that gave birth to autonomy, there was a tug-of-war between the interests of the center and the regions. Where the central government loses control over the regions, decentralization is often a source of problems. Even decentralization is also a concept that is not final because the background of its birth is filled with social turmoil that exists in society. For example, the birth of decentralization was caused by public anger against the Suharto regime through the 1998 reforms, then the concept of decentralization was stated in Law No. 22 of 1999 (Pratikno, 2003).

The implementation of regional autonomy is still a polemic in implementing the government. This is because the regional response to the authority given by the central government to regional governments is very diverse. For example, in its development, Aceh and Papua have a strong desire



to carry out a referendum to determine their destiny or form their state. This condition makes granting regional autonomy as wide as possible a middle way to resolve regional polemics. On the other hand, in maintaining the integrity of the nation, the approach to justice and community welfare should be a top priority and provide a sense of security by not spreading fear in the regions by pointing guns at the heads of residents. This is the homework that the central government must complete to formulate a political format that can facilitate the desires and hopes of the regions within the framework of a unitary state (Cornelys Lay, 2003).

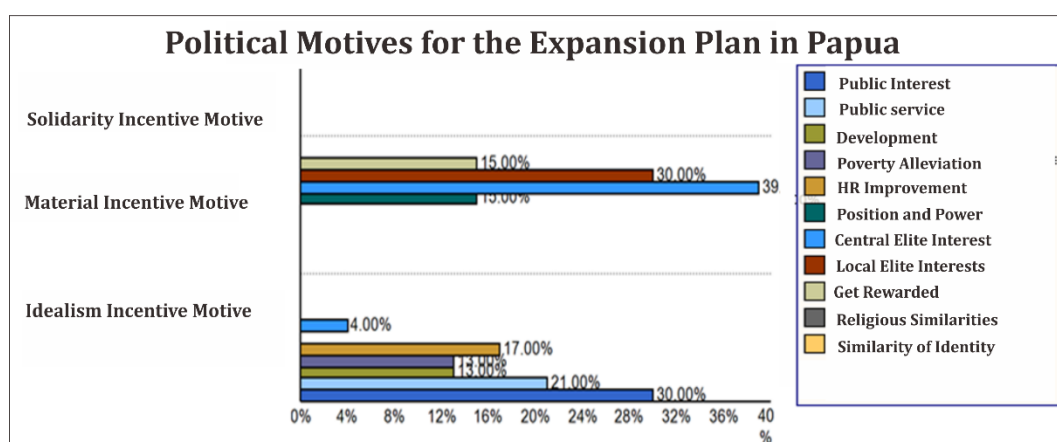
With the concept of decentralization through regional autonomy, it is possible to create new autonomous regions (DOB). The importance of new autonomous regions is carried out to bring public services closer, overcome development inequality, and realize regional representative politics. Also, to absorb the central budget sourced from the APBN, in this case, the General Fund Allocation (DAU) and the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) (Qodir & Sulaksono, 2012). Regional expansion is believed to have a positive impact on the community through regional development and development. However, in reality, regional expansion has not had a good impact on the community. The regional expansion policy did not run optimally because it was dominated by political interests (Muqoyyidin, 2013). The distribution of power in the local sphere opens up a new competition space for political actors to gain power. In the central and regional contexts, expansion is an attempt by local political elites to seize power in the central government so that the impression of expansion is only an arena of struggle and power-sharing (Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, 2007).

According to the World Bank (Nunik Retno Herawati, 2011), regional expansion is driven by four main factors: 1) The motive for the effectiveness of government administration by considering the size of the area, population density, and the lack of development. 2) Homogeneity where expansion occurs

due to religious, ethnic, linguistic, urban-rural, and income levels. 3) Fiscal motives, namely with the expansion to absorb the central government's budget through DAU and DAK. 4) The rent-seeking motive where the expansion occurs because of the desire to power and hold office. Furthermore, Tri Ratnawati (2009: 15) in (Nunik Retno Herawati, 2011) explains that there are hidden motives in the division of regions in Indonesia, including 1) the expansion occurs because of the interests of political parties. 2) Regional expansion is business-oriented. 3) The expansion of regions (to reduce ethnic and religious separatism) to protect the interests of the central and local elites. Saputra & Al-Hamdi in (Beck & J. Sorauf, 1992: 115-126) political motives are closely related to a person's efforts to realize all his interests to achieve specific goals. Furthermore, political motives can be studied through three indicators: material incentive motives, solidarity intensive motives, and idealism incentive motives. The motive for material incentives can be seen through an action taken to get a reward, position, and power. The incentive motive for solidarity is related to efforts to gain association with new groups related to emotional and moral relationships. In contrast, the idealism incentive motive is an effort to realize or prioritize the public interest rather than individual interests. Thus, to describe the political motives for the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua, it can be analyzed through material incentive motives, solidarity intensive motives, and idealism incentive motives.

From the analysis results in figure 1, it is clear that the political motive for the plan to expand the new autonomous regions in Papua is strongly influenced by material incentives and idealism. In terms of material incentives, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions is strongly influenced by the interests of the central elite, with a percentage of 39.00%. The center's interest is illustrated by the response of several national elites who support the division of Papua without questioning the moratorium. Where restrictions

on expanding new autonomous regions through a moratorium do not seem to apply to Papua, this is as conveyed by the Minister of Home Affairs that the division of Papua can be carried out without canceling the moratorium because it has been regulated in national strategic policies (Kompas.com, 2019). For this reason, if the expansion of Papua is carried out, it will have the impact of jealousy on other regions because so far, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions has been received by the ministry, there are 314 proposals. Thus, the division of Papua in the moratorium will trigger new problems in local politics (Republika.co.id, 2019).



**Figure 1. Analysis of Political Motives for New New Guinea Expansion in Papua**  
 Source: Managed by the author using Nvivo 12 Plus

On the other hand, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions is influenced by the interests of the local elite with a percentage of 30.00%, getting 15.00% position and power, and getting 15.00% in return. The presence of several figures who came to the President to convey their aspirations for the need for the expansion of the provinces of Papua and West Papua were not representative of the Papuan people because they only involved certain local elite groups. This is what triggers the pros and cons among the community over the plan to expand the new autonomous regions in Papua.

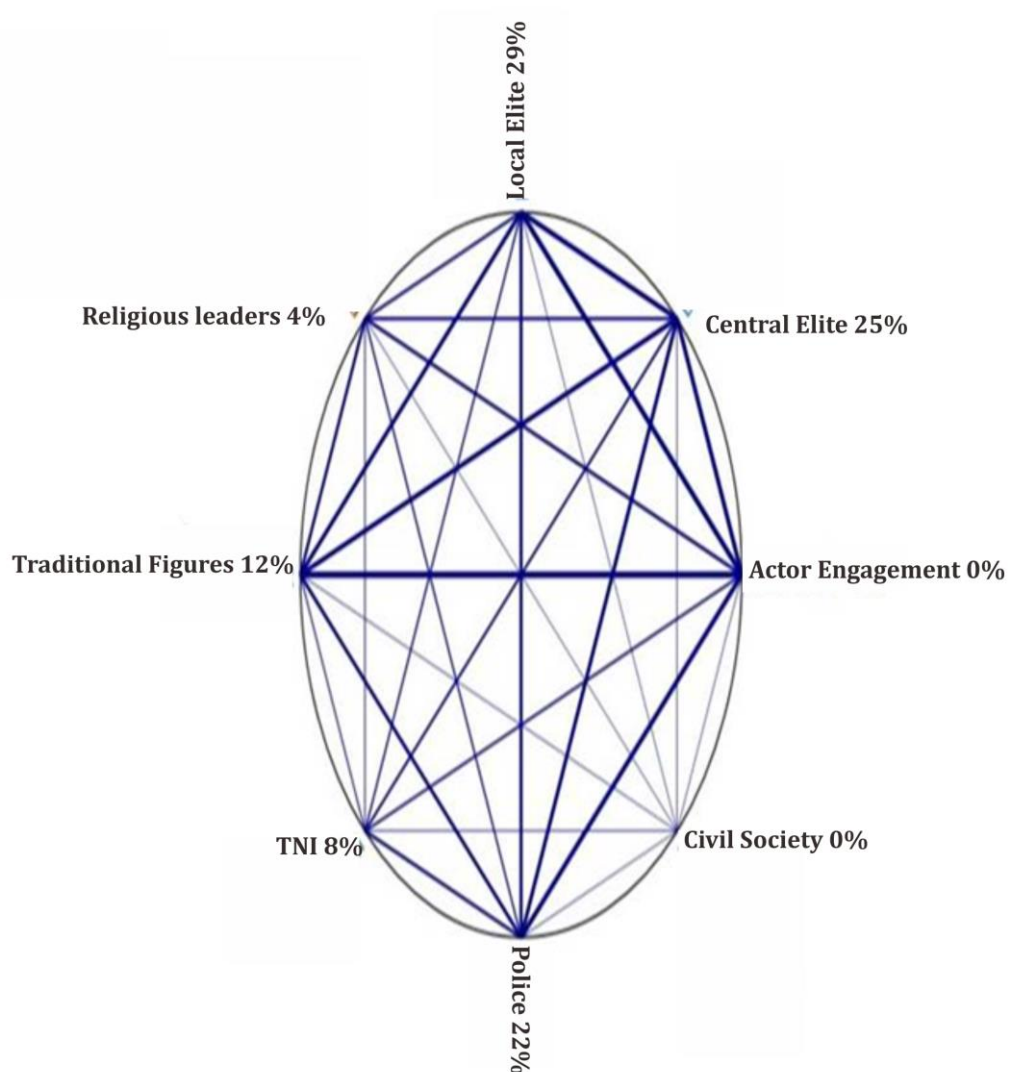
Furthermore, judging from the idealistic incentive motive for the new

autonomous region expansion plan, seen from the public interest indicators, it has a percentage of 30.00%, public services 21.00%, human resources improvement 17.00%, poverty alleviation 13.00%, and development 13.00%. Thus, the political motive of the development plan is dominated by material incentive motives, namely the interests of the central elite and local elites. From the aspect of the solidarity incentive motive, it does not influence the plan to expand new autonomous regions in Papua. Thus, regional expansion to provide better public services, increase participation, and build harmony between the community and the bureaucracy is just a sweet promise that is often given to the community. The interests of local authorities have controlled the expansion, which is part of local democracy, or regional expansion has given birth to local strongmen who control the area (Agustino, 2020).

### **Actor Engagement**

The expansion of regions started since the Old Order, where the expansion was carried out more outside Java, namely the expansion of Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan because they are considered to have broad geographical conditions. Even so, during the New Order era, there was also a process of expansion, but in a limited number. The expansion that occurred during the Old Order and New Order was top-down in the sense that it was the absolute right of the central government to become the actor of expansion. Meanwhile, during the reformation period, regional expansion was rife because the policy for regional expansion was bottom-up, influenced by the political process. Thus, the central government is not the only political actor of division, but various parties can play a role or become actors in the regional expansion (Nunik Retno Herawati, 2011). Thus, the expansion of new autonomous regions is closely related to political actors, in this case, local governments, academics, entrepreneurs, and the public who can network with their respective interests to influence the policy of accelerating the expansion

of new autonomous regions as happened in the formation of South Garut (Diki Suherman et al., 2021). For this reason, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua also involves many actors, as shown in Figure 2:



**Figure 2. Involvement of Actors in the Discourse of Expansion of New New Guineans in Papua**

**Source: Managed by the author using Nvivo 12 Plus**

Based on the results of the analysis above, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions detained in Papua involves several actors or political elites, including central elites, local elites, traditional leaders, religious leaders, TNI, and Polri. In terms of presentation, the involvement of local elites is very dominant, with a presentation reaching 29% while the central elite

reaches 25% with the dominant presentation category after local elites. Local elite actors, in this case, are regents, governors, party members, and DPRD. In the central elite is the President, members of the DPRRI, MPR, and Ministries. Apart from the central and local elites, the new DOB plan also involves the National Police with a 20% dominant percentage compared to the TNI, which is 8%. The involvement of religious leaders is much smaller with a percentage of 4% compared to traditional shops, which have a percentage of 12%, while civil society is at 0.00% participation. More details can be seen in the analysis of Word Frequency Query in Figure 3:



**Figure 3. Word Frequency Query Papua New Guinea Plan**  
Source: Managed by the author using Nvivo 12 Plus

Thus, the plan for the expansion of new autonomous regions is very much dominated by the central and regional elites. Thus, the expansion plan is heavily loaded with the interests of the central elite and the Police, and the TNI. This is because the involvement of civil society does not legitimize the DOB plan, or the new DOB plan is not based on the interests of the wider community. Political elite groups, both central and local, continue to encourage expansion in Papua by promising prosperity, wide areas, and bringing services closer to the community. Not all new autonomous regions expansion agendas are the right policies because the regional expansion has not yet reached the substance target, namely community welfare. Therefore, the reason for

regional expansion must be based on the welfare of the community rather than the interests of the elite as a group or individual (Evana & Tarmizi, 2019). The expansion only brought fresh air in the form of social and economic benefits for the elites, then the community's interests were neglected. The new autonomous regions also widen conflicts between residents in fighting over the remnants of power from the elites, and expansion is a ploy by the elite to steal power.

## CONCLUSION

The plan for expanding new autonomous regions in Papua is full of material-intensive motives, namely the interests of political elites, both central and regional, to gain rewards, position, and power. There is a narrative in the ideological incentive motive that regional expansion is for the public interest, namely providing services, developing infrastructure, increasing human resources, and alleviating poverty. However, in reality, several new autonomous regions in Papua have not impacted the Papuan people. Thus, the expansion of new autonomous regions in the context of Papua is not the right policy because the regional expansion has not yet reached the substance target, namely community welfare. Thus, regional expansion should be focused on the welfare of the community rather than the interests of the elite as a group or individual. There are a number of actors involved in the plan to expand the new autonomous regions, namely local elites, central elites, the National Police, TNI, traditional leaders, and religious leaders. In contrast, civil society at large is not involved at all.

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