

Research Article

Papua Special Autonomy and The Relocation Policy of Indigenous Betel Nut Women Vendors in Sorong City: An Interpretative Perspective

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Abstract, This study examines the implementation of Papua Special Autonomy in the context of the relocation policy affecting indigenous betel nut vendor women in Sorong City, using an interpretative perspective. The research focuses on how betel nut women vendors understand and experience the relocation policy as indigenous actors directly affected by public policy. The objective of this study is to explore the meanings, experiences, and interpretations constructed by these women in relation to relocation policies under the framework of Papua Special Autonomy. This research employs a qualitative method with an interpretative approach, utilising in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that the relocation policy has not fully reflected the core principles of Special Autonomy, particularly in protecting, empowering, and recognising the rights of indigenous Papuans. The women vendors interpret relocation not merely as an urban spatial arrangement, but as a restriction on their economic space and socio-cultural identity. This study contributes theoretically by enriching the discourse on Special Autonomy from the perspective of local actors, and practically by offering policy recommendations for more inclusive, participatory, and culturally sensitive relocation policies in Papua.

Keywords: Indigenous Betel Nut Women Vendors; Interpretative Study; Papua Special Autonomy; Relocation Policy; Sorong City.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Papua Special Autonomy constitutes an affirmative policy designed by the state to address structural underdevelopment, developmental inequality, and the socio-economic marginalization experienced by Indigenous Papuans (Orang Asli Papua/OAP). Normatively, this policy aims to grant broader authority to local governments in regulating and managing the interests of Papuan communities, while upholding respect for fundamental rights, socio-cultural values, and the participation of indigenous peoples in development processes (Law No. 2 of 2021 on Special Autonomy for Papua).

In practice, Special Autonomy is expected to serve as a primary instrument for achieving social justice and economic empowerment for local communities, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, urban development dynamics in Papua, including in Sorong City as one of the economic growth centers in Southwest Papua Province, reveal tensions between urban spatial planning agendas and the sustainability of indigenous livelihoods. One prominent issue concerns the relocation policy targeting Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors (*Mama-Mama Papua*), who function not only as informal economic actors but also as socio-cultural symbols of Indigenous Papuan economic identity.

According to data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the informal sector remains the primary source of livelihood for Papuan communities, particularly women, with the proportion of informal workers in Papua consistently exceeding the national average. Betel nut trading serves not only as a means of subsistence but also as a socio-cultural space that

represents customary relations, solidarity, and the continuity of local identity (Widjojo, 2010). Relocation policies implemented by local governments are generally justified on the grounds of public order, urban aesthetics, and traffic management. However, several studies indicate that relocation policies often result in income decline, loss of market access, and weakened bargaining power among informal traders, especially women and indigenous communities (Yustika, 2016; Sitorus & Nugroho, 2019).

In the Papuan context, this issue becomes more complex because relocation policies cannot be separated from the mandate of Special Autonomy, which explicitly emphasizes the protection and empowerment of Indigenous Papuans. Previous studies on Papua Special Autonomy have primarily focused on institutional aspects, governance of Special Autonomy funds, and their impact on the development of the education and health sectors (Kambuaya, 2015; Timmer, 2007). Meanwhile, research on informal traders in Papua tends to emphasize economic and urban management aspects without deeply linking them to the normative and philosophical framework of Special Autonomy.

Thus, there remains a limitation in studies that position the experiences and interpretations of policy subjects, in this case, Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors, as the central focus of analysis, particularly through an interpretative approach. Given this research gap, this study is important for better understanding how relocation policies are interpreted, experienced, and negotiated by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors within the framework of Papua Special Autonomy.

This study aims to uncover the meaning of relocation policies from the perspective of local actors and assess how well policy implementation aligns with the spirit of protecting and empowering Indigenous Papuans. Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching the study of Special Autonomy through an interpretative approach oriented toward the lived experiences of policy subjects. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for local governments in formulating relocation policies that are more inclusive, participatory, and sensitive to the socio-cultural context of Indigenous Papuan communities.

Given the focus and interpretive approach employed, this study is not intended to measure the success or effectiveness of the relocation policy. Therefore, the research questions are formulated to explore the meanings and lived experiences of policy subjects, namely: 1) What are the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous Papuan women vendors in Sorong City? 2) What roles and responses have local government institutions demonstrated toward Indigenous Papuan women vendors? 3) What empowerment efforts and business capital support are needed by Indigenous Papuan women vendors?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Papua Special Autonomy as an Affirmative Policy

Papua Special Autonomy represents a comprehensive affirmative policy framework specifically designed to address and correct deeply entrenched structural inequalities and persistent socio-economic marginalization experienced by Indigenous Papuans (Orang Asli Papua/OAP). This policy framework transcends merely administrative or bureaucratic dimensions, embodying normative and philosophical commitments that fundamentally reposition Indigenous Papuans as the primary subjects and beneficiaries of development interventions rather than passive recipients of government programs (Timmer, 2007; World Bank, 2018).

In contemporary public policy discourse, Special Autonomy sets explicit requirements for the alignment of policies with the genuine interests, needs, and aspirations of Indigenous Papuan populations. This alignment must be operationalized through comprehensive mechanisms, including legal protection of Indigenous rights, substantive economic and social empowerment initiatives, and formal institutional recognition of Indigenous Papuans' status as priority stakeholders in regional development processes.

The theoretical foundation of Special Autonomy rests on principles of distributive justice, corrective equity, and recognition of historical marginalization. As an affirmative policy instrument, it acknowledges that treating unequal groups equally perpetuates inequality, necessitating preferential measures to achieve substantive equality. However, critical scholarship increasingly questions the gap between Special Autonomy's normative aspirations and implementation realities, particularly regarding whether policy benefits meaningfully reach marginalized subgroups such as Indigenous women in the informal economy, who experience compounded forms of exclusion based on indigeneity, gender, and economic informality.

Women Informal Traders and the Urban Economy

Informal women traders are a strategically vital component of both household livelihood systems and broader urban economic ecosystems, performing essential functions that sustain families and contribute significantly to urban commercial vitality. Despite their critical economic roles, these women typically occupy highly vulnerable and precarious positions within urban economies, facing systemic constraints, including severely limited access to productive capital, inadequate physical trading facilities and infrastructure, and minimal legal protection or formal recognition of their economic rights and contributions (Chen, 2012).

In the specific Papuan sociocultural context, Indigenous women betel nut vendors—commonly and respectfully referred to as "Mama-Mama Papua"—perform multidimensional roles that extend well beyond simple economic transactions. These women function simultaneously as essential economic actors generating household income, as custodians and transmitters of important social values and traditional knowledge systems, and as visible embodiments and preservers of local cultural identity within increasingly modernized and externally-influenced urban environments (Widjojo, 2010).

The betel nut trade itself carries deep cultural significance in Papuan societies, serving social, ceremonial, and symbolic functions beyond its commercial value. Indigenous women's predominance in this trade reflects both economic necessity and cultural continuity. However, their economic contributions remain undervalued within formal economic frameworks and development planning, rendering them invisible to policy mechanisms and vulnerable to spatial policies that prioritize formal commercial interests. Understanding these women requires analytical frameworks that recognize the intersection of economic functions, cultural preservation, and gendered patterns of informal-sector participation within Indigenous communities navigating rapid urbanization and economic transformation.

Relocation Policy from a Social Justice Perspective

Trader relocation policies are conventionally understood and officially justified as technical instruments of urban spatial management, designed to rationalize commercial activity patterns, improve traffic flow, enhance urban aesthetics, and modernize city environments in accordance with contemporary planning standards. However, critical policy analysis reveals that in practice, relocation policies often produce significant harms, particularly resulting in the systematic loss of economic space, market access, and livelihood security for vulnerable and marginalized groups who lack political power and formal legal protections.

Scott (1998) and Stone (2012) provide crucial theoretical foundations for understanding these dynamics, emphasizing that policies formulated and implemented without meaningful consideration of the lived experiences, contextual knowledge, and subjective interpretations of policy subjects carry substantial risks of reinforcing rather than ameliorating existing patterns of social injustice and structural inequality. When policymakers and implementing bureaucrats prioritize abstract planning principles, aesthetic preferences, or elite interests over the survival needs and experiential knowledge of marginalized communities, policies become instruments of exclusion rather than inclusion.

Therefore, a comprehensive, critically informed analysis of relocation policies must extend beyond the examination of their formal stated objectives, official justifications, or administrative procedures. Such analysis must fundamentally investigate and center the actual meanings these policies hold for affected populations, the concrete material and social impacts they generate in local contexts, and the power dynamics they reveal or reproduce. This requires methodological approaches that privilege the voices, perspectives, and interpretations of local actors—particularly marginalized groups like Indigenous women and informal traders—while recognizing them as authoritative knowledge-holders regarding policy impacts on their lives and livelihoods.

The Interpretative Approach in Policy Analysis

The interpretative approach to policy analysis represents a significant methodological and epistemological departure from rationalist, positivist policy analysis traditions, fundamentally repositioning meaning-making processes, subjective lived experiences, and actors' own interpretations at the analytical center rather than treating policy as an objective, technical intervention amenable to neutral evaluation (Yanow, 2000; Fischer, 2003).

Within interpretative frameworks, policy is conceptualized not as a fixed, objective reality existing independently of human interpretation, but rather as a dynamic social construction that is actively interpreted, contested, and imbued with different meanings by the

diverse actors involved in policy processes. Different stakeholder groups—policymakers, implementing bureaucrats, policy subjects, civil society organizations—may attribute fundamentally divergent meanings to the same policy based on their distinct social positions, experiences, interests, and values.

This interpretative perspective proves particularly relevant and analytically productive for understanding how Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors interpret, experience, and respond to relocation policies implemented within Papua Special Autonomy's broader framework. While government authorities may interpret relocation as urban improvement, modernization, or even empowerment, vendors may experience and interpret the same policies as spatial exclusion, economic threat, cultural erasure, or a betrayal of Special Autonomy's promises. These interpretive divergences are not merely subjective differences in perception but reflect underlying power asymmetries, competing rationalities, and contested visions of development, justice, and belonging. Analyzing these interpretive conflicts illuminates fundamental questions about whose meanings, whose knowledge, and whose interests shape policy formation and implementation, revealing policy as an arena of symbolic and material struggle rather than neutral technical administration.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretative perspective. This approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings, experiences, and interpretations constructed by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors (*Mama-Mama Papua*) regarding relocation policies within the context of Papua Special Autonomy.

The research was conducted in Sorong City, Southwest Papua Province, focusing on Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors operating in urban areas. The research participants included the women vendors as the primary actors, as well as local government officials involved in the formulation and implementation of relocation policies. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the participants' lived experiences and interpretations of relocation policies. Observations were undertaken to understand the social context and the practices of betel nut trading in public spaces. Document analysis included laws and regulations, regional policy documents, and official reports related to Special Autonomy and trader management.

Data were analyzed interpretatively through processes of data reduction, thematic categorization, and meaning construction. Empirical data were examined in relation to theoretical frameworks on Special Autonomy, informal economy, and interpretative public policy. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods.

Socio-Economic Conditions of Indigenous Papuan Women Betel Nut Vendors in Sorong City

Field findings indicate that the betel nut trading activities undertaken by Indigenous Papuan women cannot be understood merely as subsistence-based economic activities. From an interpretative perspective, betel nut trading represents both a survival strategy and an expression of the social and cultural identity of Indigenous Papuans in urban spaces. Dependence on daily income reflects the fragile economic structure of the vendors' households, rendering them highly vulnerable to urban spatial management policies, including relocation.

Limited access to capital experienced by these women vendors reflects not only individual financial constraints but also structural exclusion within regional economic policy systems. Restricted access to formal financing schemes for Indigenous Papuan women and informal traders reinforces their position as a marginalized economic group. Within the framework of informal economy theory (Chen, 2012), this condition places these women in a sector that sustains the urban economy yet receives unequal protection and institutional support.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The primary challenges faced by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors in Sorong City relate to limited access to economic resources and policy support. First,

inadequate access to business capital constitutes a structural barrier that constrains the growth of their enterprises. Without sufficient and sustainable financial support, trading activities remain subsistence-oriented, meeting only daily needs and providing no opportunities for long-term welfare improvement.

Second, Indigenous Papuan women vendors face limited access to adequate trading facilities, including proper selling spaces, protection from weather conditions, and basic infrastructure support. This condition indicates that urban economic management policies have not fully accounted for the needs of Indigenous women traders, who are integral to the local economic system. Third, the absence of secure and adequate trading locations exacerbates their economic vulnerability. Uncertainty regarding selling locations directly affects income stability and places them at risk of eviction. This situation confirms that the issue extends beyond urban orderliness and reflects inequitable access to economic space.

In this context, the critical questions raised by Indigenous Papuan women vendors about the government's implementation of Special Autonomy (Otsus) reflect a gap between the policy's normative objectives and their lived realities. Although conceptually aimed at improving the welfare of Indigenous Papuans, the benefits of Special Autonomy have not been tangibly experienced by these economically vulnerable women. This condition suggests that the distribution of Special Autonomy benefits has not adequately addressed the concrete needs of Indigenous women in the informal economic sector. Therefore, the challenges faced by Indigenous Papuan women vendors must be understood as structural issues that require policy reorientation toward economic empowerment, the provision of adequate trading facilities and space, and strengthened access to capital for Indigenous women.

Interviews with the Assistant for Administration, Economy, and Development of the Sorong City Secretariat, Thamrin Tajuddin, S.T., M.M., revealed that betel nut vendors along Ahmad Yani Street, predominantly Indigenous Papuan women, serve as the backbone of micro-level household economies, relying on daily sales to finance living expenses, school fees, and basic consumption. In implementing the Special Autonomy policy in public service and community empowerment, the Sorong City Government refers to Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 106 of 2021 concerning the Authority and Institutional Framework for the Implementation of Special Autonomy Policy in Papua Province. Under this regulation, the Sorong City Government holds authority in the economic sector while prioritizing Indigenous Papuans.

Cross-sectoral coordination among regional agencies, including the Trade Office, Cooperatives and SMEs Office, Social Affairs Office, Community Empowerment Office, the Social Welfare Division of the Regional Secretariat, and the Municipal Police (SATPOL PP), has been conducted. Meeting outcomes included agreements to prepare regional regulations, mayoral regulations, and mayoral decrees to ensure that relocated betel nut vendors are properly registered and eligible for business capital assistance. The Sorong City Government has provided business capital assistance, both in goods and in cash, as part of its mandate under Special Autonomy legislation.

According to the Head of the Sorong City Trade Office, in 2024, the government distributed business capital assistance based on Mayor Decree No. 100.3.3.3/52/2024 concerning the determination of beneficiaries of People's Market Trader Assistance funded through Revenue Sharing Funds for Fiscal Year 2024. A total of 420 beneficiaries received assistance financed by the Sorong City Regional Budget through the Trade Office.

Further interviews with the Municipal Police (SATPOL PP) revealed that, in response to concerns about urban order and perceived slum conditions, betel nut vendors along Ahmad Yani Street will be relocated after the demolition and reconstruction of the market planned for this year. In accordance with the duties and functions of relevant regional agencies, the vendors will be registered and formally proposed for inclusion in a mayoral decree.

Discussion

Capital Constraints and Subsistence Characteristics: An Informal Economy Perspective

The research findings demonstrate that Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors in Sorong City operate predominantly at a subsistence economic scale, a condition fundamentally shaped by severely limited access to capital and sustainable institutional support mechanisms. This operational reality aligns closely with informal economy theory, which characterizes informal-sector entrepreneurs as often trapped in what scholars term "survival entrepreneurship"—economic activities primarily oriented toward meeting immediate daily

subsistence needs rather than facilitating capital accumulation, business expansion, or long-term wealth generation (Abdullah, 2022).

The subsistence orientation of these women vendors is not a matter of individual choice or entrepreneurial limitation but rather a structural condition imposed by systemic exclusion from formal economic systems. Chotim (2019) provides critical insights in this regard, noting that Papuan women operating in the informal sector often remain confined to subsistence-level economic activities because they are systematically excluded from formal financing systems, banking infrastructure, and government-sponsored development programs. This exclusion persists despite the explicit normative aims of Papua Special Autonomy legislation, which, in theory, prioritize enhancing the economic welfare and development opportunities of Indigenous Papuan populations.

The implications of this structural exclusion are profound and multifaceted. Without access to formal credit mechanisms, these women vendors cannot acquire sufficient working capital to purchase inventory in bulk, which would reduce per-unit costs and increase profit margins. They cannot invest in improved storage facilities, transportation, or diversification of product offerings. They remain perpetually vulnerable to daily income fluctuations, unable to build financial reserves that could buffer against illness, family emergencies, or seasonal variations in demand.

Furthermore, the absence of formal financial relationships means these women lack credit histories, collateral recognized by institutions, or institutional ties that might facilitate future economic advancement. Their economic activities, while essential to household survival and contributing meaningfully to the urban informal economy, remain invisible to formal economic planning and policy frameworks. Thus, capital limitations experienced by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors must be understood not as individual financial shortcomings or failures of entrepreneurial initiative, but as structural features deeply embedded within the broader architecture of Indigenous women's participation in informal economic sectors. This structural understanding demands policy responses that address systemic exclusion rather than merely providing temporary or superficial financial assistance.

Lack of Facilities and Economic Space: Urban Spatial Justice

The research reveals that Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors face chronic shortages of adequate trading facilities, including proper selling spaces, protection from adverse weather, and basic infrastructure that would enable dignified and secure economic activity. Additionally, they experience profound uncertainty regarding the security and permanence of their trading locations. These conditions can be analyzed productively through the theoretical lens of urban spatial justice and the politics of access to economic space in contemporary urban environments.

Kanem (2018) provides crucial theoretical grounding for understanding these dynamics, arguing that Indigenous Papuan women traders must continuously negotiate and renegotiate their access to public urban spaces with state authorities, municipal enforcement agencies, and formal economic actors. These negotiations are inherently asymmetrical, as urban spatial policies and planning frameworks frequently marginalize, delegitimize, or actively suppress women's informal economic activities in favor of formalized commercial development, aesthetic modernization projects, and spatial regimes that privilege formal business interests and middle-class consumption patterns.

Wambrauw (2013) reinforces and extends this analysis, demonstrating through empirical research that the overwhelming majority of Indigenous Papuan women operating in the informal sector lack access to adequate, purpose-designed trading facilities. This infrastructure deficit places them in heightened vulnerability and precarity, exposing them to environmental hazards, leaving them without sanitation facilities, and leaving them without legal protection or formal recognition of their economic rights to urban space.

These findings collectively reinforce a critical analytical point: the challenges facing Indigenous Papuan women vendors extend far beyond narrow technical questions of urban order, traffic management, or aesthetic improvement. Rather, they fundamentally concern issues of equitable access to economic space, spatial justice, and the right to the city. When urban planning and management policies systematically exclude informal traders—particularly Indigenous women—from adequate and secure trading locations, these policies effectively deny their economic citizenship and right to participate in urban economic life.

The spatial marginalization of Indigenous Papuan women vendors reflects broader patterns of intersectional discrimination, wherein Indigenous identity, gender, informal employment status, and economic marginalization compound to produce particularly severe forms of spatial and economic exclusion. Urban spatial policies that prioritize aesthetic considerations, formal commercial interests, or elite consumption preferences over the economic survival needs of marginalized populations represent fundamental violations of spatial justice principles. Addressing these inequities requires reconceptualizing urban space not merely as a site for regulation and control, but as a commons to which all residents—including Indigenous women, informal traders—possess legitimate claims and rights of access.

Relocation and Economic Vulnerability: Policy Implementation Gap

The absence of secure, legally recognized trading spaces, combined with the non-participatory character of relocation policies, significantly intensifies the economic vulnerability experienced by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors in Sorong City. This intensification occurs through multiple interconnected mechanisms that undermine both immediate livelihood security and longer-term economic stability and opportunity.

Setitit et al. (2025) provide crucial contextual analysis, noting that street vendor management and spatial regulation policies implemented across Papua Province often prioritize urban aesthetic considerations, spatial orderliness, and modernization discourses over substantive economic protection for economically vulnerable populations, with Indigenous women bearing disproportionate burdens under such policies. These policy priorities reflect broader tensions between competing visions of urban development—formal, aestheticized, tourist-friendly urban spaces versus diverse, inclusive urban economies that accommodate informal livelihoods.

The specific case of relocation policy in Sorong City exemplifies these problematic dynamics. The Mayor of Sorong's oral directive on vendor relocation, coupled with relocation plans that lack clearly specified timelines, defined relocation destinations, or commitments to provide adequate replacement facilities, reflects a critical policy implementation gap identified by public policy analysis. This gap represents the often substantial discrepancy between stated policy intentions, normative policy objectives, and the actual grassroots-level impacts experienced by affected populations.

Policy implementation gaps arise from various sources, including inadequate resources for implementation, lack of coordination among implementing agencies, insufficient consultation with affected communities, absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and divergence between policymakers' priorities and frontline bureaucrats' practices. In the context of vendor relocation, the implementation gap manifests as policies announced in terms of urban improvement and economic empowerment actually functioning as mechanisms of displacement and economic disruption for vulnerable Indigenous women.

The non-participatory nature of relocation planning compounds these problems. When relocation decisions are made without meaningful consultation with affected vendors, without incorporating their knowledge of consumer patterns, spatial needs, and economic constraints, and without securing their informed consent, such policies inevitably fail to address actual needs and often produce counterproductive outcomes. Relocated vendors may find themselves distant from their customer bases, lack transportation infrastructure, or compete with established traders in new locations, resulting in a decline in income rather than economic improvement.

Furthermore, the uncertainty and insecurity generated by threatened relocation—even before actual displacement occurs—create chronic stress, undermine vendors' willingness to invest in their businesses, and weaken their negotiating position with suppliers and customers. This policy-induced vulnerability contradicts the protective and empowering intentions that, in theory, underlie Papua Special Autonomy frameworks, revealing fundamental gaps between policy rhetoric and implementation realities.

Special Autonomy and Affirmative Policy Gaps

The critical questioning articulated by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors regarding the tangible existence and concrete benefits of Papua Special Autonomy reflects profound weaknesses in the implementation and actualization of affirmative policy frameworks ostensibly designed to enhance Indigenous welfare and economic opportunity. These expressions of skepticism and disillusionment carry significant analytical weight, as they emerge from the lived experiences of policy subjects who, in theory, should be the primary beneficiaries of Special Autonomy provisions.

Although Papua Special Autonomy was normatively designed and legislatively mandated to improve the economic, social, and political conditions of Indigenous Papuan populations through preferential resource allocation, targeted development programs, and affirmative policy mechanisms, substantial evidence indicates significant implementation failures. Hamzah and Yudiawan (2020) provide crucial empirical grounding for this critique, arguing that the promised benefits of Special Autonomy have not been fully realized by Indigenous women working in the informal economy, despite their theoretical status as priority beneficiaries under the policy framework.

The research findings from Sorong City provide a concrete illustration of these implementation failures. While the Sorong City Government has distributed business capital assistance under the 2024 Mayor's Decree, with 420 beneficiaries receiving support financed through Revenue Sharing Funds and the Regional Budget, qualitative evidence strongly suggests that such policies remain partial, fragmented, and fundamentally insufficient to address the structural needs of Indigenous women vendors. The assistance provided tends to be administratively oriented, focused on distributable goods or one-time cash transfers, rather than addressing deeper structural requirements, including sustainable capital access mechanisms, secure and legally protected economic space, comprehensive social protection, and long-term economic development pathways.

This gap between policy provision and structural need reflects several interconnected failures. First, policy design often emphasizes quantifiable outputs—such as the number of beneficiaries and the amounts distributed—rather than qualitative outcomes, such as sustained livelihood improvement, economic security, or enhanced bargaining power. Second, assistance programs frequently operate within existing structural constraints rather than challenging the fundamental conditions that produce Indigenous women's economic marginalization. Third, top-down policy implementation approaches fail to incorporate Indigenous women's own knowledge, priorities, and agency in defining their needs and appropriate responses.

The affirmative policy gap also reflects an inadequate understanding of how intersecting forms of marginalization—Indigenous identity, gender, informal employment status, spatial exclusion—compound to produce particularly severe forms of economic vulnerability requiring comprehensive, structurally-oriented policy responses. Addressing these gaps requires a fundamental reorientation of Special Autonomy implementation toward participatory, rights-based approaches that center Indigenous women's voices, address structural exclusion, and deliver meaningful economic transformation rather than superficial assistance.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the challenges faced by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors in Sorong City are structural and multidimensional, extending beyond issues of urban order. These women serve as the backbone of household economies, relying on daily trading activities to meet basic needs such as food, children's education, and family sustainability. Nevertheless, their position within the urban economic structure remains highly vulnerable.

First, limited access to adequate business capital results in subsistence-oriented trading activities. Although business capital assistance distributed by the Sorong City Government under Special Autonomy reflects the government's commitment, it has not fully addressed the need for sustainable business development and long-term welfare improvements. This indicates that economic empowerment policies remain partial and insufficiently integrated. Second, limited facilities and the absence of secure trading spaces exacerbate economic vulnerability. Uncertainty of selling locations and lack of infrastructure directly affect income stability. Urban spatial planning has not fully recognized Indigenous women traders as legitimate and essential actors within the local economy.

Third, enforcement processes and relocation plans lacking representative alternative trading spaces place these women in socially and economically precarious positions. Policy implementation has tended to prioritize urban aesthetics and order, while equitable access to economic space has not become a primary concern. Fourth, the gap between the normative objectives of Papua Special Autonomy and the lived realities of Indigenous Papuan women vendors indicates that the benefits of Special Autonomy have not fully reached the concrete needs of Indigenous women in the informal sector. Their critical reflections on the

implementation of Otsus reflect perceived policy injustice and limited tangible welfare improvements.

Therefore, the challenges faced by Indigenous Papuan women betel nut vendors in Sorong City reflect structural issues that require a reorientation of Special Autonomy policy toward stronger economic empowerment. Such reorientation should include sustainable capital access, provision of safe and adequate trading facilities, and urban governance policies that are just, participatory, and culturally sensitive to the socio-cultural conditions of Indigenous Papuan communities.

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