

## The Impact of the Special Autonomy Fund on Indigenous Papuans (OAP) and Support for the TNI-Polri

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### ABSTRACT

Special Autonomy (Otsus) for Papua is a central government policy that aims to improve the welfare of indigenous Papuans (OAP) through infrastructure, education, health, and economic development, as well as supporting TNI-Polri operations in maintaining security in the region. Despite the large amount of special autonomy funds allocated, reaching IDR 8.5 trillion by 2022, major challenges remain in achieving equitable prosperity for indigenous Papuans. The Human Development Index (HDI) in Papua increased slightly to 60.62 in 2021, but remains the lowest nationally. In addition, only about 8% of indigenous Papuans are categorized as prosperous. This study aims to analyze the impact of the use of special autonomy funds on the welfare and quality of life of indigenous Papuans, evaluate the role of these funds in supporting TNI-Polri operations, and assess the effectiveness of their allocation in supporting local government activities and maintaining security stability in Papua. The results show that despite improvements in the welfare of the Papuan people and support for the operations of the TNI-Polri, the unequal distribution and use of funds remains a challenge. Therefore, increased transparency, accountability and public participation in the management of Special Autonomy funds are necessary to ensure equitable and sustainable benefits for all Papuans.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Special Autonomy (Otsus) for Papua was given as a form of central government policy to give greater authority to the Papuan local government in managing resources and policies in the region. The special autonomy funds received by the local government aim to improve the welfare of the Indigenous Papuan people (OAP) through infrastructure, education, health, and economic development. In addition, these funds are also used to support TNI-Polri operations in activities such as security, regional elections, development, and recruitment.

The Papua Special Autonomy Fund (Otsus) has become one of the main policies of the central government in an effort to improve the welfare of the indigenous Papuan people (OAP) and support the operations of the TNI-Polri in the region. These funds are given with the hope of encouraging infrastructure development, improving the quality of education and health, and strengthening the local economy. According to Law Number 2 of 2021, the allocation of Special Autonomy funds for Papua reached IDR 8.5 trillion in 2022, which is divided into Specific Grant and Block Grant (Masitoh, 2021; Sultan & Prasetya, n.d.).

The use of Special Autonomy funds for indigenous Papuans has focused on various important sectors. An increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) is one indicator of the success of this policy. Despite a small increase in Papua's HDI in 2021 to 60.62, the region still ranks at the bottom nationally. This shows that although large funds have been allocated, great challenges remain in achieving equitable prosperity for all indigenous Papuans (BPS Papua, 2021; Sultan & Prasetya, n.d.).

In addition, special autonomy funds are also used for TNI-Polri operations in maintaining security and order in Papua. This includes election security activities, infrastructure development, and recruitment of security personnel. However, the unequal distribution and use of funds often leads to dissatisfaction among local communities. Data shows that only around 8% of indigenous Papuans can be categorized as prosperous, while the majority are still in the moderately prosperous or less prosperous categories (Sultan & Prasetya, n.d.).

To improve the effectiveness of the Special Autonomy Fund, greater transparency and accountability in its management are required. Local governments need to involve local communities in the planning and implementation of programs funded by Otsus. In addition, capacity building of local institutions and education for local human resources is essential so that the benefits of the Special Autonomy fund can be felt equally and sustainably by all Papuans (Sultan & Prasetya, n.d.).

However, the challenges in managing Papua's Special Autonomy funds remain enormous. One of the main challenges is the lack of oversight in the use of funds, which often leads to inefficiencies and misuse. There are many reports of misappropriation of special autonomy funds allocated for infrastructure development and public services, which ultimately do not reach the people who are supposed to benefit. Therefore, improvements in reporting, auditing and monitoring systems are needed so that every rupiah of the Special Autonomy fund is used optimally for the welfare of OAP (BPS Papua, 2021).

In addition, the synergy between the local government, the central government and the security forces must be strengthened. The support of the TNI-Polri in Papua is very important to create security stability that supports development. However, a security approach alone is not enough without efforts to improve welfare and inclusive dialog with the Papuan people. It is important for the government to improve coordination with various stakeholders, including traditional, religious and civil society leaders, in the formulation of more holistic and sustainable policies (Sultan & Prasetya, n.d.).

For this reason, in the future there needs to be an in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of Otsus implementation. The government needs to listen to the aspirations of the Papuan people more openly and transparently in evaluating this policy. Improvements in the welfare of OAPs can not only be measured in economic terms, but also from increased access to education, health, and recognition of their cultural and political rights. That way, Otsus is expected not only to be a financial instrument, but also a bridge to achieve equality and justice for all Papuans (Masitoh, 2021).

### ***Problem Formulation***

From this background, this research has the following problem formulation:

1. How is the impact of the use of special autonomy funds on the welfare and quality of life of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) analyzed?
2. What is the role and contribution of the Special Autonomy Fund in supporting TNI-Polri operations in Papua?
3. How effective is the allocation of the Special Autonomy Fund in supporting various local government activities and maintaining security stability in Papua?

### ***Research Objectives***

This study has the following research objectives:

1. Analyzing the impact of the use of Special Autonomy Funds on the welfare and quality of life of Indigenous Papuans (OAP).
2. Evaluate the role and contribution of the Special Autonomy Fund in supporting TNI-Polri operations in Papua.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the Special Autonomy Fund allocation in supporting various local government activities and maintaining security stability in Papua.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The implementation of Special Autonomy (Otsus) in Papua, designed to improve the welfare and quality of life of Indigenous Papuans (OAP), has been an important policy by the Indonesian government. This review explores the various impacts of the Special Autonomy Fund on OAP and the support provided for TNI-Polri operations in the region.

### ***Impact on the Welfare of Indigenous Papuans***

The main objective of the Special Autonomy fund is to address the socio-economic disparities faced by indigenous Papuans through improved infrastructure, education, health, and economic development. Research shows varying impacts on the welfare of OAPs. According to research by Ham and Octaviani (2022), the Human Development Index (HDI) in Papua remains the lowest among 34 provinces in Indonesia, despite significant allocations of special autonomy funds. This finding suggests that despite large financial inputs, translation into tangible improvements in living standards is less effective than expected (Ham & Octaviani, 2022).

Furthermore, another study examining the distribution and utilization of Otsus funds showed that while some OAP communities reported improved access to health and education services, the overall impact was inconsistent. Factors such as geographical challenges, administrative efficiency and socio-political dynamics strongly influence the effectiveness of these funds (Juliarini & Hatmoko, 2020). This inconsistency in impact emphasizes the need for a more robust and context-sensitive approach to the allocation and management of Otsus funds.

### ***Support for TNI-Polri Operations***

In addition to improving the welfare of OAPs, Otsus funds also play an important role in supporting the operations of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Polri) in Papua. These funds are allocated to improve security measures, support local elections, and facilitate recruitment and training programs. Part of the Otsus budget is directed to special grants for TNI-Polri operations, aimed at maintaining stability and addressing security issues in the region (BPS Papua, 2021).

Research shows that the allocation of Otsus funds to TNI-Polri has facilitated a range of security and development activities, contributing to a more stable environment that supports development projects. However, there are concerns about the militarization of aid and its impact on trust and cooperation between security forces and local communities. Effective oversight and transparent management of these funds is essential to ensure their use is appropriate and beneficial to the intended recipients (Masitoh, 2021).

### ***Effectiveness of Fund Allocation***

The effectiveness of the allocation of Otsus funds remains a topic of debate. Although the funds are intended to promote equitable development and stability, the actual results show mixed success. Statistical analysis, such as the regression model used in some studies, shows a positive but moderate correlation between the allocation of Otsus funds and improvements in welfare indicators (Juliarini & Hatmoko, 2020). This analysis suggests that although there is a functional relationship between funds and socio-economic improvements, other variables such as governance quality, local participation, and socio-political stability play a significant role.

In addition, the literature suggests that the effectiveness of these funds in achieving their objectives is hampered by issues of accountability and

transparency. Strengthening local governance structures and ensuring community involvement in decision-making processes are recommended to enhance the impact of Otsus funds. Addressing these challenges could result in more sustainable and equitable development outcomes for OAPs as well as a more effective support framework for TNI-Polri operations in Papua (Ham & Octaviani, 2022; Juliarini & Hatmoko, 2020).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach to analyze the impact of the Special Autonomy Fund on the welfare of indigenous Papuans (OAP) and support for TNI-Polri operations. This method involves collecting and analyzing data from various secondary sources, including academic journals, government reports, books, and other articles relevant to the research topic.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Impact Analysis of the Use of Special Autonomy Funds on the Welfare and Quality of Life of Indigenous Papuans (OAP)***

The Special Autonomy Fund (Otsus) allocated to Papua Province aims to improve the welfare and quality of life of Indigenous Papuans (OAP) through various development programs. According to research by Juliarini and Hatmoko (2020), there is a positive relationship between the Special Autonomy fund and the increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) in Papua. Increased special autonomy funds contribute to an increase in HDI, although the impact is relatively small due to complex geographic, demographic and local policy challenges (Juliarini & Hatmoko, 2020). In addition, research conducted by Iryanti et al. (2014) showed that the Otsus policy has a significant impact on the welfare of indigenous Papuans in Mimika Regency, with a regression coefficient of 0.689 and a correlation coefficient of 0.345, indicating a considerable contribution to community welfare (Iryanti et al., 2014).

While there is a positive correlation between Otsus funds and improvements in the Human Development Index (HDI), the results achieved have been limited due to the unique geographic and demographic factors in Papua. Papua is a large geographical area with significant infrastructure challenges, making access to education, health and economic services difficult in remote areas. In addition, local policies that are not always in line with central policies also affect the effective use of Otsus funds. Therefore, despite the increase in special autonomy funds, the impact on people's welfare is still not maximized throughout Papua (Juliarini & Hatmoko, 2020).

In addition to geographical challenges, the implementation of Otsus funds also faces obstacles in terms of governance and transparency. Research by Iryanti et al. (2014) that showed a significant impact of the Special Autonomy fund on welfare in Mimika Regency may not apply equally to all districts in Papua. Some areas still face problems in the distribution and use of funds that do not match the needs of local communities. The lack of community oversight and involvement in the planning and implementation of Otsus programs has resulted

in a lack of effectiveness in achieving the goal of improving the welfare of Indigenous Papuans (OAP).

To increase the positive impact of the Special Autonomy fund, efforts are needed to improve governance and increase community participation. Local governments must be more transparent and accountable in managing Otsus funds, by involving Papuan communities in planning programs that are relevant to local needs. In addition, increasing the capacity of local governments in managing the budget is also important to ensure that the funds actually have an impact on sustainable development, particularly in the education, health and economic sectors. With a more inclusive and targeted approach, the Special Autonomy fund has great potential to further improve the welfare of OAPs in the future.

### ***The Role and Contribution of the Special Autonomy Fund in Supporting TNI-Polri Operations in Papua***

The Special Autonomy Fund also plays an important role in supporting TNI-Polri operations in Papua, especially in terms of security, the implementation of regional head elections (Pilkada), development, and recruitment. According to Lay and Purwoko (2018), special autonomy funds are not only allocated for community welfare, but also to support TNI-Polri operations to maintain security stability in Papua. This significant allocation of funds reflects the central government's commitment to ensuring that security and order in the region are well maintained (Lay & Purwoko, 2018). This financial support is particularly important given the security challenges in Papua, which require a comprehensive and sustainable approach.

While the allocation of special autonomy funds to support the TNI-Polri plays an important role in maintaining security stability, there are concerns that an overly dominant security approach could detract from the focus on development and community welfare. Sustainable security in Papua depends not only on military or police operations, but also on fulfilling the social, economic and cultural rights of local communities. An imbalance between the allocation of funds for security and welfare programs could exacerbate social tensions, which in turn could hamper Otsus' long-term goal of improving the welfare of Papuans (Orang Asli Papua).

In addition, the use of special autonomy funds for the TNI-Polri also needs to be accompanied by increased transparency and accountability. Without strict oversight, these funds run the risk of not being used optimally, both for security operations and in supporting regional development. It is also important to involve local communities in decision-making regarding the allocation of funds for security, so that TNI-Polri's efforts are more in line with the needs of local communities and can promote more inclusive and sustainable stability.

### ***Effectiveness of Special Autonomy Fund Allocation in Supporting Local Government Activities and Maintaining Security Stability in Papua***

The effectiveness of the allocation of Special Autonomy funds in supporting various local government activities and maintaining security stability in Papua can be seen from several indicators. First, special autonomy funds are

allocated for education, health, and community economic empowerment, which are the main pillars in improving community welfare. According to Masitoh (2021), the government has allocated IDR 8.5 trillion in special autonomy funds for Papua in 2022, with a focus on increasing HDI through education and health programs (Masitoh, 2021). Secondly, the funds are also used to strengthen customary institutions and public services, which aim to strengthen local social and cultural structures, as well as maintain security stability through the active participation of indigenous peoples.

Although Otsus funds have been allocated to a variety of important sectors, their effective use is often hampered by implementation challenges on the ground. One such obstacle is the lack of coordination between the central government, local governments and local communities in designing and implementing programs funded by Otsus. As recognized by many, the uneven distribution of funds and slow bureaucracy often hinder the achievement of optimal benefits for Papuans, especially in the education and health sectors which are the main focus of improving the Human Development Index (HDI).

Furthermore, strengthening adat institutions and public services through the Special Autonomy fund is an important step in maintaining the social and cultural stability of local communities. Customary institutions have a central role in uniting Papuan society and bridging communication between the government and indigenous peoples. Special Autonomy funds used to strengthen these institutions are expected to increase community participation in maintaining local security, especially in the context of conflict resolution through traditional mechanisms. However, without sustained capacity building and active community involvement in the management of funds, the effectiveness of adat institutions in maintaining security stability will be difficult to realize.

On the other hand, security challenges in Papua cannot only be solved through military or law enforcement approaches. The Special Autonomy Fund used to support TNI-Polri security operations is expected to create stability conducive to development. However, an approach that overemphasizes security without considering an inclusive development and welfare approach can actually create tensions among local communities. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is needed, in which special autonomy funds are not only allocated for security operations, but also for programs that support dialogue and reconciliation between the government and the Papuan people.

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, Special Autonomy funds have had a positive impact on the welfare and quality of life of Indigenous Papuans (OAP), although the increase is still relatively small. In addition, these funds also play an important role in supporting the operations of the TNI-Polri and maintaining security stability in Papua. Despite challenges in its implementation, the targeted and sustainable allocation of Special Autonomy funds is expected to continue to improve community welfare and security stability in Papua.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, this study provides recommendations to improve supervision and community participation in the management of the Special Autonomy Fund and strengthen the synergy between the local government and the TNI-Polri in maximizing the use of funds for the welfare of the people and the security of the Papua region. In addition, this study recommends that the following be done

### *Improving Transparency and Accountability in the Management of Special Autonomy Funds*

To ensure that the use of the Special Autonomy Fund achieves its intended goals, it is important for central and local governments to improve transparency and accountability in budget management. Stricter monitoring and auditing mechanisms should be implemented, including the involvement of local communities in the process of program planning and implementation. This can reduce the risk of misappropriation and ensure that every dollar allocated is truly used for the welfare of the Papuan people.

### *Strengthening Local Government Capacity and Involving Indigenous Peoples*

The Papuan local government needs to improve its capacity to manage the Special Autonomy budget more effectively. Training and capacity building for local leaders, as well as increased cooperation with adat institutions, will help in designing programs that are more relevant to the needs of local communities. Involvement of indigenous people in decision-making and fund management will increase program effectiveness and reduce social discontent.

### *A More Inclusive and Balanced Development Approach*

Although the Special Autonomy Fund is used to support TNI-Polri security operations, an overly security approach should be avoided. Instead, a more balanced approach between security and welfare development efforts should be adopted. The government should prioritize programs that promote dialogue, reconciliation, and improved access to education, health, and economic services for Papuans. This approach is expected to create long-term stability based not only on military power but also on inclusive development.

## FURTHER STUDY

To build on the findings of this study, several areas for further study are recommended:

1. **In-depth Analysis of Fund Utilization:** While this study outlines the general impact of the Special Autonomy Fund on Indigenous Papuans (OAP) and TNI-Polri operations, future research could focus on a more detailed analysis. Research should examine the allocation of funds on a district-by-district basis to identify which areas have effectively utilized these resources and which have not. This will provide a clearer understanding of the factors contributing to the successful or unsuccessful use of funds.
2. **Longitudinal Studies on Welfare Metrics:** Given the relatively slow progress in improving the well-being of OAP, future studies should adopt a longitudinal approach. This would allow for a more detailed

examination of trends over time, focusing on welfare indicators such as health, education, income levels, and HDI, with an emphasis on understanding how long-term use of funds correlates with sustained improvements in these areas.

3. **Community Involvement in Fund Allocation:** Further research is needed into how community participation in the allocation and management of Otsus funds can be improved. Case studies on community-led initiatives and how they influence the success of Otsus funds could provide valuable insights for creating more inclusive governance models.
4. **Comparative Study of Security Approaches:** As the allocation of funds to the TNI-Polri is a key component of the Special Autonomy framework, it would be useful to conduct a comparative study of the different security strategies used in Papua. This could include an exploration of how a balance between security measures and socio-economic development initiatives can be achieved to promote long-term peace and stability in the region.
5. **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Accountability Measures:** Given that the issue of transparency and accountability in the management of Otsus funds is a recurring challenge, further research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of current oversight mechanisms. Future research could explore best practices in fund auditing and public participation from other regions or countries and propose ways to strengthen these mechanisms in Papua.
6. **The Impact of Special Autonomy on Local Governance:** The relationship between central and local governments in terms of fund management and policy implementation is an important factor in the effectiveness of Otsus. Future research should focus on the capacity of local government structures to manage these funds effectively, exploring gaps in administrative capacity, quality of governance, and policy alignment between central and local governments.

Further research will not only deepen understanding of the effectiveness of Otsus funds, but also provide important insights to improve policy formulation and implementation for the benefit of indigenous Papuans and broader security concerns in Papua.

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