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Special Autonomy in Papua and West Papua

An Overview of Key Issues

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Abstract: The special autonomy granted to the Provinces of Papua and West Papua is a special authority that is recognized and granted by the central government to the Provinces of Papua and West Papua to regulate and manage the interests of their local community based on the aspirations and basic rights of the people of Papua and West Papua. The implementation of the special autonomy in Papua and West Papua has encountered many challenges, such as in managing funds, human resources, institutional capacity, and governance, which impacted the welfare of the people. This study aimed to review the two decades of implementation of the special autonomy, its challenges and obstacles, and dynamics in fund supervision in improving the welfare of the people of Papua and West Papua. To achieve its aims, this study used a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review. The results of the study showed that there were discrepancies in the use of special autonomy funds and low realization of the budget for education and health in the provinces of Papua and West Papua. Even though there has been an increase in welfare in Papua, Papua was still lagging compared to other provinces as evident from its HDI and poverty levels. The slow political process, limited government personnel, and human resources contributed to the slow handling of conflicts in Papua and West Papua. Supervision of special autonomy funds faced many obstacles in the communication process, weak legal instruments, and weak coordination between the central government, regional government, and community.

Keywords: public welfare; special autonomy; special autonomy

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I. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries implementing asymmetric decentralization. There are three types of asymmetric decentralization in Indonesia, which are the Capital Region of DKI Jakarta, the Special Autonomy Regions (Aceh, Papua, and West Papua), and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. As a consequence of asymmetric decentralization, the central government granted wider authority to these provinces and disbursed funding to fund their administration (Budiratna & Qibthiyyah, 2020; Jaweng, 2022; Labolo, 2014).

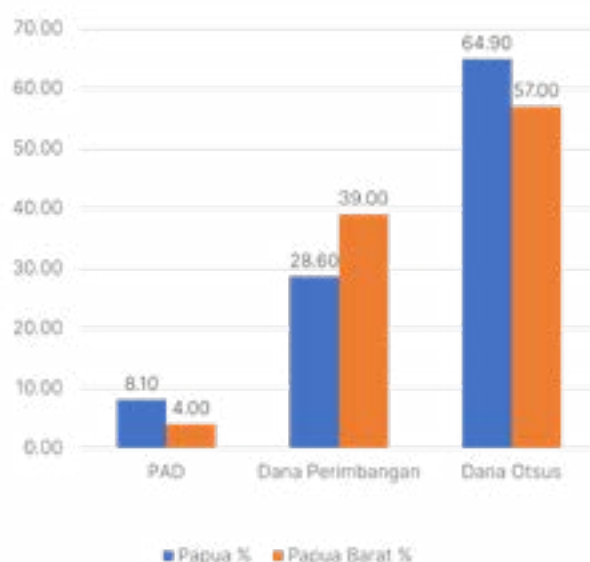
Administratively, the special autonomy funds are a response to the diversity of the communities. Politically, the special autonomy funds are granted to create and support democratic and just governance, both vertically (between the central government and regional governments) and horizontally (between regional governments) (Calcaterra & Kaal, 2021). In reality, the special autonomy funds in Papua and West Papua were used to reduce the separatism issues as a political compromise (Latupeirissa et al., 2021; Malak, 2012; Tryatmoko, 2012).

The Papua Special Autonomy Law serves as the basis for the Papuan to administer, regulate and exercise their authority in administering local government and managing the natural resources of the province for the prosperity of the indigenous Papuans (OAP). Article 1 of Law No. 2/2021 stated that indigenous Papuans are people from the Melanesian racial group consisting of indigenous tribes in the Papua Province, and people who are accepted and recognized as Papuan Indigenous People by the Papuan Adat Community (Masyarakat Adat Papua). This authority is expected to accelerate the development in Papua to reduce the development gap and empower the community. The Special Autonomy Law was born to improve past policies that caused tension due to inequality in development, human rights violations, and the neglect of the OAP's basic rights (Latupeirissa et al., 2021).

As the second amendment to Law No. 21/2001, Law No. 2/2021 on Papua's special autonomy funds had several problems. One of them was the problem of institutionalization. For almost 20 years, the special autonomy was unable to work effectively: community participation and legitimacy have weakened, the special autonomy structure has not worked well in responding to the needs of the Papuan people, and several institutional practices were not following the

Special Autonomy regulations, for example, the distribution of the special autonomy funds is not regulated in local government regulation (Perdasus), and the use of the Noken system in the Governor election (Tryatmoko et al., 2021). In addition, according to Argawati (2022), the revision of the Special Autonomy Law ignored inputs from the communities and several parties. Most of the revisions in this law focused on articles 34 and 76 on regional expansion and did not thoroughly discuss the development and supervision of the special autonomy funds. The substance contained in this law certainly cannot overcome the various problems in Papua and West Papua (Tryatmoko et al., 2021).

A study by (Aziz et al., 2016) suggests that the special autonomy funds of Papua and West Papua have not been managed optimally due to the lack of guidance and supervision over the management of special autonomy funds. After nearly two decades, the disbursement of the special autonomy funds has not created significant changes to the performance of regional development. This can be seen from the low HDI in the Province of Papua, which is still below the national HDI, as well as the level of poverty and inequality in these two provinces (refer to Table 2). Meanwhile, the value of the special autonomy funds from the central government increases every year (Figure 2).



Source: BPKAD Papua Province (2022)

Figure 1. Contribution of the Special Autonomy Funds to the Regional Budget Plan in Papua

Based on the revenue structure, from 2002 to 2020, the average contribution of the special autonomy funds and additional infrastructure funds (DTI) to the Regional Budget Plan (APBD) of Papua province reached 64.9 percent of the total regional income in Papua, and 57 percent of the total APBD of West Papua (Figure 1). This high percentage indicates that the governments of the Papua and West Papua provinces are highly dependent on special autonomy funds. Successful management of the funds would be an indication of the success of regional development.

In 2018, the audit result of the State Audit Board (BPK) showed that 51.7 percent of districts/cities in Papua Province received Disclaimer of Opinions and Adverse Opinions.

Likewise, 38.5% of regencies/cities in the province of West Papua received Qualified Opinions (WDP). A Disclaimer of Opinion means a financial report that cannot be audited following the auditing standards. In other words, the examiner does not believe in the financial statements (it contained material misstatement). A Qualified Opinion means a financial statement that has been fairly presented and disclosed in all material respects, except for the matters relating to the qualification, so that the financial information in the financial statements that are not qualified in the audit opinion can be relied upon.

The 2018 BPK report stated that several factors caused the disclaimer of opinion, namely: weak asset management (sufficient evidence cannot be submitted to BPK and goods inspected are not the same as its records), lack of proper accounting system, and limited human resources.

The 2021 BPK report also stated that untimely disbursement of special autonomy funds, delays in determining the allocation, and inappropriate procurement of goods and services have contributed to problems in the disbursement of the special autonomy funds. The BPK reports indicated that the management, utilization, and accountability of the special autonomy funds were poor and not in accordance with the applicable regulation (Kum, 2015; Malak, 2012; Tryatmoko, 2012).

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the problems in the management of the special autonomy funds in more detail. The first part of the study described the two decades of special autonomy for Papua and the role of the special autonomy funds in improving the welfare of the people of Papua and West Papua. Next, this study

captured the challenges and obstacles in the implementation of special autonomy and reviewed the supervision of special autonomy funds. Lastly, this study provided recommendations for the utilization of the special autonomy funds to address the welfare of Papua and West Papua.

Many studies focus on the correlation of special autonomy funds to development or the supervision of these funds (Abrar et al., 2018; Arispren et al., 2021; Hasibuan, 2021; Juliarini & Hatmoko, 2020; Lahumeten, 2017; Suhartono & Satya, 2020). This study combined the two issues and supported by an analysis of the obstacles to the disbursement of the special autonomy funds. As such, results from previous studies were complemented by supporting data from various credible institutions. The result of this study complemented previous studies on special autonomy and to be an input for the government to accelerate the achievement of welfare, especially for the people of Papua and West Papua.

II. Methods

The provinces of Papua and West Papua were chosen on purpose for several reasons. First, Papua and West Papua have received special autonomy funds. Second, Papua and West Papua were relatively lagging compared to other provinces in Indonesia and had a high level of regional disparity and a low level of welfare compared to other provinces.

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with a literature study method. The study aimed to capture and describe the use of special autonomy funds, as well as the problems and challenges of using the funds.

Secondary data from credible institutions/agencies relevant to the study, such as the Statistics Indonesia (BPS), the Directorate General of Fiscal Balance of the Ministry of Finance (DJPK RI), the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Papua and West Papua Provinces, and the mass media, were used to support and strengthen this study.

The secondary data in this study comprised of the use of Papua and West Papua special autonomy funds, regional development performance data (poverty rate, Human Development Index, unemployment rate, Gini ratio, and economic growth), and the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) of Papua and West Papua from 2013 to 2021.

III. Results and Discussion

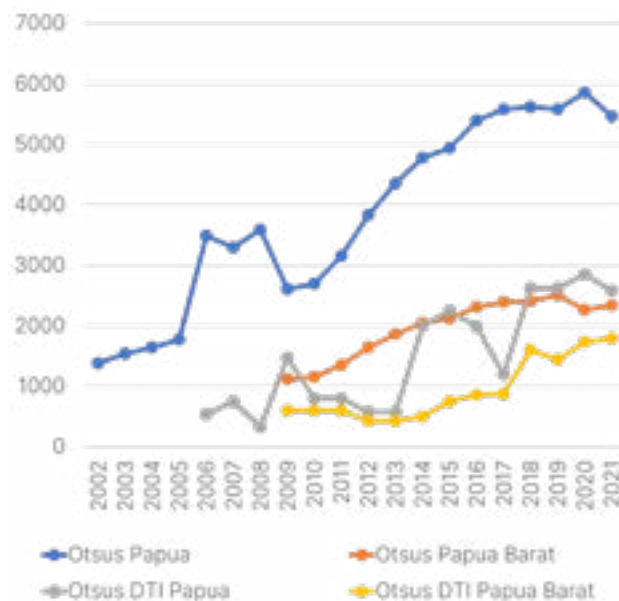
A. Results of the Two Decades of Implementation of Special Autonomy in Indonesia

The special autonomy granted to Papua was based on the economic, cultural, and socio-political background that is different from the other regions in Indonesia (BPK, 2021; Labolo, 2014). Recognition and respect for the OAP's basic rights and empowerment were deemed to be the fundamental issues for attaining welfare for Papua. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is the key so that public services and empowerment of OAP and the Papuan people, in general, can be improved (Jaweng, 2022).

The special autonomy funds were increasing every year, except in 2020 (Figure 2). The budget decline in 2020 was caused by the reallocation of the budget for activities/programs to reduce the impact of COVID-19. In 2021, the special autonomy funds increased compared to 2020, but the value was still lower compared to 2017. Pattinasarany et al. (2022) also stated that between 2002 to 2019, the special autonomy funds increased by 8.9% per year. This budget is expected to increase every year because the latest special autonomy law mandates that special autonomy funds for Papua are 2.25% of the national General Allocation Funds (Dana Alokasi Umum/DAU) (article 34 paragraph 3 point e). This provision certainly requires guidance and supervision to ensure that the funds are used for appropriate programs and activities.

Through Law 35/2008, West Papua was granted special autonomy funds along with Papua. This law mandates that 70 percent of special autonomy funds be allocated to Papua Province and 30 percent to West Papua. The amount of funds received by West Papua until 2020 is Rp23.43 trillion with the Additional Infrastructure Funds (DTI) of Rp11.19 trillion (State Finance Accountability Committee (BAKN), 2020).

The 2022 data from Bappeda for Papua Province shows the absorption of Special Autonomy funds from 2013–2020 in Papua Province averaged 90.24 percent, with the remaining budget of more than IDR 517 billion per year. The DTI realization in the same period was much lower (81.09 percent). Meanwhile, in West Papua, during the same period, the realization of the absorption of the special autonomy funds was an average of 88.65 percent per year, and the realization of DTI at 86.75 percent per year.



Source: BPKAD Papua Province (2022)

Figure 2. Special Autonomy Funds in Papua and West Papua (billion)

This indicates that the funds have not been fully realized following the mandate of the Special Autonomy Law.

The 2020 BPK report stated that there were discrepancies in the use of the special autonomy funds for education, health, infrastructure, and economic empowerment. The low absorption of the special autonomy funds was due to the standards, procedures, and criteria (NSPK) set by the central government in the local government law. In other words, there was no difference in the administration of the special authority government and the others. In addition, a study by Pusat Kajian Akuntabilitas Keuangan Negara-Badan Keahlian DPR RI (2020) found that DTI often overlaps with the Physical Special Allocation Funds (DAK).

The absorption of the special autonomy funds that are not optimal affected the development of the provinces of Papua and West Papua. This is in line with the studies by Hasibuan (2021), Aziz and Zuhro (2018), Widjojo and Budiatri (2012), and Pratomo (2021) that the special autonomy fund was not optimal in improving the welfare of the people of Papua and West Papua. In 20 years of the implementation of special autonomy, the welfare of the Papuan people (especially the OAP) was still below other provinces/districts in Indonesia.

The poverty level in Papua and West Papua has been declining since the implementation of

Table 1. Welfare Indicators in Papua and West Papua

Welfare Indicators	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Papua Province									
Poverty (%)	31.33	28.93	28.29	28.47	27.69	27.59	27.04	26.72	26.86
GINI Ratio	0,442	0,408	0,421	0.39	0,397	0,384	0,394	0,392	0,397
HDI	56.25	56.75	57.25	58.05	59.09	60.06	60.84	60.44	60.62
Economic Growth (%)	8.55	3.65	7.35	9.14	4.64	7.32	-15.75	2.32	15.11
Unemployment (%)	3.15	3.44	3.99	3.35	3.62	3.00	3.51	4.28	3.77
West Papua									
Poverty (%)	27.14	26.26	25.73	24.88	23.12	22.66	21.51	21.70	21.84
GINI Ratio	0,418	0,405	0,428	0,401	0,387	0,391	0,381	0,376	0,380
HDI	60.91	61.28	61.73	62.21	62.99	63.74	64.70	65.09	65.26
Economic Growth (%)	7.36	5.38	4.52	4.15	4.02	6.25	-0.77	2.66	1.03
Unemployment (%)		5.00	8.08	7.46	6.49	6.45	6.43	6.80	5.84

Source: BPS Papua and West Papua (2022)

the special autonomy. The poverty level in Papua declined from 41.8 percent in 2002 to 26.86 percent in 2021. This means that within the span of twenty years, the poverty level in Papua Province fell by 19.96 percent. West Papua also experienced a decline in the poverty rate from 41.3 percent in 2006 to 21.84 percent in 2021. This is in line with a study by Budiratna and Qibthiyyah (2020), which stated that the special autonomy funds can reduce poverty levels significantly in Papua and West Papua. In addition, the decline in the poverty level is dominated by migrants compared to the OAP. The poverty level of the OAP is lower than that of migrant communities. The OAP poverty rate declined from 42 percent in 2010 to 35.4 in 2019, while the poverty rate for migrants declined from 25.1 to 18.6 percent. The average rate of improvement in poverty level for the OAP (1.9 percent per year) was smaller than those of the non-OAP (3.3 percent per year) (Pusat Kajian Akuntabilitas Keuangan Negara-Badan Keahlian DPR RI, 2020).

The high poverty level in the provinces of Papua and West Papua (26.86% and 21.84%) was also influenced by the economic and social structure of the community, which was unable to optimize the management of abundant natural resources. Limited education, skills, and knowledge are some of the causes of the high poverty level in Papua and West Papua. BPS data (2020) shows that 30.17 percent (110,359 inhabitants) of the population in Papua are elementary school graduates and 16.61 percent have a junior high school diploma. In West Papua, 34.58 percent of school-age children (ages 7-24) are not in school. Both provinces also lack access to basic needs such as the need for clean water, sanitation, and proper drinking water

(Kanwil Ditjen Perbendaharaan Papua Barat, 2021; Sumule et al., 2019; Wahyuni & Damayanti, 2014).

State Finance Accountability Committee (BAKN) (2020) stated that most people living in poverty are located in the mountains and hinterlands with very limited access. The remote location far from the province's capital and market access makes these areas even more isolated and shackled with high poverty levels. The very high dependence on mining, agricultural, and forestry sectors also made it difficult for Papua and West Papua to overcome their poverty issue.

The HDI value has been increasing over the span of twenty years. Unfortunately, BPS measures the human development index of both the OAP and non-OAP. As such, these values are insufficient to describe the condition of the OAP.

In 2021, the HDI of Papua and West Papua was 60.62 points and 65.26, respectively, but compared to the HDI on East Nusa Tenggara and nationally, Papua's HDI was still lagging.

The next problem was the gap in the HDI between regencies, where the Merauke, Nabire, and Yapen Regency HDI were above 66, while Puncak Jaya, Asmat, Yahukimo, and other

Table 2. Average HDI in Papua and Indonesia

Period	Papua	West Papua	National
1996-2002	-0.03	-0.02	-0.56
2003-2009	1.19	1.30	1.46
2010-2012	1.01	1.03	0.88
2013-2017	1.24	1.07	0.90
2002-2019	1.19	1.30	1.16

Source: BPS, processed data

regencies had a low HDI of below 50. This gap indicates a very wide disparity in development between regions, which will certainly affect the quality of human resources.

Based on Papua province's Regional Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD), the average HDI increase between 2002 to 2019 was approximately 1.19% per year. Before the implementation of regional autonomy (between 1996 to 2002), the average HDI of Papua decreased by approximately -0.03% per year. This means that the implementation of special autonomy can improve the performance of HDI. Compared to the national HDI at the same period, Papua's HDI grew 0.03 points, as shown in Table 2.

This is in line with the studies by [Juliarini and Hatmoko \(2020\)](#), [Hasibuan \(2021\)](#), [Juliana et al. \(2018\)](#), [Tatogo et al. \(2018\)](#) which argued that the special autonomy funds influenced the increase of HDI in the Papua province. However, several problems, which are the main components of HDI, such as education, economy, and health, remain to be addressed. According to [Marey \(2020\)](#), the health situation was severe, 4.5 percent of toddlers (aged 0–23 months) suffered poor nutrition, and 30 percent of toddlers were stunted.

One of the government's priority programs in the 2019–2023 RPJMD of Papua Province is strengthening human resources by increasing access and quality of education services at every level of education, especially basic services. This is in line with the central government's program in the Unit for Accelerating the Development of the Provinces of Papua and West Papua (UP4B) which has been felt by OAP ([Katharina, 2015](#)).

The inequality in income distribution was also very high in the provinces of Papua and West Papua. In 2021, the Gini coefficient for Papua, West Papua, and Nationally were 0.397, 0.380, and 0.381, respectively. High inequality of income slowed down the growth of the regional economy ([Juliana et al., 2018](#)). The gini ratio is used to see the distribution of income in an area as a whole ([Saputri & Suryowati, 2018](#)). High inequality, where there is a wide gap between high and low-income people, will trigger conflict and jealousy. The Gini ratio of the Provinces of Papua and West Papua showed an improvement between 2013 to 2019.

However, development in Papua and West Papua mostly benefited migrants who were not indigenous Papuans and West Papuans. Many economic activities are dominated by migrants, such as shops along the road, while the Papuan

people are mere spectators in their land, which in turn creates a gap and triggers a conflict between OAP and non-OAP (migrants) ([Suhartono & Satya, 2020](#)).

Finally, one fact that should be appreciated is the relatively high economic growth of the Papua Province, which reached 15.11 percent, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, West Papua Province needs to work harder to increase and stabilize its economic growth.

The economic growth of Papua Province is high due to its natural resources, namely oil and gas, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and mining ([Suhartono & Satya, 2020](#)). The BPS data in 2021 shows that in the second quarter, the agricultural sector grew quite high at 15.24 percent, while other sectors experienced a contraction (decrease).

B. Challenges in Managing the Special Autonomy Funds

1. The Special Autonomy Funds Were Not on Target

Law No. 21 of 2001 mandates the allocation of the use of special autonomy funds for education at 30 percent and health at 15 percent. The latest revision of the Special Autonomy Law (Law No. 2 of 2021) mandates the use of special autonomy funds for education at 30 percent and for health at 20 percent.

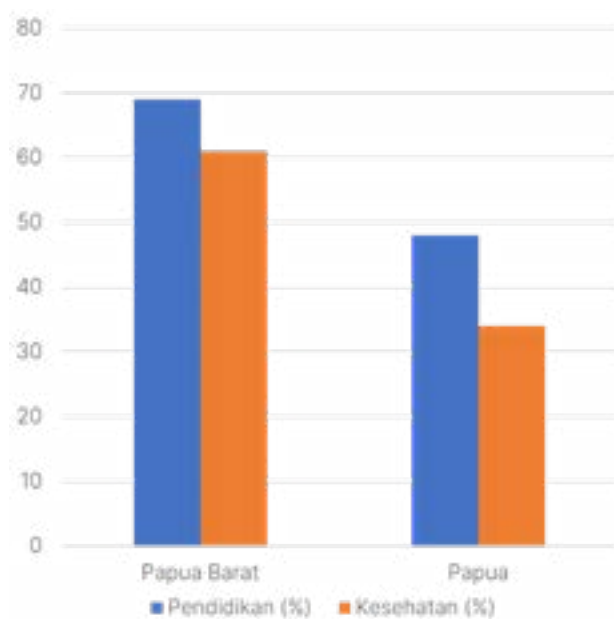
Unfortunately, the realization of budget allocations in the education and health sectors was low. For example, in 2018, 61 percent of regencies in West Papua Province and 34 percent of regencies in Papua did not meet the minimum 15 percent of the budget allocation for health. This budget is earmarked for the provision of basic health services, referral health services, prevention and eradication of disease, improvement of community nutrition, and development of environmental health and basic sanitation.

The low absorption of the budget for health affects the improvement of the health of the Papuan people, which is reflected in the low life expectancy, the high prevalence of malnutrition in children under five, and the high number of stunting. A report by [State Finance Accountability Committee \(BAKN\) \(2020\)](#) stated that the low life expectancy of the Papuan people is influenced by the lack of health facilities and unequal distribution of specialist doctors in the regencies and cities. Figure 2 shows the absorption of the special

autonomy funds in the health and education sectors.

In the education sector, 69 percent of regencies in West Papua and 48 percent of districts in Papua have met 30 percent allocation of the special autonomy. The 30 percent allocation of the budget is intended for improving literacy and providing basic education (9 years), non-formal education, and higher education. Regencies that have not allocated 30 percent for education include Tolikora, Membramo Raya, Lanny Jaya, and Jayawijaya. The impact of the low realization of the education budget was apparent in the education indicators. The literacy rate (76.79 percent) and the average length of schooling were low compared to the national rate of 95.66 percent and even compared to East Nusa Tenggara (91.9 percent literacy rate).

The special autonomy funds are prioritized for the development of human resources (education and health), infrastructure, and the economy. Unfortunately, the impact of the disbursement of the special autonomy funds has not been fully felt by the people of Papua and West Papua. As stated by [Tryatmoko et al. \(2021\)](#), specifically for education policies in Papua and West Papua, various interventions have been carried out and attempted but have not produced an optimal result in transforming Papua's education sector. The central government has issued Presidential Instruction No. 5/2007, Presidential Decree No. 65/2017, and Presidential Instruction No. 9/2020



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020, processed

Figure 3. Allocation of the Special Autonomy Funds in 2018

regarding the acceleration of welfare development in the Provinces of Papua and West Papua.

Two main challenges slowed down the education development in Papua and West Papua: structural challenges (management and budgeting for education development) and socio-cultural challenges due to diverse cultural identities (such as difficult geographical conditions and limitations to learning and developing themselves). For this reason, the role of the central government is crucial to open dialogue and cultural approaches to community aspirations (development needs in the field of education) by involving all policymakers and the community so that education management is a shared responsibility.

2. Socio-Political Barriers

Since the enactment of Papua, the political process in Papua has been turbulent. As a result, the local government's performance is not optimal and not productive. Papua had been struggling with conflicts at the start of the special autonomy law implementation, which disrupted the local government arrangement. Although Papua was no longer a military operation area (DOM), the human rights violations have not ended. The forceful taking of customary rights and the misery of the OAP made some Papuans rebel under the auspices of the Free Papua Organization (OPM) ([Aziz & Zuhro, 2018](#)). The OPM separatist group also rejects the Special Autonomy in Papua and considers it a failure. The unclear and protracted resolution on human rights violations has led to the loss of mutual trust between the central government and the OAP ([Widjojo et al., 2009](#)).

During the two decades in Papua and more than ten years in West Papua, the implementation of the special autonomy seemed to be "half-hearted." After the ratification of the Special Autonomy policy in Papua, the government of Abdurrahman Wahid, the People's Representative Council (DPR), and Megawati Soekarnoputri issued an instruction to accelerate the expansion of Papua (Presidential Instruction No. 1/2003), which divided Papua Province and West Papua despite the rejection by the Regional People's Representative Council of Irian Jaya (now Papua).

The delay and tug-of-war for the formation of the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) indicated the major influence of the central government and a limitation on the MRP authority due to the concern of the central government about separatism. This concern has led to strong political interference,

which has harmed the basic principles of special autonomy, such as the designation of the members of the MRP and the rejection of several drafts of the special regional regulations (Ranperdasus) of the [People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia \(2018\)](#).

Although the formation of the MRP increases the role of the OAP in politics and government, the OAP voice had not been seen in the policy-making process due to the limitation of quality and number of the OAP representatives ([Tryatmoko et al., 2021](#)).

A report by BPS (2018) stated that 447 mass conflicts in villages (8.05 percent) were reported to the local police. The conflicts were caused by fights between residents, residents and security forces, residents with government officials, different ethnic groups, and students. Meanwhile, in West Papua, the percentage of villages experiencing mass conflict is 5.74 percent.

From January-December 2020, 100 conflicts in Papua and West Papua were recorded, comprised of 40 cases of fighting, 22 riots, and 38 violence against civilians, and the number of victims was 57 ([Chairil & Sadi, 2020](#)).

There are several causes of problems or conflicts in Papua, namely: First, Indication of fraud in the 1669 referendum on the determination of the people's opinion (Pepera) by the Indonesian Government that did not follow the New York agreement (one man, one vote). Second, Human rights violations by the Indonesian Government and the state security apparatus.

Third, Increased marginalization and discrimination against the Papuan people. Fourth, Failure of economic and social infrastructure development in the provinces of Papua and West Papua (for example, access to health facilities, education, and economic development of the Papuan people) ([Aziz et al., 2018](#)). These problems were the root causes of the Papuan conflict, which led to increased protests and the emergence of new pro-referendum groups ([Chairil & Sadi, 2020](#)).

Horizontal conflicts also occurred due to the implementation of direct elections that were contrary to the Papuan customary and cultural values. For example, a dispute on the Authority of State Institutions (SKLN) in Papua Province between the General Election Commission and the DPRP regarding authority resulted in a vacant governorship for two years (2011-2013), and the provincial government was led by a governor appointed by the central government. The political

uncertainty causes Papua to unable to carry out strategic policies in maximizing the management of the special autonomy funds. The situation resurfaced during the simultaneous regional elections at the district/city level due to the re-election in Papua Province in 2017 ([Erika, 2017](#)).

3. Civil Apparatus

Success in the management of the special autonomy Papua is closely related to the capacity of quality institutions and apparatus A report by [BPK \(2021\)](#) stated that the Special Autonomy Implementation Administration Bureau has not carried out its duties optimally.

The report also mentioned that the Special Autonomy Implementation Bureau only manages joint affairs in the education sector in the form of providing scholarships to the OAP across districts/cities. Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) such as Bappeda have also not carried out their duties optimally due to the limited number of qualified human resources in planning and physical development. The BPK report also stated that most apparatus in Bappeda had a social science background (not competent human resources in planning and physical development) and are not supported by adequate work mechanisms.

Limited human resources in managing special autonomy funds caused a misappropriation of funds and difficulty in making decisions and carrying out evaluations, which led to wrong policies/decisions ([Jaweng, 2022](#); [Malak, 2012](#)). For this reason, it is necessary to increase the capacity and skills of the apparatus at the Papua Province Autonomy Bureau, the Special Autonomy Implementation Administration Bureau at the Regional Secretariat, and the Bappeda Section of West Papua Province to enable them to plan, implement, provide guidance, and supervise the disbursement of the special autonomy funds and realization of the special autonomy programs.

The BPK 2021 data also shows that only seven employees have competency in planning and development in Papua Province, while the districts/cities did not have any. The lack of human resources at the provincial/district and city levels affects their ability to prepare regional planning and budgeting as mandated by the Special Autonomy Law. As a result, the budgets and activities were not based on regional priorities/needs such as education, health, infrastructure, and community empowerment. The lack of knowledge and qualified human resources also

affected the reporting, compliance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the management of the special autonomy funds (Frasawi et al., 2021).

Community participation in the regional planning process in the Development Planning Discussion (Musrebang) was just a formality (Kuddy, 2018). The community was also not involved in the processes of policymaking, budget planning, or public services for managing natural resources and regional assets. The proposals presented by the community were not included in regional planning and budgeting documents. In addition, the lack of transparency made it difficult for the public to access the special autonomy funds in the education, health, and infrastructure sectors (Wijaya, 2016).

On the other hand, at the central government level, no specific management unit was put in charge of special autonomy areas to provide capacity building for local stakeholders and strengthen its control over the regional government's practices and activities in the special autonomy regions. The management of special autonomy funds in the central government was delegated to the middle-level apparatus with limited authority (Directorate of Regional Arrangement and Special Autonomy, Ministry of Home Affairs), although this matter was crucial, cross-sectoral, and often required strategic decisions (Jaweng, 2022). Thus, it was not surprising that during the two decades of the implementation of special autonomy, the management of the special autonomy policy had not functioned properly.

4. Policies and Institutions

The synergy between the central and local governments is one of the keys to the successful implementation of regional autonomy and improving the quality of public services. This commitment should be contained in every policy related to the implementation of regional autonomy. During the twenty years of the implementation of the special autonomy law, various policies and regulations have been issued by the government to improve the welfare of Papua.

These regulations are Presidential Instruction number 5/2007 on the development of Papua and West Papua, Law No. 35/2008 on the Amendment to the Special Autonomy Law for Papua, Presidential Regulation No. 65/2011, and Presidential Regulation No. 66/2011 on the acceleration of development in Papua and West

Papua, Presidential Regulation No. 2/2015 on the 2015–2019 RPJMN and Presidential Instruction No. 9/2017 on the acceleration of development in Papua and West Papua. Presidential Decree No. 65/2011, Presidential Regulation No. 66/2011, and Presidential Regulation No. 2/2015 were replaced with Presidential Instruction No. 9/2020 and Presidential Decree No. 20/2020 regarding the acceleration of development in Papua and West Papua and the formation of an integrated coordination team. Unfortunately, the policies that have been implemented by the government were unable to accelerate the development of the Provinces of Papua and West Papua to be on par with other provinces.

The conflicts in Papua and West Papua also contributed to the ineffectiveness of this policy. For this reason, efforts to handle potential conflicts should be included in the design of accelerated development in the provinces of Papua and West Papua. In the 2018–2023 RPJMD of Papua, there were 2205 cases of conflicts in 2015 and 3561 in 2017. The RPJMD also stated that Jayapura City had the highest crime rate, followed by Mimika Regency and Jayapura Regency.

The prolonged conflict might be prompt by several issues, including the ineffective resolution of problems of security and order, as well as the limited understanding of the public about civil liberties, political rights, and democratic institutions. The amendment of the Special Autonomy Law in Papua is expected to show the commitment of the central and regional governments to accelerate the development of Papua and West Papua.

On the institutional side, the amendment of the special autonomy law mandated the management of special autonomy funds by one institution, namely the Special Autonomy Agency. On the supervisory side, the Papuan People's Assembly's (MRP) role as one of the implementations of monitoring the use of special autonomy funds also needs to be strengthened. The results of the 2021 BPK study suggest that the MRP never received a report on the realization of the special autonomy funds, even though Governor Regulation No. 12 of 2012 stated that the task of the MRP as an external supervisory agency for the use of special autonomy funds. Other than a supervisory role, the MRP also has a strategic function to voice the OAP aspirations on the use of the special autonomy funds allocation.

C. The Supervision of the Papua Special Autonomy Funds

The supervision of the special autonomy funds was not effective. This is indicated by the central government's point of view that the funds were granted for political reasons due to guilt over the Papua situation after joining the Republic of Indonesia (Aziz et al., 2018). Unresolved human rights issues and threats of separatist movements have resulted in the OAP's lack of trust in the central government. The lack of communication about the management of special autonomy funds is often used by local political elites for political commodities (campaign materials) to increase their brand and claims for the success of public services in managing special autonomy funds (Aziz et al., 2018).

In addition, the Village Development Program (PROSPEK) was created to utilize the special autonomy funds in Papua. The special autonomy funds are allocated to finance this program before the funds are distributed to districts/cities and provinces (Aziz et al., 2018). However, the Papua Provincial Government did not disseminate the information about this program effectively and did not provide adequate transparency regarding the management and use of PROSPEK funds. Unprofessional Human Resources was a major obstacle in reporting and monitoring mechanisms. The Ombudsman's assessment of the quality of public services in Papua Province showed a low level of compliance. This indicates that the quality of service is poor, and the increase in special autonomy funds has no significant effect on public services in Papua Province (Bappeda Provinsi Papua, 2019).

Four factors influenced the supervision of the special autonomy funds (Aziz et al., 2019).

First, The limited capacity of the central, regional, and community institutions. Limited human resources at the BPK, BPKP, and the inspectorate caused ineffective supervision. The community's weak critical power affected regional economic performance in the implementation of special autonomy.

Second, The conflict of interests among the government elites. The regional heads often removed the regional apparatus (SKPD) considered to threaten their political interests and groups.

Third, The ineffective legal instrument of supervision. The regulation of supervision

in the Perdasus caused weaker and narrower supervision.

Fourth, The local politics. Security issues were often used as an excuse to increase special autonomy funds and minimize supervision from the central government.

Law No. 21/2001 and its latest amendment do not regulate the mechanism for monitoring the special autonomy funds. Article 34 paragraph 14 of the Special Autonomy Law only states that supervision of revenue management in the context of special autonomy is carried out in a coordinated manner in accordance with its authority by ministries, non-ministerial government institutions, regional governments, people's representatives, financial audit bodies, and universities. However, the supervision mechanism of each institution is not explained in detail. Potentially, the absence of this arrangement might cause the misappropriation of the special autonomy funds. Many parties and experts believe that the revision of this law does even come close to the "spirit" of the special autonomy of Papua and West Papua (Budilaksono, 2021). The special autonomy funds have been increasing almost every year. In 2021, it reached 93 trillion for Papua and 33 trillion for West Papua. Certainly, these funds require strict supervision to ensure that budget irregularities do not occur.

The community was also not allowed to question the minimal performance of the local government, and there was no complaint mechanism in the regions to accommodate and follow up on public concerns. In almost all regencies/cities in Papua province, there was no legal umbrella for community control over local government performance. Control was carried out only spontaneously and conventionally, which did not bring changes to Papua's development. As a democratic country, the principle of openness must be followed, and the local governments must be transparent about their administration (Tahir, 2010).

Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Papua Province are concerned with managing the realization of the special autonomy funds. However, it seems that the NGOs are unable to synergize with the local community, and they don't have common goals regarding the realization of the special autonomy funds. For example, the Papuan Budget Transparency Alliance (ATAP), formed in 2013, had an objective to monitor and advocate for the use of public budgets, especially those related to education, health, and infrastructure in Papua. The lack of

coordination made this alliance finally disband (Aziz et al., 2018). On the other hand, the DPRD, which has a task related to budgeting, did not have clear indicators to assess the realizations of the special autonomy funds. The DPR and MPR were often used as a “formality approval stamp” in the ratification and nomination process for regional heads in Papua (Herizal & Purwaningsih, 2017).

From the central government side, there was no regulation on the supervision and procedures for managing special autonomy funds. This absence of regulation has contributed to the ineffective implementation of the special autonomy policy. In addition, the coordination between the governor and the central government was also not good. The governor was unable to push for the needs and priorities of local development. The central government seems to turn a blind eye to the implementation of the special autonomy policy (Aziz & Zuhro, 2018). From the central government's side, the central government's neglect of the management of special autonomy funds was indicated by ineffective coaching functions and no provision of technical assistance to the regions. The impact of this lack of attention was a high probability of irregularities and corruption.

From the local government's side, the supervision of the special autonomy funds was carried out through its internal supervision mechanism through the inspectorate, and the monitoring and evaluation were carried out by the Bappeda. During the twenty years of implementation of the special autonomy policy, the government's internal control function was ineffective due to the lack of human resources and high operational costs to reach the challenging locations (BPK, 2021).

D. Alternative Policies

To accelerate the development and welfare of Papua and West Papua, particularly the indigenous Papuan (the OAP), the government must address several issues, which are: the fulfillment of the basic needs of the people and the creation of a development plan that is adapted to the context of Papua and West Papua and based on an affirmative and holistic approach.

In the 2020-2024 RPJMN, Papua's development is directed and focused on five aspects:

1. acceleration of the development of human resources that are superior, innovative, and

have a good character by taking into account the context of Papua, especially the OAP;

2. transformation and acceleration of equitable development in Papua by taking into account connectivity between regions, villages, cities, and customary territories;
3. partnerships between economic and development actors based on the potential of integrated economic sectors from upstream to downstream;
4. improvement of environmental sustainability and quality, resilience to disasters and climate change mitigation, and spatial planning by taking into account local wisdom;
5. improvement of bureaucracy and governance to strengthen the special autonomy, provide integrated public services, and ensure an inclusive local and social democracy.

In terms of the transfer mechanism for the special autonomy funds, the government needs to decide on the most appropriate method to ensure that the development goals can be carried out with good quality (Aziz et al., 2019; Hasibuan, 2021; Putra, 2021). The government needs to change the perspective of providing special autonomy funds from political funds to development funds. Special autonomy funds can be granted with specific objectives and strict requirements, especially in supporting the improvement of basic services related to education, health, basic infrastructure, and economic activities. In terms of public financial management, the use of special autonomy funds must be transparent, accountable, and efficient. Performance-based budgeting is also needed for the use of special autonomy funds to minimize misuse of funds.

The governments of Papua and West Papua, the central government, and the DPRD need to create a grand design for the development and implementation of special autonomy with a clear target, which will be the reference in regional planning documents for local governments to develop Papua and West Papua (Hasibuan, 2021; Pattinasarany et al., 2022). Monitoring and supervising mechanism for programs and activities funded by the Special autonomy funds also need to be created.

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planning documents for local governments to develop Papua and West Papua (Hasibuan, 2021) (Otonomi, 2022). Monitoring and supervising mechanism for programs and activities funded by the Special autonomy funds also need to be created. This mechanism has not been clearly stated in the latest amendment of the Special Autonomy Law.

IV. Conclusion

The two decades of disbursement of the special autonomy funds in Papua positively impacted Papua's economic performance (lower poverty level, higher HDI, lower unemployment, and inequality). However, the management of the autonomy funds faced several problems, such as the low level of absorption of funds, especially in the fields of health, education, and infrastructure development, as well as the lack of clarity on the priority programs and the overlapping programs/activities with programs from other funds and socio-political barriers. The low capacity of human resources also weakened the implementation of special autonomy, where security and separatism issues were often used as an excuse for the lack of evaluation and monitoring of the special autonomy funds.

In addition, supervision of the special autonomy funds was weak at the central government, local government, and community levels. The central government did not have a set of procedures or instructions for managing the special autonomy funds, nor did the regional government (the inspectorate, DPRD, and MPR) have full authority to supervise. Meanwhile, the indigenous community (OAP) was not allowed to question the performance of the local government, and there was no mechanism to file, follow up, and resolve community complaints.

As a final note, it is recommended as well as policy recommendations, it is necessary to consider the following points below:

1. First, it is necessary to have a proper priority programs/activities activity plans (in education, health, and infrastructure sector) to have clear development targets.
2. Second, the involvement of OAP should be involved in every stage of development in Papua and West Papua by opening up public spaces needs to be provided.
3. Third, the central government (Ministry of Home Affairs) needs to coach and monitor

the regional governments and increase the competence of local government officials.

4. Fourth, a grand design for the management of the Papua and West Papua special autonomy funds that are adjusted to the national target should be made to ensure that the development process of Papua and West Papua is in line with other regions.
5. Fifth, Policies on incentives and disincentives for local governments that are negligent in budget management should be enforced.
6. Finally, to ensure that the people of Papua and West Papua can quickly overcome poverty, an appropriate, integrated, and focused breakthrough is needed with an affirmative approach based on the needs of the people of Papua and West Papua.

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