

LOCAL TRANSMIGRATION PROGRAM IN MERAUKE REGENCY

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Abstrak

The lives of local communities in Papua require government attention amidst modernization and development through various programs, one of which is the transmigration program. The purpose of this study is to describe the local transmigration program in Merauke Regency. This study used a qualitative approach, collecting data through observation, interviews, and literature review. The data were then analyzed using the NVivo 15 analysis tool. The research results show that the transmigration program in Merauke Regency is currently being implemented using a local transmigration approach, focusing on local villages within the Regency, where the transmigration areas are the customary rights of the communities. The existence of the local transmigration program has had an impact on the lives of local communities, such as the construction of various infrastructure to support the program. The implication of this research is that local governments need to adopt a different approach to successfully implement the local transmigration program.

Keyword : Program, Local Transmigration, Merauke.

INTRODUCTION

The transmigration program is a government program to carry out voluntary population movement from one region to another with one of the goals being to improve welfare and settle in transmigration areas organized by the Government. The transmigration program carried out by the New Order government mainly came from Java and other islands, where Papua Province, which was then called Irian Jaya Province, was also targeted by this program with Merauke Regency being one of the areas that received the transmigration program and was placed in two areas, namely the Salor area and the Muting area which are currently included in the Semangga District, Tanah Miring District, Kurik District, Jagebob District, Muting District and Elikobel District.

The transmigration policy creates a flow of population migration from highly populated areas which is distributed to less populated areas (Susetyo et al., 2024, p. 99), This policy certainly helps the government redistribute the population, open up and accelerate development in isolated areas, and boost economic growth in agriculture, plantations, and other sectors. However,

the transmigration program also has other impacts, namely the high demographics in South Papua, making South Papua, particularly Merauke Regency, a region with a diverse population distribution. On the other hand, the transmigration program creates a gap between local villages and transmigration villages, where transmigration villages tend to be more developed than local villages. Although the transmigration program includes several heads of local families in transmigration settlements, this has not had a significant impact, as they have not fully adapted to other community groups in the transmigration settlements. This obstacle can create a gap between local residents and transmigrants, as well as other residents, in terms of knowledge, skills, and education levels.

Another aspect of the demographic complexity in South Papua is that when the regional expansion policy, which establishes South Papua Province as a new autonomous region, is implemented, the demographic population in South Papua will increase. If efforts are not made to control population distribution in South Papua, there is a possibility of resistance within the community's life order. The complexity of the transmigration program leaves various challenges for the government to take steps to harmonize various development programs. Referring to this background, the purpose of this study is to describe the government's efforts regarding the local transmigration program in Merauke Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public policy should be a step taken by the government based on facts in the public domain by utilizing all resources to solve public problems. Steven A. Peterson defines public policy as government action to address some problem, namely a government action to overcome a problem (Subianto, 2020, p. 3). However, Peterson's view on the implementation of policies issued by the government tends to be top-down, where the government, as the decision maker, issues steps to be taken to resolve various problems in the lives of the people. One of the top-down policies is the policy in the form of a transmigration program, which is stated in Undang-Undang Transmigrasi at pasal 1 ayat (2) states that "transmigration is the voluntary movement of people to improve welfare and settle in transmigration areas organized by the government." (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 29 Tahun 2009 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 15 Tahun 1997 Tentang Ketransmigrasian, n.d.). The transmigration program has been made a priority in long-term development in Indonesia with the hope of improving the quality of life of transmigrants and indigenous people in the destination areas. (Susetyo et al., 2024, p. 84).

One study stated that in the previous New Order era, transmigration was top-down, where the appointment of locations and transmigrants was directly determined by the Central Government without any other considerations. (Sukarno et al., 2023, p. 2). Other research also

states that the failure of transmigration is due to the top-down nature of the program which often ignores the conditions of the placement area from social, economic, geographical and cultural aspects. (Oktafiani & Yogaswara, 2020, p. 202). The two studies above show that top-down policies don't always have an impact on their implementation. While top-down policies may be relevant for some, bottom-up policies need to be given their own space if they impact the broader public sphere. This ensures that policies are truly effective, not only because they are top-down but also because they are bottom-up. As mentioned, the effectiveness of public policy is measured by the extent to which it is implemented and provides solutions to various current public problems. (Luthfie, 2021, p. 8).

RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research places greater emphasis on collecting and processing verbal data, which is the preferred approach in this study, using a case study approach. Creswell defines a qualitative approach as a process of research and understanding based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and human problems. (Murdiyanto, 2020, p. 19). Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews with a purposive sampling method with 7 informants, and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive analysis method using thematic analysis techniques with the help of Nvivo 15 software, where the process involved categorizing data into main themes related to the research topic.

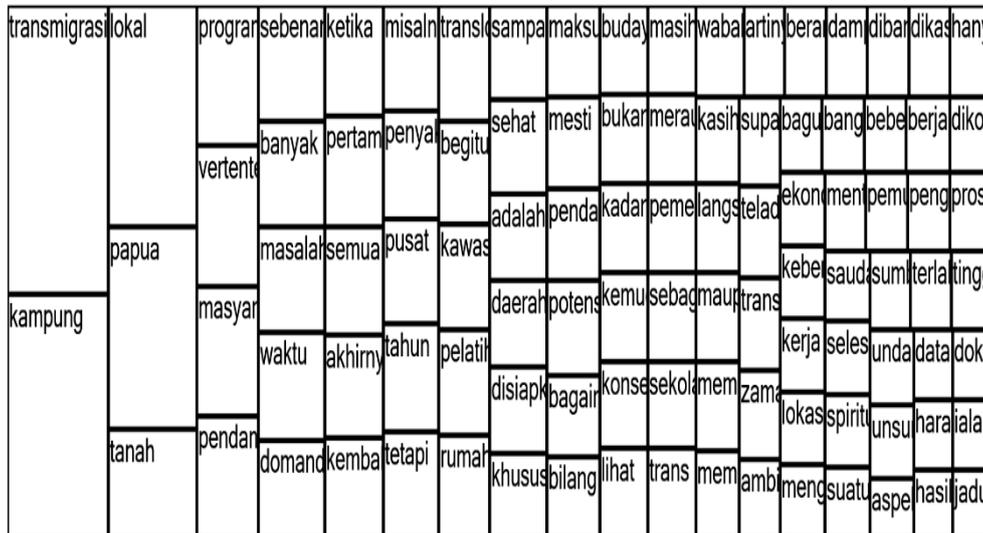
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

New Pattern of Transmigration Program

Recently, the discourse on transmigration has been quite prominent in the public sphere, particularly in South Papua, drawing a negative response from community members regarding the planned transmigration program in Merauke Regency. However, this view is not accompanied by a comprehensive understanding of transmigration itself, leading to negative social commentary, leading to rejection of the program, similar to previous years. This is due to the limited public awareness of the program, which has led to misunderstandings regarding the government's program.

The transmigration program has entered the South Papua region, specifically Merauke Regency, where it is located in two transmigration areas: Salor and Muting. One of the transmigration policies is stated in Keputusan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 7 Tahun 1978 Regarding the Determination of the Special Region of Aceh, North Sumatra, North Sulawesi, Maluku, and Irian Jaya as Transmigration Areas. The transmigration program brought changes in

Table 1. Tree Map of the Most Frequently Appearing Words in Research Data



The results of the Nvivo 15 data analysis through Word Frequency Query show that the word transmigration is most frequently uttered with a percentage of 1.32%, followed by the word kampung at 1.12%, the word lokal at 0.88% and the word Papua at 0.80% and the word tanah at 0.44%. The results of the Nvivo analysis are as the topic in this study about transmigration, specifically looking at how the local transmigration program in Merauke Regency. The NVivo analysis above is as the result of an interview with the informant Head of the Transmigration Division at the Manpower and Transmigration Office of Merauke Regency as follows:

“Salah satu programnya itu program transmigrasi lokal, program ini diutamakan terhadap masyarakat lokal dan juga potensi pengembangan sumber daya yang ada di kawasan transmigrasi”.

The results of the interviews and analysis above provide an explanation that the current transmigration program or known as the transmigration revitalization program, especially in Merauke Regency, is carried out with a local transmigration program pattern as a new pattern or new model of transmigration targeting local villages or villages inhabited by residents around the transmigration location who are indigenous Papuans as customary land owners. Payage in his writing stated that the transmigration program in Papua has the potential to transfer the customary land rights of local communities to immigrants, resulting in the loss of access to traditional land (Payage, 2024, p. 180), with this new local transmigration pattern, the conditions as intended by Payage in his research are expected not to occur.

The government through Kementerian Transmigrasi implementing a transmigration program with several types, one of which is local transmigration, where this program aims to build new cities from villages, reduce urbanization, and improve community welfare through the utilization of local potential. In addition, there are also complete transmigration programs and

patriot transmigration, as well as other transmigration programs. The local transmigration program was previously implemented in Merauke Regency, but the program had several limitations, such as conditions where it did not run optimally, among other things because the community felt uncomfortable and left the transmigration location. This was caused by various factors, one of which was the location of the transmigration location being far from the main village, as stated by the informant Kepala Bidang Transmigrasi at Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Kabupaten Merauke in the interview as follows:

“Memang pada saat berjalan ada beberapa kendala-kendala yang menyebabkan kampung tidak berjalan sesuai dengan harapan, misalnya di Kampung Mbilanggo itu banyak rumah-rumah yang kosong. Kita coba melihat kembali, mengevaluasi kembali, kenapa masyarakat ini meninggalkan tempat yang sudah dibangun. Dengan harapan kita waktu bahwa nanti jadi pemukiman khusus orang asli Papua yang baik dan layak. Tetapi memang seiring berjalannya waktu tidak berjalan sesuai dengan harapan, nah setelah kita pelajari rupanya ketika pemukiman itu kita bangun jauh dari kampung induk, ini juga menyebabkan masalah karena ketergantungan mereka ke kampung induk itu besar”

Another obstacle is the limited budget allocation from the local government for the local transmigration program. Nevertheless, with government support, the relevant parties continue to implement the program in Merauke Regency. Based on these conditions, the current direction of the local transmigration program in Merauke Regency is geared toward a model that benefits the local community more by utilizing local potential and resources.

Local Transmigration Program in Merauke Regency

Local transmigration is a new model for unraveling and regulating demographic life, particularly for indigenous Papuans, within a single region. The tree diagram analysis in Diagram 1 illustrates the results of a thematic analysis of transmigration policies in South Papua.

Diagram 1. Tree Map Diagram



Each box in the diagram represents a theme and subtheme that emerged in the research, with the size of the box reflecting the level of attention or intensity of discussion on that aspect. This indicates that the transmigration policy in South Papua is geared toward establishing new, more adaptive patterns, addressing the socio-cultural conditions of the indigenous community, and sustainably utilizing local potential.

The tree map diagram above shows one column of local transmigration requirements for those participating in the program. In 2025, the local transmigration program will be centered in Domande village, located in Malind District. Interview results with Kepala Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Merauke Regency in his explanation he stated that:

“Saat ini memang Pak Menteri memiliki beberapa fokus utama untuk daerah transmigrasi salah satunya kita di Merauke itu di kawasan Salor, khususnya di Kampung Domande dan program itu lebih diutamakan kepada orang asli Papua”.

In order to support the local transmigration program in Domande village, based on the results of interviews with informants, several things have been done, including the following:

- 1) Local transmigration areas are land that is the customary rights of local communities that is not far from or adjacent to the main village, this is as stated in the article which states that increasing harmonious cooperation between the central government and regional governments in planning policies and strategies for developing transmigration areas, as well as with the local community (traditional leaders and community leaders) regarding the provision and status of land ownership (Purba & Saleh, 2023, p. 73). By participating in a local transmigration program that is not far from the main village or parent village, social relations will certainly be maintained and avoid undesirable behavioral patterns such as returning to one's hometown because they are far from social life or alienation in the transmigration area as has happened before.;
- 2) Transmigration residents come from the main village or parent village, especially those who are native Papuans who are recorded in the village data and are willing to move to participate in the local transmigration program;
- 3) Construction of housing facilities for transmigration residents, where in 2025 the first stone was laid for the construction of 100 housing units at the local transmigration location;
- 4) Construction of other facilities that support the implementation of local transmigration programs such as roads, electricity and other supporting facilities.

The current local transmigration location still faces limitations, particularly in terms of infrastructure. Therefore, the local transmigration program in Domande village has also led to the construction of several other supporting facilities. This situation echoes previous research, which found that the current transmigration development/development area still faces significant limitations, particularly in terms of access (roads, bridges, and other means of transportation)

between villages (Ningsih & Najamuddin, 2021, p. 120). In addition to the construction of a number of infrastructures as an impact of the presence of this local transmigration program, it has had a positive effect on the sustainability of the lives of local communities, in the sense that there are often several heads of families in one house or those who do not yet have permanent housing so that the local transmigration program is very good to implement.

The research results also found conditions that require attention from the local transmigration program as follows:

- 1) Transmigration residents who come entirely from one village, this condition certainly presents a situation that is still the same as the situation in the previous local village;
- 2) There are efforts to include people from outside the village as local transmigration residents;
- 3) The condition of local transmigration land which is entirely the customary rights of the local community, this condition makes the opening of local transmigration locations dependent on the willingness and decision of residents to provide their customary rights as a location for the local transmigration program.

The local transmigration program is indeed appropriate to promote in order to regulate the lifestyle of local communities in Merauke Regency, especially given the resistance to transmigration as previously planned and the high demographics amidst the establishment of South Papua Province. Local transmigration is one program that can save the lives of indigenous Papuans from the onslaught of various aspects of development, in addition to the possibility of certain groups of customary land owners transferring their land to other individuals or groups through sale. Rather than transferring land ownership and function, it would be better if the land were managed for agriculture and plantations and transferred to the local transmigration program.

The implication of this research is that the government needs to make further efforts through various approaches to ensure that the transmigration program is not deemed a failure or ineffective when implemented. Furthermore, an evaluation of the current local transmigration program is crucial to provide input for the government and the Merauke Regency Government in determining strategic steps to be taken regarding the program and assessing its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results as described and analyzed above using the Nvivo 15 analysis tool, it can be concluded that the current transmigration program is directed at a new pattern of transmigration program, namely the local transmigration program targeting local villages of indigenous Papuans. The local transmigration program takes into account several conditions, including willingness to move to the old location or village or the parent village and the location of the local transmigration land next to the parent village. The results of this study indicate that there are differences from previous transmigration patterns, where the current local transmigration pattern is entirely determined or the initiative comes from local residents to give their customary rights to the government to then follow up as a local transmigration program. For 2025, local transmigration is directed to the Domande village, Malind District, where initial steps have been taken to build 100 housing units accompanied by the construction of a number of other facilities. Further studies are expected to propose an appropriate model or framework to support the implementation of the local transmigration program in Merauke Regency. Suggestions in this study include: 1) the need to conduct comprehensive public awareness campaigns on the local transmigration program to ensure its public awareness and prevent social unrest; 2) adequate regional budget allocation for the local transmigration program, particularly to support community empowerment; and 3) the need for evaluation of the ongoing program to inform future strategic steps for local transmigration management.

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