

Inter-Island Mobility and Social Change in Tidore Kepulauan City, North Maluku

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Abstract. This research uses a qualitative approach to explore inter-Island mobility and social change in Tidore Island, North Maluku. Data obtained from observations and interviews show that social change in Tidore occurred due to the dynamic factors of cross-island population mobility in recent years. Data were divided into groups of those who are working semi-permanently and those who are commuting to work (commuters). The main factors triggering inter-island population interactions in Tidore City are the need for labor supply, basic commodities in the food and logistic sector, as well as support services from several groups. Conversely, this town is the center of government services with labor suppliers in the formal sector (government) and service economy. It also depends on certain commodities that can only be supplied from the surrounding Island (Halmahera). The research analysis shows that infrastructure (transportation) availability contributes to the intention of local government and the community to create new economic centers in the form of regional commodity markets and additional ports to support population mobility as active mediators for the sustainability of socio-economic development in this region.

Keywords: inter-island mobility, social change, commodity, tidore island

Introduction

Geographic mobility in the region with an archipelago background has distinct characteristics. Therefore, there is a need to implement an alternative approach to the study of inter-island mobility because significant development is evident in a mobile population with a history of high socio-economic networks.

The population is the primary basis for the development of capital and movement of commodities in a region. In this context, the study of population mobility includes examining the economic structure of an archipelagic region and establishing its networks and patterns of productive dependence, in which the state and various

interest groups and social institutions are involved.

Indonesia is an archipelagic state, characterized by numerous islands or series of land connected by the sea. It is a maritime continent proven by its marine and aquatic entities aligned with islands. In several historical literatures, it is extremely evident that the archipelago maritime civilization is the main foundation for the identity network of Malay, Islamic empire, and commercial ports that were established since the pre-modern period of Southeast Asia. Additionally, it was once a global seaport (Salman, 2016; Reid, 2019).

In the historical context, the North Maluku province, particularly the Tidore

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Island, has been occupying a strategic position in the maritime trade network since the 17th century. It was one of the four largest Islamic sultanates during the pre-colonial era and had regional partnerships with West Papua as well as economic links to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries (Lapian, 2009; Widjojo, 2007; Andaya, 1993).

The city of Tidore Kepulauan (TIKEP for short) is a relatively new "island city", characterized by a cluster of small archipelagoes in the northern part of Maluku. Administratively, Tidore Kepulauan was originally incorporated into Halmahera Tengah Regency (Halteng). However, in early 2000, it broke away and became an autonomous municipality with its capital Soasio.

As an autonomous city, Tidore has been extremely progressive in building its economy in recent years. However, changes in various sectors provide a new space of local development where the quality of livelihoods of local community improved and became more productive. Furthermore, the use of local market opportunities has succeeded in facilitating regional mobility. As a result, there is an active market network in almost all islands connected with Tidore town.

Population mobility from Tidore Kepulauan to Halmahera in order to work in various formal and informal sectors is clear evidence of social change in this region. The movement of goods (inter islands) is carried out using medium-sized ships with a capacity of approximately 60 people to the Garolaha market in Tidore City. In the larger context, there is a significant indication that the development of areas around this island has succeeded in triggering the growth of new markets as well as strengthening the balance between supply and demand in the region.

In addition, the city of Tidore is a productive supplier of human resources (HR) in the region, particularly those employed in various government agencies or private sectors in Halmahera. On the contrary, communities in this island are consumers of Halmahera's basic commodities, while the Garolaha market serves as the transaction center.

Territorially, this market, which is situated in Tidore, is the center of economic activities in the region. The islanders from Halmahera are forced to become

mobile commodity suppliers to meet the communities' needs in Tidore Island. This condition shows that economic relations and community development in Tidore Kepulauan City (TIKEP) do not only automatically act as a *regional mediator* between producers and consumer nodes. In fact, economic communities in these regions (Tidore and Halmahera) serve as regional connectors that ensure economic sustainability since these two islands are a functional medium for the mobility of population, technology, and commodities.

These facts are perceived as a new socio-economic space that dynamically facilitated the population mobility in the Tidore region and its environs. However, the characteristics of inter-island economic crossings are often perceived and handled as limited, irrespective of the fact that cross-border activities aid to develop basic functions that ensure sustainable growth in these areas (Agusta, 2013; Usman & Sairin, 2017; Lalamentik, et.al, 2018).

Population mobility is the most relevant key factor in development. According to Tjiptoherijanto (2000), it is "an integral part of the development process. Mobility is defined as changes in the economic and social structure of an area. Therefore, the development process cannot exist without population mobility. Similarly, there tends to be no significant population distribution without dynamic developmental activities."

Operationally, various forms of population mobility are measured based on the concept of space and time. Theoretically, the basic concept of time is measured six-hourly or more, for example, when a person or group of people leaves their homes or original area and returns on that same day. Furthermore, the choice of staying at a place is measured by the duration from when an individual or group of people leave their homes or starting point for more than a day, and less than six months. However, for permanent mobility, it is measured by the length of time, when a person leaves the original area which tends to either last for six months or more, except for those that intend to remain in the destination (Mantra, 2012; Romdiati & Noveria, 2019).

This research proffers two central questions, namely (a) the manner in which socio-economic processes occur in a situation where inter-island mobility is the determining factor for the availability of commodities

and services requested by the government and local communities, and (b) the forms of social change that emerges from population dynamics as well as the interaction between economic players in providing a number of basic commodities involving the local government and inter-island trading groups.

Research Methodology

This research is a field study carried out from April to June 2019 and from February to May 2020. Tidore Kepulauan City was chosen based on two reasons, namely (1) in recent years, population mobility from Tidore to Halmahera has grown rapidly, irrespective of the fact that the role of the government sector seems dominant and at the same time mediates this movement daily, (2) Tidore City is primarily involved in the circulation of goods originating from Halmahera Island, therefore, this study is aimed to determine the process of supply and demand as well as the establishment of labor, and the impact of social changes in these two islands.

In this study, a qualitative approach was applied by carrying out field observations and in-depth interviews, as well as analyzing secondary sources obtained from the government office in Tidore City. The method applied is consistent with the qualitative study framed by Creswell's (2013) which stated that "qualitative research procedures simply mean viewing a subject matter from multiple perspectives", in which a number of outlooks tend to compete with each other at first glance when in the actual sense they complement each other. These differences aid in understanding the analyzed situations, particularly during the interview, which was carried out in the field. Subsequently, 45 informants were interviewed, and it was discovered that 26 of them were government employees, while 19 of them were traders. Each group has had a mobility experience for approximately 5 to 20 years.

The native Tidore language was actively used in the interview to acquire accurate data and for the informants to be at ease. The government employees were interviewed with an Indonesian accent, or in some instances, the Malay-Tidore language was adopted.

Results and Discussion

Population Mobility in Tidore

Tidore Kepulauan City is characterized by a cluster of numerous small island in the northern part of Maluku (North Maluku) land. Administratively, it was originally merged to the district of Halmahera Tengah (Halteng), although in the early 2000s it separated and became a municipality with the capital in Soasio. Historically, Soasio was the former capital of Irian Barat (1956) where Sultan Tidore of Zainal Abidin Sjah was the Governor of Papua Barat and was appointed by President Soekarno (Presidential Decree No. 142/1956, dated 23 September 1956).

Geographically, the Tidore Kepulauan City has a towering contour with the sea overlaying its environments. Several islands such as Maitara (the Island photographed on a thousand rupiah banknotes), Mare, and part of the Halmahera mainland are also administratively regarded as an integral part of Tidore City. The sea surrounds this area, and in the north it is bordered by Halmahera Barat Regency, in the south by Halmahera Selatan Regency, in the east by Halmahera Timur and Halmahera Tengah Regencies, and in the west by Ternate City. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Tidore Kepulauan City (2018), it has a population of approximately 99,337 (Aryanti, 2018; BPS, 2018; Danindro, 2017).

Nowadays, the various sectors and infrastructure are physically improved in Tidore Island. There is significant progress on the economy as well as on local human resources. There are also a number of changes in public aspirations and participation in local development. Furthermore, the use of public concern as the conditions for progressivity is becoming more effective.

The population mobility from Tidore to Halmahera Island in order to work in various formal sectors is a manifestation of the dynamics of development in this region. Conversely, the movement of goods in small boats that conveys approximately 20 people to the Garolaha market is a proof of development in this Island.

The indigenes of Tidore are producers of human resources in Halmahera Island where they are employees in various agencies in the region. In addition, the individuals residing in Halmahera Island are consumers of the services rendered in the government bureaucracy. Consequently, the

indigenes of Tidore are consumers of the basic commodities supplied from Halmahera Island to the Garolaha market, which serves as the center point for economic activities.

The indigenes and residents of Halmahera Island become producers who fulfill the request of people from Tidore. This shows that economic relations and community development in the Tidore Kepulauan City (TIKEP) are not only based on producers' or consumers' relationships, but also as the center for achieving sustainable growth.

Population Mobility and Commodity Circulation

The introduction of a new mode of transportation (speed-boat) in 2000 has been a triggering factor for the increased flow and frequency of inter-island mobility in Tidore and Halmahera. Informant B (57 years), a trader, stated that:

"Nowadays, buying and selling in Tidore is different. In order to make sales on Tuesday, in the past, one had to leave the house on Sunday because they had to adjust to the schedule of wooden motorbikes. Likewise, when their goods in the market are sold out, they are unable to go home immediately because they have to wait for the motorbikes as well. At present, it is better (since) there are several speed boats and they do not have to rush or wait too long."

Based on interviews with several traders in local market, changes in mobility patterns occurred due to the boarding or overnight commuter model. This change has an economically beneficial impact because the amount of expenditure for their daily needs in the boarding house is far greater than that of commuters. They spend only on sea transportation, while their food and other needs are covered in their daily household expenses.

This research also discovered that the dimension of time in inter-island mobility is extremely influential for both government employees and traders. Furthermore, assuming the traders are in a destination for three days, the total expenditure is calculated as follows:

They eat 3 times a day and the cost of one meal is IDR. 20,000, thus the total expenditure on food for 1 trader is within the range of IDR. 180,000. This is extremely contradictory, particularly when they choose a commuter where they stay 7 to 8 hours in the destination area (market and boarding house) and spend approximately IDR. 40,000 to 50,000 for one meal (at the market). Meanwhile, for the ticket price (transportation), each passenger pays relatively IDR 200,000 to IDR 300,000 per person, depending on the number of items they intend to deliver. Furthermore, daily income (of inter-island traders) is relatively between IDR. 500,000 and 700,000, -. In accordance with this data, it is evident that transportation is extremely expensive, while the daily cost of living in a boarding house also drains their expenses.

The data is also consistent with the theory explored by Scott and Marshall (2005) which argued that commodities are the determining factor in various market activity since they detect the market mechanisms regulated by economic actors, the establishment of interaction patterns, fulfillment of needs, size, quality, and the price decision. However, technology is an additional resource to the circulation of goods.

Specifically, the circulation of goods is ultimately followed by the determination of labor, the production process, and organization, in which geographical, cultural, and marketing factors are economically considered. This leads to two possibilities: a market formed because it is driven by demand (buyer-driven) or because the power of producers boosts supply (producer-driver). This pattern is a common indication of coastal and inter-island economic relations, although it occurs based on different organizational capacity and the reason for that is highly dependent on the primary commodities that drive the local economy (Kamuli & Amin, 2018).

On a daily basis, the circulation of goods and economic patterns of services in society needs to be perceived as a "social process" involving non-economic factors. In the case of Tidore Kepulauan City (TIKEP), it is very clear that changes in the scale of local development, modernization process, including urbanization policy are profound factors (Trigilia, 2002).

Conversely, several conditions,

patterns, and actors are involved in the "circulation of goods". In the inter-island economic context, North Maluku is geographically renowned for being the producers of certain commodities as well as ancient marketing networks involving cross-generational actors accompanied by certain emotional-historical ties.

Conceptually, the market is the determining factor for detecting the scale and circulation of goods. However, the natures of goods or commodities are based on human demands. In fact, geographic conditions and the structure of demand changes from person to person and from groups to groups in the society. Therefore, it is very clear that "the market unites commercial activities" (Plattner, 1989). In addition, historically, according to Plattner (1989), commercial practices were formed due to the role of government in uniting several "economic, religious, and political" interests at one point in time and space to accommodate agricultural growth.

In Tidore, even during a pandemic crisis, inter-island mobility was 100% increased. However, since the beginning of 2020, two conditions greatly influenced changes in the mobility of traders' groups, namely (a) market relocation, and (2) the Covid-19 pandemic. Market relocation causes the cross-island traders to wait several weeks in order to be able to trade due to the development of market facilities by the local government.

Consequently, during the Covid 19 pandemic, cross-island traders in North Maluku were not allowed to enter and exit the local Tidore market for approximately two weeks because the government closed all access and exit. The goal is to reduce the number of positive cases, as similar policies were applied in several of Indonesia's regions. Uniquely, the traders move about by delivering their agricultural products through motorboat to trusted collectors in the local Tidore market to be sold to their customers. Their fate is different when compared to government employees because despite not going to work during the pandemic, they received their monthly salary.

However, government employees also experience economic dilemmas, for example, whenever they work in an office such as in Halmehara or Tidore, their personal expenses for daily needs (food and transportation) can range from IDR 70,000

to 120,000 per person. On the contrary, those who prefer a monthly contract system spend approximately IDR 1,100,000 to IDR 2,200,000 per person monthly. Generally, they only eat once during lunch because they prefer to eat breakfast and dinner at home.

Empirically, almost all actors, both working in the office and traders, do not engage in other business activities to boost their income. The government employees depend on their monthly salaries, while the traders count on the profit gained from selling their agricultural products in Tidore or Halmahera.

Social Change and Mobility:

Market Network and Permanent Employment

According to Himes and Moore, three dimensions of social change are required for the survival of every community, namely structural, cultural, and interactional dimensions. Based on this perspective, attention is paid to these dimensions when viewing the occurrence of circular mobility in Tidore Kepulauan City (Narwoko, 2007; Martono, 2014; Romdiati & Noveria, 2019),

Consequently, change is always required in every community because it serves as a marker of progressivity, and each group plays a number of roles. In this instance, social change is defined as a significant alteration in social structure within a certain period (Sztompka, 2010). In addition, these alterations affect the essential elements of life. The dynamics of the island community, particularly those experiencing high mobility, need to embrace the changes in their environment, daily adaptation, and working culture (Smelser & Haferkamp, 1992).

Inter-island mobility actors possess a certain social status and image in accordance with their respective areas of origin. This is based on their lifetime achievement, and when they gather with other community groups, they feel a sense of prestige. Furthermore, they possess loads of experiences and relationships.

Changes in work structure and patterns of mobility have an impact on the image of local residents which is an important cultural achievement. The task of those in the government sector further enhances their social position because they are perceived

as loyal servants of the country and are respected because their monthly income is guaranteed. Likewise, cross-island traders are perceived as successful because they tend to improve their household economic conditions, have managed to acquire business experiences, and have engaged in extensive interactions.

Generally, social changes that occur in each group are caused by direct or indirect factors. The major push factors in inter-island mobility are trade relations and educational needs, while the availability of commodities, markets, employment, and aspirations to improve income is regarded as the pull factors.

Besides the main factors, there are trigger conditions that cause an increase in the number of people involved in the transportation of inter-island commodities. The availability of a 24-hours infrastructure is a supporting resource for inter-island passers-by (commuters). However, due to the relatively low price of the wooden-motors boat, it remains popular transportation in the region. One disadvantage of this boat is that its operating schedule is not as speed-boats.

Generally, inter-island transportation is the basic infrastructure that boosts development. The availability of various transportation modes is extremely important in islands because it provides access for residents to support economic mobility. Practically, mobility aims to mediate economic interactions that trigger the realization of goods and services as well as creates avenues for people to socialize. An adequate and suitable transport system causes isolated islands to become exposed as well as obtain new resources that accelerate their welfare.

In the context of population mobility in Tidore Island, sea transportation is the most crucial mode. Conversely, variations in modes of marine transportation determine the smoothness of tasks, development of the market, and trade networks.

The route for both government employees and traders is relatively similar. The difference is the operating schedule of the motorboats serving groups of employees (usually operate from morning to evening). Meanwhile, for those serving traders, the operating schedule is from morning to afternoon (local market hours).

The speed boats boarded by

government employees have a capacity of 12 to 16 passengers. However, they generally ply a motorboat with a size of 28 GT (Gross Tonnage). The distance to the destination is approximately one hour. The group of traders usually rent a 5 GT motorboat to go to their destination (inter-island market) with a capacity of 4 to 6 people along with a number of agricultural products to be sold in the markets. The duration of the trip is relatively 2 to 3 hours.

**Motorboat Passengers
(From and To Tidore Island, 2013-2018)**

Year	Passengers	
	Arrival	Departure
2013	31,883	24,683
2014	41,177	18,860
2015	56,624	28,903
2016	23,963	23,492
2017	44,470	28,976
2018	37,082	34,918

Source: *The Office of Tidore Port, 2019*

Mobility actors use a similar mode of transportation. The government employees usually rely on the 28 GT of *Dowora Idaman* Boat. Besides from being affordable, the departure time is shorter than the regular speed boat. Therefore, they get to their office at the appropriate time, and for those that are usually late, the speed boat is an alternative.

Financially, actors who do not engage in additional businesses have their source of income only from their jobs as government employees or traders. However, in accordance with the circular mobility pattern, they benefit from its economic impact. As a result, changes in the economic scale of inter-island traders have been proven to increase household welfare. This is significantly obvious in Tidore, although in the long term, this condition tends to be largely determined by the capacity of commodities exchanged as well as the rational actions of each group in handling every market opportunity (Widayatun, 2016; Zafirovski, 2001).

Shifts in cultural values are persistent and tend to foster new cultural patterns which are properly adopted by local communities. In this instance, the circular mobility pattern is increasingly being selected by residents engaged in the trade and educational sector

(Romdiati & Noveria, 2019). Parallel to this concept, the circular mobility pattern in Tidore directly provides cultural changes which are evident in the relationship between fellow families that respect and care for each other.

Conclusion

Economic activities tend to correspond to human mobility, which leads to certain relationships and basic requirements in each locality or regionality in terms of functions of the economic actors (producers, distributors, and consumers) and goods and services. Therefore, in the study of economic sociology, the structure formed is the result of "social interaction" that includes the dimensions of culture, institutions, rationality, and even history.

The migration from Tidore Island to Halmahera is referred to as *circular* mobility. This condition offers a meaningful economic contribution to the two dominant circular groups in the region, namely traders and government employees. It also implies that the shorter the duration to the actors' (government employees and traders) destination, the lesser the amount of money they spend on their daily needs. This fact is the *strategic ground* for population and commodity dynamism in Tidore Islands Town.

Changes in mobility patterns are largely determined by the resilience and adaptation degree of actors to a number of regional conditions in North Maluku, including motivation, transportation schedules, cost of living, and kinship moments. During this adaptation process, the volume of trade commodities, workload, consumer networks, the readiness of inter-island markets, and government regulations are playing a role as the determining factors.

Actors of inter-island from Tidore who work in the government and business sectors tend to boost their social and economic images in the community. They are being respected and perceived as a diligent and loyal group with lots of experience and extensive networks. This impression exists in Tidore and Halmahera as the primary aim of circular mobility.

Finally, adaptation is an obvious factor that triggers the mobility of people and commodities in Tidore. This phenomenon

continues to develop, particularly in the marketing aspect of specific daily commodities. Furthermore, the demand for government jobs (government employees) conditions their daily adaptation where they ultimately select a circular mobility pattern as the best option. This regional condition is the cultural basis for the structural sustainability of economic development in Tidore and Halmahera Island towards a better future.

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