

The Welfare-Based Development in The Context of Maritime Culture: Encounters with anthropological perspective

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Abstract. The context of geographical diversity in Indonesia essentially influences development approaches both at national and local levels. The development of social welfare cannot be implemented solely by utilizing quantitative and statistical parameters, but it has to be executed seriously by observing qualitative parameters, i.e. socio-cultural dimensions of indigenous people. Mapping of socio-cultural context in the archipelago communities is necessary to be conducted as a strategic way to construct maritime-based perspective and development paradigm. This article attempts to describe analytically socio-cultural context of archipelago communities in Maluku with their own dynamics as an endeavor to strengthening the significance of anthropological-based development perspective and paradigm reconstructed by the provincial/local government and stakeholders in Maluku.

Keywords: cultural diversity, archipelago community, anthropological perspective, development strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

Maluku Province is one of seven archipelago provinces in Indonesia namely provinces of North Maluku, North Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Bangka Belitung and Riau Islands. Those seven provinces are characterized as archipelago provinces since they have so-called archipelago features that can be distinguished from other continental provinces. The features are [1] :

- 1) Having larger oceanic territory than mainland;
- 2) Uneven rate of demographic distribution for relatively small number of people who dwell in;
- 3) Archipelago communities live in segregated living areas of island(s), with strong affinities to the limited land (island), and tend to keep existential harmony to nature and slower in accepting social changes;
- 4) Diverse natural resources;
- 5) The ecosystem is determined by isolation degree of geography and bio-diversity;
- 6) Limited and small-scale economic activities as well as have no adequate supporting distribution and marketing networks;
- 7) Limited natural resources, vulnerable environment toward changes, incline to accelerate devastation, critical natural disaster;
- 8) Bio-geographical potential of bio-diversity on land and water surrounding small islands;
- 9) Mostly located around along national borderlines vis-à-vis other foreign countries.



This archipelago province has territorial wide 712,480 km² consists of 658,331,52 km² (92,4 percent) sea area and 54,148,48 km² (7,6%) land area (combining lands of big and small islands). In such territory there are 1,430 islands with four big islands: Seram (18,625 km²), Buru (9,000 km²), Yamdena (5,085 km²) and Wetar (3,624 km²) [1]. The rest are medium and small islands inhabited by indigenous and multi-ethnic communities that have diverse socio-cultural characters and various traditional management strategies of natural resources [2]. The Maluku archipelago surrounded by three oceans: Seram Sea (north), Banda Sea (central) and Arafura Sea (east-south). Administratively, the province has borderlines with North Maluku (north), Timor Leste and Australia (south), Papua (east) and Southeast as well as Central Sulawesi (west).

Historically, the archipelago experienced golden periods once it became the center of global spice trade far before the advent of European. The Malukan had the long term of cultural and economic interactions intertwined among Southeast Asian merchants, which in turn attracted Europeans to play their economic roles in this archipelago. This historical fact demonstrates that the spice that once was an eminent commodity, in fact, had nothing significant effects to increase prosperity and welfare of Malukan. The history of colonialism in Nusantara and, then, Indonesia, began with the fascinating economic values of spice in the Maluku archipelago [3].

The reality of mass poverty still becomes the face of Maluku archipelago society since the colonial period until the postcolonial Indonesian regimes (primarily after the Proclamation of Independence 1945). During the New Order regime under Suharto's presidency, the paradigm of national development that had been political jargon of the regime actually was only the practice to absorb mostly natural resources from the periphery (outer islands) to the center (Java and Jakarta's political and business elites as well as President's cronies). Topatimasang states that there is three main factors driving the marginalization in Maluku: (1) The big capital invasion; (2) Over-centralization of power; and (3) Imposition of the strange values [4]. These factors are intertwined and must be understood as macro problematic context at the micro local level in Maluku.

The reality of the New Order's national development did not indicate such a significant paradigm shift in managing just and equal development in eastern part of Indonesia. Data released by the Center Bureau of Statistics (BPS) noticed that the number of poor people per September 2016 is 27,76 million or 10,7 percent of the total number of the Indonesian population. The amount actually was reduced about 250,000 persons compared to data of March 2016. However, it is still a high number of Indonesian poor people because of the huge gap of poverty between rural and urban communities, and the inter-island development discrepancy. Maluku and Papua are still in highest positions with percentage 21,98%, and Kalimantan at lowest rank 6,45%. Meanwhile, based on the percentage of poor population in each province, we have subsequent position about the poverty, such as Papua 28,4% , Papua Barat 24,88%, NTT 22,01%, Maluku 19,26%, Gorontalo 17,63%, Bengkulu 17,03%, and Aceh 16,43% [5].

The cabinet of Joko Widodo endeavors to drive development programs based on the different (new) paradigm. The main focus of Jokowi's national development begins to seriously and programmatic bridge the poverty gap that happened for the time being. Many giant-projects of infrastructure development are directed to eastern islands of Indonesia, such as Papua and Maluku. Indonesian development paradigm as a maritime country is implemented by constructing the infrastructures of sea transportation which have been assumed as the source of development gap between "western" and "eastern" parts of Indonesia. However, it should be acknowledged that the hard problem today is about improving bureaucratic characters and development parameters used by Indonesian technocrats or development designers who are still not moving far from continental paradigm and/or mindset. This article attempts to elaborate developmental perspective of maritime territories in eastern Indonesia from archipelagic human and cultural perspectives framed by anthropological analysis.

2. METHODS

This article is based on combined research methods, i.e. literature research and field research. Literature research is conducted by visiting library and browsing several primary literatures on internet, such as available on-line journals and e-books. Then, field research is conducted by doing depth interviews to some key informants whose capabilities to give explanation about national development programs, the basic paradigm of development strategies on archipelagic society in eastern Indonesia and the challenges of development approaches conducting by provinsial government of Maluku.

3. RESULT

3.1 *Perspective on Archipelago Society*

Indonesia is an archipelago nation-state. It has thousands of islands with small, medium, and big, inhabited by various indigenous communities who develop each their traditions and cultures based on geographical context as an archipelago. The geographic differences influence the Islanders' worldview about human existence and environment, as well as human-human and human-nature interrelationships. The concepts of change and development in their cultural mindset have a different level and extent. That is the reason why the enforcement such development concept and praxis from outside essentially become ineffective way since it will clash or disharmony with their worldview about the meaning of and how to develop life existentially.

In the context of a maritime nation-state, there are differences of character and identity between so-called “archipelago society” and “island society”. The island society is a social category of people who live in a single big island or continent. They imagine a socio-cultural sphere of the wide single mainland (island) that separate from the sea. The social life of island society concentrates on land with somehow particular history, and relatively homogenous language and culture. Whereas the archipelago society lives on various islands where the sea is regarded as the natural bridge to connect inter-island societies; land and sea are united or cannot be separated existentially.

The archipelago society refers to a social specification, not merely as people who live in the island[s], but a social community who really demonstrates specific identity, culture and existence of archipelago within its interconnectivity among various islands, and also construct particular cosmology about the structural balance of land and sea. Archipelago culture is about land-sea multicultural worldview and practices, which forms cultural habitus that open to view – and mostly depend on – sea while living in the land (island). The existential relationship to land and sea has been anchored to the honor for ancestors or *tete-nenemoyang*. This aspect actually presents ontological spirit for the deep of cultural meaning that link human existence with surrounding reality, physically and spiritually [6]. By this aspect, cosmological structure of consciousness is not a binary opposition but binary juxtaposition, as one can see in dual concepts “*kaatas*” (going up) // “*kabawah*” (going down); “*kalao*” (go to sea) // “*kadara*” (go to land/mountain); “*kiri*” (turn left) // “*kanan*” (turn right); “*ina*” (mother/female) // “*ama*” (father/male) [7]. Such differences should not be opposed but have to be juxtaposed to reach the dynamic equilibrium, as an outrigger in left-right sides of traditional boat *perahusemang* which keep the balance of the boat while struck by wins and waves. Structure of thought as this binary juxtaposition has also been reflected in the cultural philosophy of *siwa-lima* (*siwa* means the group of nine; *lima* means the group of five) and *heka-leka* (*heka* means conflict, destroy, war; *leka* means to reconcile, reconstruct, peace) [8].

3.2 *Social Problem of Archipelago Society*

The primary problem of welfare development of archipelago society is structural poverty. There are two core issues that can be identified as the problematic axe of structural poverty in Maluku: (1) internal issue: the context of segregation and isolation of the archipelago that consists of mostly small-size islands; (2) external issue: national development policies do not stand for the social welfare of archipelago society. Those issues are manifested in various problematic realities, such as very limited

access to transportation facilities, inter-island territorial isolation, lower exchange values of goods and services, and high-cost economic.

For years, the eastern archipelago of Indonesia has been experiencing unjust development processes inasmuch paradigmatic perspective views sea/ocean as “problem” and not as “opportunity” in attempt to develop social welfare. The archipelago society has been marginalized by very limited access to transportation and communication technology, also less availability of local material and infrastructure for supporting development projects, which all the time only being centered on certain big islands. Poverty and underdeveloped archipelago society might be seen mainly caused by vulnerability factors, geographical challenges, and national development policies that heavily exploitative rather than reconstructive. These factors disrupt natural equilibrium that, in turn, confounds the cosmological order system of the archipelago society.

The implementation of national government policies seemingly inclined to handle archipelago society as mainland/continent society with relatively homogenous cultural characteristics and having more effective accessibility in managing their daily life. Even the policies for managing outer archipelago society in several border zones are more exploitative and coercive with many illegal practices, which then create a protracted powerless dependency of the archipelago society, such as the cases of Maluku Barat Daya in Wetar Island, Romang and other islands, conterminous with Timor Leste. In order to strengthen economic activities in this archipelago province, we assume that there is no another way than the certainty to develop inter-island connectivity. Therefore, it needs more critical and sustainable observation how to develop an integrated network of sea-routes through main harbors as the nexus for connecting many potential islands, designing natural tourism and ferriage infrastructures [1].

Sociologically speaking, the policies of rural development in the context of archipelago society still tend to duplicate patterns of development in city or mainland, which is actually irrelevant to the natural and socio-cultural context of archipelago society whose uniqueness and diversity. The archipelago society faces limitedness of land area for development activities and high-cost economic that is not affordable by rural society in the archipelago. Most of them who live in along coastal areas are unable yet to optimally develop the so-called maritime cultural way of life since there are limited means and facilities as traditional fishermen, narrower areas for fishing and breeding caused by sea pollution and discriminative regulations that restrict the productive area of society. Another crucial problem is about foreign fishing ships that operate illegally in Maluku sea with tons capacity, comparing to a very limited capacity of traditional boats by local fishermen who use modest fishing technology [9].

In many facts, the archipelago society trap into structural poverty not because they have nothing but precisely almost can do nothing in the abundance of natural resources (land and sea) to leverage level of their social life; it is because primarily mismanagement of development programs which are not based on archipelago context and likewise misunderstanding about the archipelago cultural characters. The reality of mass poverty in the archipelago is a kind of systemic issue that includes determinant aspects, such as geographical context, socio-economic levels of society, multiculturalism, concepts of self and human personality, and national/international policies.

Four variables of poverty of archipelago society:

- 1) Isolation – largely archipelago society in Maluku still lives in isolated islands both in interior areas, mountains, river-sides, so that they difficult to evolve their life better.
- 2) Limited access – segregated by sea and lack of transportation infrastructures for connecting the islanders to several developed centers (capital cities of district and regency).
- 3) High-cost economy – driven by higher social and financial costs that must be endured by the people to increase their welfare level. Prices are determined by those who hold economic power (merchants), whereas the people are powerless to control prices of their local products and other goods.

- 4) Weak of society's exchange values – all limited public facilities that need for increasing social welfare in the archipelago, finally, bring about weak or lower exchange values where prices of goods and services are worthless.

4. DISCUSSION: Welfare-based Development and Archipelago Clustering Approach

The development of archipelago territorial in general must be conducted through certain phases and centering on some centers of development or economic growth. Patterns of territorial development in Maluku, to some extent, have been done by using archipelago clustering approach (*Gugus Pulau*) on the basis of local wisdom analysis toward the geographical distance, cultural expression, natural resources, average economic similarity and development orientation. In order to determine *Gugus Pulau*, it is used the parameter of ordering center for service and its range, characteristic of surrounding cities and regions, relevant policies and analysis result about territorial patterns based on *gugus pulau* that had been done previously. Then, it is formulated into 12 *gugus pulau* (GP) as follows [1]:

- 1) GP I: Buru Island ~ Namlea
- 2) GP II: West Seram Regency ~ Piru and Kairatu
- 3) GP III: North Seram Regency ~ Wahi
- 4) GP IV: East Seram Regency ~ Bula
- 5) GP V: South Seram ~ Masohi
- 6) GP VI: Banda Islands and Teon-Nila-Serua (TNS) ~ Bandaneira
- 7) GP VII: Ambon and Lease Islands ~ Ambon
- 8) GP VIII: Kei Islands ~ Tual
- 9) GP IX: Aru Islands ~ Dobo
- 10) GP X: Tanimbar Island ~ Saumlaki
- 11) GP XI: Babar Islands ~ Tepa
- 12) GP XII: Southern Islands and Wetar ~ Serwaru

The *gugus pulau* approach is an important breakthrough for planning and implementation phases of social development in Maluku. However, it is not supported fully by development strategic policies that largely pivot on the political will of the central government who hold control upon certain governmental departments which determine financial and supporting systems for development projects that driving implementation of the *gugus pulau*. Consequently, the implementation of *gugus pulau* ceased only as a concept but failed to be executed comprehensively. What happened subsequently until today is going back to dependency on the central government albeit local autonomous has been running since the issue of TAP MPR RI No. XV/MPR/1998 about the Implementation of Local Autonomous, up till the recent regulation Undang-Undang No. 23/2014 about Provincial and Local Government (Revision of Undang-Undang No. 32/2004).

The main objective of Local Autonomous initially is to open access for just and equal development as well as prosperity canalization through good management of natural resources for social welfare in Maluku archipelago. Undang-Undang No. 11/2009 states “*Kesejahteraan Sosial adalah kondisi terpenuhinya kebutuhan material, spiritual dan sosial warganegara agar dapat hidup layak dan mampu mengembangkan diri, sehingga dapat melaksanakan fungsi sosialnya.*” [Social welfare is a condition where material, spiritual and social needs of every citizen are fulfilled so that can live properly and able to develop their self that in turn can do their social function] The basic needs of each citizen encompass (1) social rehabilitation; (2) social insurance; (3) social empowerment; (4) social protection. Therefore, the social welfare basis in implementing development programs, capacity building and empowerment must become the prime reference for archipelagic social development in Maluku. Even though, on the other side, it still can be found that few stakeholders have the reluctance to shift continental paradigm into an archipelagic paradigm. It is mainly due to the absence of multicultural knowledge and consciousness that characterizes Indonesian

society. There is still a strong inclination to see the structure and social system of the Indonesian archipelago as an entity that can be uniformed so that development in any form can be forced to be accepted and implemented by the people.

Therefore, it is not surprising that most development projects were only seen as the arena for grabbing project money regardless of the outcome and impact. Instead of developing for the welfare, such development projects brought about a destructive impact on the environment, the obliteration of local communities' cosmology, which in turn erodes social awareness about roles and social functions that their local cultural consensus has. Conflicts over lands became an increasingly frequent phenomenon among families, villages, even between civil/military government apparatus who also feel the pleasure of "stealth projects" in their administrative areas [10].

Furthermore, the implementation of the *gugus pulau* development approach must be followed by the five cultural strategies:

First: strengthening the local cultural content based on *gugus pulau* paradigm as a way to introduce multicultural characteristics of the Maluku archipelago society at every educational level.

Second: capacity building of government apparatus with the perspective of multiculturalism through cultural studies periodically when s/he is proposed to promote for a higher position.

Third: demographic management in the context of urban society, especially to constantly observe the dynamics of urban society as the centers of socio-cultural encounter in the archipelago; through cross-social-group coordination both from local/indigenous and non-Maluku communities.

Fourth: revitalization of *adat* institutions on each *gugus pulau* by re-establishing social agreements on the basis of local wisdom between local/indigenous and non-Maluku communities.

Fifth: empowering the capacity of local communities to conduct cultural and political environment negotiations with provincial and central governments vis-à-vis implementation of development programs that has no orientation on social welfare of the archipelago society by opening communication accesses up till to the level of strategic decision-making of development.

5. CONCLUSION

The national development paradigm, especially in eastern Indonesia, has actually been shifting significantly from the continental-oriented to the archipelago one. However, such paradigm shift is not followed immediately by the implementation of concrete development programs based on social welfare policy. Consequently, although national development and economic growth became the main political jargon of 32-year of the New Order regime but, in fact, the main problem of structural poverty has not been resolved. Even the interregional development gap (Java and outer islands) is getting bigger.

Indonesian central government under the President Joko Widodo a.k.a. Jokowi endeavors to re-establish the maritime paradigm primarily for development in the eastern archipelago of Indonesia. This effort must be accompanied by, first of all, the capacity building of local communities so that they are able to recognize the characteristics of psycho-social and the structure of cultural awareness as an archipelago society. Through properly self-identification, the implementation of development programs is not merely seen as an external intervention but rather the process of facilitation and empowering social and cultural capitals that already exist inside the archipelago communities.

In that context, the *gugus pulau* development approach is not only ceasing at the stage of fabricating development discourse but becoming the driving force of social change and existential development from-by-to the archipelago community itself. The development of *gugus pulau*, thus, becomes the empowerment process for constituting an independent mental culture to manage the natural wealth and cultural pluralism for the fulfillment of social welfare demands holistically: physically and spiritually.

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