

# Adaptation Strategy of Ambonese Refugee Community on Buton Island in Meeting Household Needs

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**Abstrak.** This research looks at the Ambonese refugee community on Buton Island already has a work ethic to face life's difficulties. They seek to obtain sources of income by trading and other diversifying livelihoods. This is a form of adaptation strategy to face difficulties in meeting family needs. This study aims to determine the adaptation strategy of the Ambonese refugee community in the city of Baubau in meeting household needs. This research was conducted in the city of Baubau in the Buton archipelago of Southeast Sulawesi Province. The type of research used in this study is qualitative research with data collection techniques; observation, in-depth interviews with refugee communities, and documentation. The results showed that the economic difficulties experienced by the Ambon refugee community, have made them not accept it passively but they actively make rescue efforts to get out of the problems faced by maximizing the role of family members to be involved in economic activities. In general, the efforts made can be categorized into two categories, namely the first to develop a business as a small trader in the city of Baubau and its surroundings and the second to develop a business as a small trader and accompanied by other businesses to increase income. However, the characteristics of their business are still characterized by relatively small capital and profits.

**Keywords:** Household Needs, Ambon Refugee Community, Adaptation Strategy

## 1 Introduction

Every society can adapt to solve the problems faced related to meeting the needs of family life to survive, so it can be found that each community has a certain adaptation pattern because humans are in different environments so they have different adaptation patterns (Aryal et al., 2020). Various studies on adaptation strategies in meeting the needs of life have been conducted, for example, research on the adaptation of fishing communities where fishing communities utilize social institutions. All family members are deployed to cooperate in family business activities. This is done to overcome the low level of family income. Such a strategy allows them to increase family income. On the other hand, they also try to minimize family expenses if fishery business results decrease. Expenses are prioritized on family needs that are family needs (Young et al., 2019). Another research on the adaptation of women selling fruits where the efforts made by women selling fruits

in increasing their business results with strategies of networking cooperation with fellow fruit sellers, building cooperation with fruit producing farmers or fruit agents. To increase business results to the maximum they involve family members (Bafor et al., 2019). Research by Saediman et al./examines community adaptation strategies in food security on Binongko Island. They express three sides of view, namely; The production side where the community applies a mixed farming model based on local wisdom values. The distribution side is the storage carried out by the community independently. The consumption side is where frugal living arrangements are found by the community to avoid food scarcity (Saediman et al., 2021).

Kieft's research in Helmi and Satria examines food scarcity faced by the community and answers it with a layered pattern strategy. With this strategy, society can sustain life with three forces. This strength is built by the community by not only doing a certain business but seeking other businesses as a backup if the business is engaged in failure. The first layer of people do business in the plantation sector by planting beans, cassava, and corn). The second tier of society strives in the field of animal husbandry and can raise various livestock such as cows, buffaloes, or other livestock. The next layer of society is trying in other areas that are still available in their area. These layers are a form of strategy carried out by the community to avoid if a layer fails. If the first layer fails, the second layer can function as a buffer. Furthermore, if the second layer fails, the third layer can function as a buffer (Helmi & Satria, 2020).

In line with Beckman's thoughts in Priyatna & Sumartono, if a person is faced with difficulties in his life, then in theory two things are his choice that must be implemented in response to these difficulties. The first is that the difficulties faced are responded to passively and there is no visible maximum effort to overcome the problems faced. It is explained that this response is identified as a mental attitude because the difficulties faced are responded to with a tolerant and understanding attitude, and try to see the problem as something that must be accepted with patience. The response carried out, for example, uses certain values so that there is an understanding that the difficulties that are being experienced are something that can be accepted resignedly and seen as something ordinary. It can also be by developing comparisons with the past so that difficulties experienced are considered trivial. Second, the difficulties faced will be responded to actively, and try to take serious treatment of the problems experienced. In this state, one will respond to the difficulties encountered with maximum effort by developing strategic measures to solve the difficulties encountered (Priyatna & Sumartono, 2011).

Various efforts made by a group of communities to meet the needs of their households in this study are explained by the concept of adaptation strategy. Adaptation strategy is the result of a change that occurs in living things and if there is a change behavior change, adaptation appears in every living thing (Lin, 2020; Sturmberg et al., 2019; Tsourapas, 2019; Yletyinen et al., 2018). Adaptation is a process that places humans who strive to achieve goals or need to face changing environments and social conditions to survive (Wamsler et al., 2020).

Living things will respond to environmental conditions and will create various possible ways for living things to meet their needs. This relates to previous life experiences and responds and then builds a mechanism to deal with various problems faced (Akinyi et al., 2021; Du et al., 2020). Therefore, adaptation is a method used by living things to maintain their -anticipate changes that

occur in their environment and decide the best path in the socio-economic and physical environment (Kusnadi et al., 2008).

When there were riots in Ambon, Maluku Province in 1999, approximately 300,000 residents were exodus in the city of Bau-Bau. At that time their situation was very poor and in general had difficulty in meeting household needs, both clothing, clothing, and other basic needs. Various parties have assisted refugees to ease the burden they face, both government and private parties. The efforts made by the Baubau city government towards refugees are mainly meeting the needs of clothing, food, and health. At the same time, the Baubau City Government has provided a residential area so that refugees can have housing facilities.

Thus, since the beginning of the arrival of Ambonese refugees in the city of Baubau, the government has been present to provide services so that refugees can get out of difficulties in meeting household needs. Although it is understandable, various problems are still faced by the government related to various socio-economic services to the refugee community. But amid the difficulty of meeting household needs, refugees have been forced not to accept fate passively, slowly trying to adapt to the environment to find new sources of income independently. Therefore, this paper aims to determine the adaptation strategy of the Ambonese refugee community in the city of Baubau in meeting household needs.

## **2 Method**

This research was conducted in Baubau City, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia using a qualitative approach. The main data collection technique, namely in-depth interviews, was conducted to obtain information on the adaptation strategy of the Ambonese refugee community in the city of Baubau in meeting household needs. Interviews were also conducted with government representatives and indigenous leaders. Observations were made to observe the progress of efforts made by the Ambon refugee community. Documentation is carried out on documents related to the handling of Ambon refugees. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive-qualitative analysis.

## **3 Findings and Discussion**

Baubau City is one of the cities in Southeast Sulawesi Province located in the southern part of Buton Island. Geographically, its position is very strategic because it has a seaport that can connect cities in Southeast Sulawesi Province (Kendari, Raha, Wanci), as well as can connect cities on a national scale (Surabaya, Makassar, Ambon, Palu, Jayapura). With such a strategic position, it has encouraged the city of Baubau to become a trading city that has supporting facilities for seaports that have national standards and become a liaison city in the central and eastern parts of Indonesia. In addition, the city of Baubau also has Betoambari Airport.



Map of Research Location

As a stopover city from various regions, of course, it has had an impact on the growth of the city of Baubau which became a city of trade and services. This can be seen in the construction of markets as trading places for the community. Besides being traders, people in the city of Baubau also work as fishermen, but cannot be said to be full fishermen because their activities besides carrying out fishing activities in the Baubau Bay area and its surroundings also have other jobs as short-term garden farmers such as corn and cassava plantations.

Previously, the Baubau city government had designated the Wakonti area located in the eastern part of Baubau city as a migrant settlement place for the Ambon refugee community. The government's initial steps have been to build as many as 697 housing units for the refugee community. Despite the various shortcomings experienced, the government has made maximum efforts so that the Ambonese refugee community, which is generally ethnic Butonese, has independence in meeting household needs. Generally, the Ambonese refugee community has a livelihood outside the agricultural sector, this is inseparable from their previous life background, which is living in urban areas. With the background of their lives in urban areas, it has an impact on the development of activities in their lives today, which are dominated by trade and services.

By developing the city of Baubau as a trading city, then encouraging the Ambonese refugee community to enter market activities. In addition to Chinese and Bugis traders in Makassar, from the findings of the author in the field, there is a local ethnicity that is quite prominent in trading

activities in the city of Baubau, namely Gu traders. Armed with experience in the Maluku region, migrants from Maluku then took advantage of opportunities to enter trade activities. However, the difficulties they face are the lack of business capital they have and the relatively new business environment, besides that it can also be ascertained that old traders who have known the business environment have mastered the flow of trade and understand the various needs of the community.

The adaptation of migrants from Maluku described in this paper is what takes place in the family as a unit of analysis, namely how migrant families respond to difficulties experienced due to changes that occur in the environment with various forms of action both social and economic. In general, the adaptation choices made can be distinguished by two options, namely the first is developing small business trade and the second is developing a trading business accompanied by other businesses.

Although in the city of Baubau, there have been traders who have mastered the flow of trade, they still try to enter the ongoing economic system. As one informant put it, "There is no other way for us, which is to try our hardest to keep our family's needs met, for that we must try our best. We thank the government for helping to make huts for us, it's been amazing. But we can't be dependent, we have to try and thank you now that we can occupy the stall" (interview, Arman).

The results showed the economic activity of the Ambon refugee community; First, they trade in the market located in the city center. They occupy stalls and sell a variety of necessities, for example selling clothes, rice, sugar, laundry soap, and various kitchen utensils. Some plans There are plans that have stalls that sell various snacks, bread, and various other needs. However, those who do business by occupying stalls/stalls are relatively small.

Second, those who have relatively less capital, accumulate capital by trying to save, then trying to establish trust with other traders. When they gained trust, they then took merchandise to sell in various places in the city of Baubau or could be sold in areas located some distance from their settlement. Of course, if the merchandise has been sold, they will benefit from the results of the agreement that has been agreed, such as the results of the interview, "at the beginning of the business, I had difficulty with capital. I then offered cooperation with Chinese merchants. I am willing to sell his things by using a motorcycle. In my mind, selling using a motorcycle will be able to reach very far places. In terms of profit, it also does not disappoint, because people do not have to bother coming to Baubau. My share of the proceeds from the sale has been agreed upon by us" (Idrus interview). This strategy is forged, namely to get business capital. By establishing trust with traders who have a large capital, then traveling traders, they have confidence that they will be able to overcome business capital difficulties.

Third, to travel back to the Maluku area. This phenomenon can be found in several migrant households from Maluku. They think that the current conditions in Maluku Province are very safe and it will be very profitable if they return to business in the area. As the results of an interview with Amat (local RT chairman), "some of our residents here have migrated back to Ambon and Papua, but there are also those who migrate in Kendari, but the majority return to Ambon" (interview, Amat). They are overseas in Ambon in the hope of overcoming the capital difficulties they are facing and trying to raise capital so that they can be used for business. The development that occurs today,

those who migrate to Ambon or other places such as Taliabo and Papua after their efforts succeed, then stay for a while. In some cases, when they managed to get capital, they returned to their hometown to develop the business. From this phenomenon, we can understand that overseas strategies are carried out to get capital to develop businesses.

The next adaptation strategy carried out by Migram Maluku in meeting household needs in addition to being a trader also adds income to other businesses such as fishing. Fishing businesses tend to be chosen because for them it is very easy to do. This can be understood because the business pattern they develop is still traditional. To catch fish they use boats commonly called coli-coli with very diverse sizes between 4-5 meters. They generally only use one fishing gear with a very small number of members and some even make arrests of only one person. Other types of business carried out are carpenters and masons. Diversification of business carried out by migrants is a buffer in meeting family needs. For this reason, they usually maximize the use of family members involved in the business.

Thus, economic activity in the Baubau City Market is very important for its existence as a source of employment for former Ambon refugee migrants. However, their business is still characterized by an offer of labor with simple skills with relatively small capital. Their business existence has not been supported by professional economic management. Trade activities have not been supported by the existence of socio-economic facilities that strengthen trade business networks such as the absence of cooperatives that can accommodate wider members or the support of trade business association institutions.

## **4 Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

Based on the discussion as described in this paper, it can be concluded as follows: The economic difficulties experienced by Moluccan migrants in Baubau City, have made them not accept it passively but they actively make rescue efforts to get out of the problems faced by maximizing the use of family members to engage in economic activities. In general, the efforts made are divided into two options, namely first developing a business as a small business trader in the city of Baubau and its surroundings, and the second is developing a business as a small trader and accompanied by other businesses to gain income.

### **4.2 Recommendation**

The suggestions in this paper are as follows; 1) Government protection measures are needed for small entrepreneurs in anticipation of socioeconomic insecurity due to declining income. 2) Guidance is needed in the development of alternative forms of employment that can provide employment opportunities for the community in a sustainable manner.

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