

After 1 Century of Transmigration in Lampung, Sumatra, Indonesia: The Impact of Demographic Engineering on Culture and Inter-Ethnic Communication

Wulan Suciska¹, Bartoven Vivit Nurdin², Arie Fitria³, Anna Gustina Zainal⁴,
Lusmeilia Afriani⁵, Dikpride Despa⁶

¹ Student, Doctoral Program of Development Studies, Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies,
University of Lampung, Indonesia

² Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Lampung, Indonesia

³ Lecturer, Department of International Relations, University of Lampung, Indonesia

⁴ Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies, University of Lampung, Indonesia

⁵ Lecturer, Department of Engineering, University of Lampung, Indonesia

⁶ Lecturer, Department of Engineering, University of Lampung, Indonesia

Abstract:- This study is about the socio-cultural and communication impacts after more than a century of transmigration in Lampung, Indonesia. Since 1905, the Dutch carried out transmigration in Lampung, namely by moving thousands of residents from the island of Java to Lampung, Indonesia. Until now, the transmigration population coming to Lampung is greater in number than the native population of Lampung. Transmigration was a demographic engineering that was carried out by the Dutch and then continued by the Indonesian government. This demographic engineering certainly has a big impact, especially in Lampung's socio-cultural and inter-ethnic communication. It creates a misunderstanding of the message conveyed, due to differences in local languages. Still, positively it produces new communication, namely harmonious communication in a multicultural society. Transmigration marginalised the culture of the native Lampung people, and the language and communication of the native Lampung people also experienced extinction. For this reason, the government built cultural and communication engineering by reviving the Lampung language in schools for the younger generation, but it was not successful. Lampung culture only lives in small community groups in rural areas. This study is in the field of Communication and Cultural Sciences using the qualitative research method.

Keywords: Transmigration, Lampung, Demographic, Engineering, Communication.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to examine the socio-cultural impact and communication between ethnic groups after more than a century of transmigration in Lampung, Indonesia. The population movement from the island of Java to Lampung (Sumatra) started with the Dutch Colonization program in 1905, namely a forced transfer of the densely populated Javanese population to Lampung which was still sparsely populated. This forced relocation is referred to as demographic engineering. Colonization and Transmigration are two forms of programs carried out with the aim of spreading the population from crowded places to sparser places. The island of Java is the island with the densest population, high poverty and little land, while Lampung, Sumatra, is an area with a large area of land and is also sparsely populated, therefore Lampung is the main destination for transmigration, apart from being because Lampung is also the closest region. with the island of Java. Ease of transportation is also the reason why Lampung was previously a destination for colonization and transmigration. This population movement, which was forced by both the Dutch government and the Indonesian government, was a form of demographic engineering so that the population spread evenly in Indonesia. However, it certainly has a significant impact, namely socio-cultural

impacts and inter-ethnic communication. The impact is the increasing marginalization of indigenous culture or the marginalization of Lampung culture as indigenous people, the composition of the Javanese population is increasing, the extinction of the Lampung language, and many elements of Lampung culture are almost extinct. Meanwhile, Javanese culture is more dominant in Lampung. Inter-ethnic communication also shows that Javanese and Balinese ethnic dominance is greater in Lampung. From a political perspective, it shows that the dominance of Javanese ethnic power in local politics also seems dominant. This means that demographic engineering has had a major socio-cultural impact in Lampung. This is explained in the following research results.

2. Transmigration as Demographic Engineering in Lampung

Transmigration in Indonesia is a form of 'forced' change. In Javanese culture, there is no tradition of migrating in life. Migrants occur if there are important reasons, namely because of shame or because they are poor or destitute. However, the word poor for Javanese people is also very dynamic and flexible. Flexible poverty may be the right word for Javanese people, meaning that if you are poor but not destitute, being destitute is worse than being poor. The concept of involution for Javanese people is also very well described by Geertz [1], agricultural involution for Javanese people is a flexible and flexible form of poverty, which the logic of the Western world cannot interpret. Javanese logic cannot be 'understood' with Western logic.

Levang [2] views that this forced transmigration is due to a major error in the Malthus theory used by the government. Maltus's theory is used as a principle of transmigration. There is great fear that Java's population will exceed, so it is predicted that there will be a disaster where the Javanese population will overflow so that it is not in accordance with existing land and natural resources. Poverty in Java, referring to Maltus's theory, can be seen in two aspects (1) The explosion of Java's increasingly uncontrolled population causes the existing land to mismatch with the increase in population. (2) The population explosion causes limited resources, so they are insufficient for the food consumption of the Javanese population. However, for Javanese, the issue of poverty is not something to think about, but rather how to adapt oneself to poverty, so that one can get out of everyday problems and difficulties. Transmigration begins with colonization. Colonization was a program when the Dutch moved Javanese people to Sumatra. The goal is so that the population is balanced and not concentrated in just one place, namely the island of Java. Another goal is to work in the fields. Colonization was forced, rather than moving poor Javanese people to Lampung, in the hope of being free from the complexity of poverty. Colonization did not only occur in Lampung, but other areas in Sumatra and Kalimantan. Below is a photo of the arrival of transmigrants during the colonization period to Lampung. This photo shows that the transmigrants arrived by ship at Panjang Harbor in Lampung.



Picture 1. Transmigran came to Lampung (<https://lampung.idntimes.com/science/discovery/martin-tobing-1/sejarah-transmigrasi-indonesia-erat-kaitan-dengan-lampung-era-kolonial>)

Colonization and Transmigration in Lampung, although forced, still had many followers. This is because many transmigrants return to Java, bringing relatives and friends. They persuaded him to come to Lampung by telling stories about their glory in Lampung, namely acquiring large areas of land. As a result, those who come to Lampung are not only official government transmigrants, but also those who come of their own accord. Interestingly, there are more Javanese people who came of their own accord than because of the government's

official transmigration program. This can be seen from the villages built in Lampung using Javanese names. The number of Javanese villages in Lampung exceeds the government program transmigration villages. The number of Javanese residents exploded in Lampung.

3. Socio-Cultural Impact

Transmigration has had the impact of major socio-cultural changes in Lampung, the first is demographic changes, where the number of ethnic Lampung residents is much smaller than the ethnic Javanese who are the majority in Lampung Province. This can be seen from the following table:

Table 1. Population in Lampung by Ethnic Group.

No	Etnics	Quantity	(%)
1	Java	4.113.731	61,8
2	Lampung (Pepadun, Abung, Bunga Mayang, Peminggir)	792.312	11,92
3	Sunda (Banten)	749.566	11,27
4	Semendo and Palembang	236.292	3,5
5	Others (Bengkulu, Batak, Bugis, Minang)	754.989	11,35
	Quantity	6.646.890	100

Source : BPS [3]

The demographic impact is that the Lampung ethnic group, as the original ethnic group in Lampung, has become a minority in its own country in terms of population. This has an impact on socio-cultural aspects where there is marginality towards Lampung itself. The culture of the Lampung ethnic group is experiencing extinction, including the disappearance of the original Lampung language, many of the younger generation do not understand Lampung language, and it is no longer used in everyday interactions. In fact, Javanese is more dominant than Lampung itself. Another change is the traditions, traditional ceremonies and rituals of the Lampung ethnic group, which have adopted many Javanese cultures. Where culturally, Javanese culture is very dominant in Lampung, thus fading away the Lampung culture itself. This means that acculturation and assimilation occur in the meeting of these two cultures. Amalgamation or mixed marriages also occur frequently so that culture becomes increasingly acculturated and assimilated.

For the Javanese themselves, they came to Lampung because of poverty. Usually, if there is no rice, they eat *aking* rice (which is preserved crust), or they eat *tiwul*, which is sweet potato prepared like rice. This flexibility is what causes Javanese people to survive in poverty. For them, the most important thing is happiness with their family, not the value of what they eat. So even though the land decreases as the number of offspring increases, they are able to eat in their own way. "Eating or not eating is the important thing about gathering." Poverty among Javanese people is a common everyday problem. The most important thing for Javanese people is how not to make poverty make it difficult to be able to gather with family, laugh, joke and joke. Including the myth and belief that the increasing population of Java is due to one reality, "more children, more fortune", so that the Family Planning program (only two children is enough) in Java is not successful, whose population is increasingly exploding.

The concept of agricultural involution in Java is one of the results of Geertz's [1] research on how flexible Javanese people are in facing poverty. The decreasing amount of land, and the increasing number of family members, did not make Javanese people poor. They are able to get out of difficulties even though they can never escape the conditions of poverty. One form of adaptation of Javanese people when faced with the problem of poverty, they try to adapt to poverty. This belief and belief in the concept of '*nrimo*' (surrender to fate) may be what causes their adaptability to be higher and make it difficult to get out of poverty, as well as making them survive.

Javanese people who have moved to Lampung have the difference that they have moved and become 'Lampung people'. Currently, the generation living in Lampung is a generation that no longer knows their village in Java. Most have never been to Java. The culture that developed in Lampung is very heterogeneous, although Javanese

culture remains dominant, the Javanese character has changed. The concept of eating without eating, the important thing is to gather, currently perhaps only exists in Java. Javanese people in Lampung, this concept is changing day by day, especially in recent years. In the first generation of Javanese people in Lampung, perhaps this concept was still valid, but now, after several generations, this concept is increasingly lost and no longer applies to Javanese people in Lampung. There are two impacts of the dominant Javanese in Lampung (1) in terms of population (2) in terms of culture. However, economically or regarding 'eating', things have changed a lot, meaning we still get together but eating is our own business. Poverty is no longer shared, that is the impact of Javanese people today in Lampung.

4. Impact of Inter-Ethnic Communication

Inter-ethnic communication is communication based on ethnic groups. In Lampung, the communication that occurs is communication between multicultural communities, but it is still dominated by ethnic Javanese. In terms of verbal communication, language is dominated by the Javanese ethnic group as the largest population. Javanese is more dominantly used in Lampung compared to the local language, namely Lampung. Even Lampung people also use Javanese when communicating with Javanese and other people in general. In non-verbal communication, stereotypes and prejudices emerge among them. Where the symbols used in interactions also predominantly use symbols and behavioural meanings from the Javanese ethnic group. However, Javanese people also understand Lampung people, in the symbols and meaning of daily interactions. The stereotypes that emerge are for example that Javanese people are good at working on plantations, tougher, more diligent and more loyal. On the other hand, Lampung people are considered more suitable to be leaders because of their tough nature, for example being village heads. Lampung people are also considered no longer suitable for plantations, are less diligent and are starting to leave their jobs as farmers. Lampung people left the agricultural sector, sold their land, they preferred to become civil servants, soldiers and police. The prejudice that appears is also sometimes negative, for example, Lampung people are rude, many become thieves and so on. The opposite also appears in Javanese people, when they become successful and successful, they change their nature to become arrogant. These stereotypes appear continuously in intercultural communication in Lampung. However, these stereotypes and prejudices only exist on a small scale, not causing conflict. In general, Javanese and Lampung people are often harmonious, especially when it comes to local politics. Apart from that, differences in location of residence also give rise to a tendency for conflict to occur, namely Javanese people live in Javanese villages with Javanese village names, while Lampung people live in villages usually called pekon, kampung and so on.

Apart from that, inter-ethnic communication is also influenced by acculturation, where the emergence of interaction between these two cultures, in certain situations they interact with their respective cultures, but when they come into contact they partly use Indonesian-national symbols. However, Javanese culture is often more dominant, Lampung people are usually fluent in Javanese and understand Javanese culture well. Assimilation also occurs, namely mixed marriages, so if this happens then new cultures emerge thanks to the results of compromise and consensus on which culture to use. New culture emerges, for example in language, where new languages emerge, especially for the younger generation. In the younger generation, this has caused major changes, which have given rise to new cultural communication. The younger generation is connected to communicating with social media [4]. The older generation of Lampung people find it difficult to pass on old cultural communication methods, because of the large influence of the dominant Javanese ethnic population.

In communication between ethnic groups in Lampung, friction occurs in the form of prejudice and stereotypes at the social level, but this does not cause serious conflict. Harmonious living is more dominant, Javanese culture has been absorbed by Lampung culture. So Lampung culture is starting to become extinct, but its identity remains strong. This harmony occurs because of different livelihood systems, and having the same religion, namely Islam. In contrast to the Balinese ethnic group and the Lampung ethnic group, there was serious conflict due to the struggle for resources, especially because of religious differences [5]

In inter-ethnic communication, meaning is marked (signified) which is related to the signifier (significant or sign-vehicle) [6]. A signifier is something related to "something else" that is of concern or related to a person's role. indicated in a marker. With regard to the process of formation, meaning arises in connection with the interaction

process that occurs between people. The meaning of "something" arises in connection with the ways in which people and other people act for "something". Meaning resides in social products and in creations that are formed through the activities of interacting people. Meaning arises in connection with interactions involving actors who each receive messages from each other, interpret messages, determine situations, predict how others will act, formulate plans, make decisions to act, receive new information, predict other actions, formulate and improve plans [7]. For the supporting community, meaning needs to be displayed for certain purposes, viewed from the need for its formation, meaning is needed to display a view of the world through the use of symbols or vice versa, acting as a tool that people use to express something. . Meaning can be realized through cultural objects or their cultural products [8]. In communication between ethnic groups, the influence of identity is also very strong, like the Lampung people, so that harmony is established [9]. The impact of intercultural communication on a society is important because it influences social movements in society [10], [11], [12].

5. Local Technology Impact

Changes in local technology in Lampung have also experienced major changes, starting from agricultural technology as well as house architecture and other technology. Lampung customs and culture are a very valuable part of Lampung society today, but there has been a shift and even extinction of elements in Lampung culture. itself, so that many of the younger generation and society in general no longer know about what was once there in Lampung customs and culture, including the architecture of traditional Lampung houses. The middle-class lifestyle is also an important part of changes in house styles and shapes today. Change of life from a large family (extended family) to a small family (nuclear family)

Lampung is currently filled with various changing patterns and forms of modern home architecture. Many traditional houses were abandoned and even collapsed. The wood is rotten and no longer maintained. Wood is also difficult to obtain. A traditional house is the smallest centre of social activity related to the system of institutions within it. The traditional house socially functions as the centre of the smallest social activity or family within a group, to fulfil the complex needs of certain needs that they are aware of and understand without giving up the cultural values, norms, laws and special rules that they adhere to [13].

The traditional house for the Lampung people is called Nuwa or Lamban. Traditional houses are one of the many symbols of a village. In other words, a traditional house is a symbol of the greatness of a village. It is said to be big not because of its physical size, but because of the high dignity of its inhabitants. Traditional houses are usually large and spacious from a social perspective, namely that the people who live in them belong to the mother and are the residence of the extended family inhabited by at least five living generations.

Nowadays, traditional house buildings are starting to decrease. The current symptom is that people are remodelling traditional house buildings by swapping each element in the house. In terms of the materials used in this renovation, everything has changed with the various influences of technology in society. In terms of the shape of the building and its spatial layout, there are also signs of quite fundamental changes as a result of the erosion of the kinship system in today's Lampung society [14].

A traditional house is the smallest center of social activity related to the system of institutions within it. The social function of a traditional house is the center of activity for the smallest social unit or family within a people, in order to fulfil certain complex needs that they are aware of and understand without giving up the cultural values, norms, laws and special rules that they adhere to.

Traditional houses are the result of human work as an outpouring of human ideas and activities. As stated by Amos Rapoport, the form and function of an ethnic group's traditional house is greatly influenced by the socio-cultural factors of the people who use it [15].

The traditional house for the people of Lampung is a traditional house. Traditional houses are physically shaped like houses on stilts with an elongated tradition that has a *gonjong* roof on top. The Lampung traditional house as an object created by the community, its form and function are greatly influenced by the socio-cultural structure of the community where it lives. When the socio-cultural structure of the Lampung community began to experience changes due to various things that influenced it, the tradition of living in this traditional house began to be

abandoned by the community. This resulted in the traditional houses not functioning and one by one they began to be abandoned. This phenomenon resulted in the renovation of the traditional house while maintaining the shape of the *gonjong* roof. The roof as a form of building is a real form or embodiment in which is hidden the meaning given by the supporting community so that it becomes a source of pride and identity for the supporting community. This building is not cultural, but a cultural object (artefact). Objects are created due to social interactions that contain meaning [16]. These cultural objects occur because they are cultivated by the community through plans, methods and based on the reasons for their formation. Studying cultural objects is not only studying the generic elements of materials but also understanding the cultural concepts of society that determine their creation [17].

6. Conclusion

From the research results, several things can be concluded; 1) socio-cultural impact, after 1 century of transmigration in Lampung, society has changed into a modern society, erased from its cultural origins, its culture has become increasingly marginal, but not its identity. Lampung culture is marginalized by the dominant culture itself, as a result of the '*nemui nyimah*' or friendly nature of Lampung ethnic groups towards immigrants so that they adapt to the culture that comes. However, there is one thing that is difficult to change, namely Lampung's identity. His identity is very strong, namely '*piil pesenggiri*' (self-esteem), this can be seen during local political contestation. Acculturation and assimilation occur in interactions between cultures in Lampung. The younger generation is also experiencing changes, they socialize no longer thinking about ethnicity or ethnicity. They associate with the culture they themselves created among young people who are all digital. The next impact is 2) the impact of inter-ethnic communication, there are stereotypes and prejudice, verbal and non-verbal communication. Even though prejudice, stereotypes and so on occur, this does not lead to serious conflict between Lampung people and Javanese people. This is caused by different livelihood systems, and also the same religion, namely Islam. Meanwhile, the most serious conflict that occurred was between Lampung people and Balinese people, apart from prejudice and stereotypes, but also because of competition for resources and sharpened by religious differences. 3) The impact of local technology, a century of transmigration in Lampung has created major technological changes in Lampung, from simple technology such as houses, living equipment, transportation and agricultural equipment, experiencing changes towards more digital technology. Especially the younger generation, digital technology is the choice today.

7. Acknowledgment

This research is multidisciplinary research from the fields of sociology, anthropology, communication and engineering. Funding for this research will be funded by the University of Lampung Research Institute, Indonesia in 2024. Thank you to the University of Lampung Research Institute, Indonesia for funding this research and the international seminar event.

References

- [1] Geertz, Clifford, 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books Inc.
- [2] Levang, Patrice. 2003. *Ayo ke Tanah Sabrang*. Jakarta: KPG (Kepustakaan. Populer Gramedia)
- [3] Biro Pusat Statistik Lampung (BPS) Tahun 2000
- [4] Bossetta, Michael; Anamaria Ds; Dujé Bonnaci. 2023. Reconceptualizing Cross-Cutting Political Expression on Social Media: A Case Study of Facebook Comments During the 2016 Brexit Referendum. *Political Communication*. Vol 40, issue 6 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10584609.2023.2222370>
- [5] Statio VD & Anne Margaretha DV (2024). Same religion, different treatment. The role of origin country characteristics in employers' decisions to hire Muslims. *Journal ethnic and migration studies*. Volume 50 Issue 10. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2286212>
- [6] Winfried. 1985. *Handbooks of semiotics*. Indiana University Press, p 92.
- [7] Rudito, Bambang. 1996. *Hubungan Antar Suku Bangsa*. Makalah. P 3.
- [8] Firth in Koentjaraningrat. 1987. *Sejarah Teori Antropologi I*. Jakarta: UI. P 198.

-
- [9] Wells, Chris & Firedland, Lewis A. 2023. Recognition Crisis: Coming to Terms with Identity, Attention and Political Communication in the Twenty-First Century. *Political Communication*. Vol 40, issue 6 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10584609.2023.2222267>
- [10] Obregon r ; thomas tuft (2017) communication, social movements, and collective action: toward a new research agenda in communication for development and social change. *journal of communication*. volume 67 issue 5. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcom.12332>.
- [11] Ciszek, Erica L (2017) Activist Strategic Communication for Social Change: A Transnational Case Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Activism. *Journal of Communication*. Volume 67 Issue 5. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcom.12319>
- [12] Thomas, P. N. (2017) Contentious Actions and Communication for Social Change: The Public Hearing (Jan Sunwai) as Process. *Journal of Communication*. Volume 67 Issue 5. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcom.12301>.
- [13] Koentjaraningrat. (1974). Beberapa Pokok Antropologi Sosial. Jakarta: Gramedia.p 15.
- [14] Bachtar in Koentjaraningrat. 1984. Kebudayaan Jawa Jakarta : PN Balai Pustaka. P 213.
- [15] Rapoport, Amos. 1979. House Form and Culture. University College London. P 14
- [16] Budhisantoso. 1998. Perkembangan seni sebagai perwujudan keanekaragaman dan dinamika kebudayaan Indonesia. Jakarta: Artikel pada buku TMII. P 37.
- [17] Meissner, Frant & Linnet Taylor (2024) Migration information infrastructures: power, control and responsibility at a new frontier of migration research. *Journal ethnic and migration studies*. Volume 50 Issue 9. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2307772>