

Subtheme 3 *Political Consequences of Cross-Country Mobility*

3.1. Diana Fawzia, Ganjar Razuni, AF Sigit Rochadi

Residents Mobility and Its Political Consequences: Case Study From Batam City, Kepulauan Riau Province

Diana Fawzia¹, AF Sigit Rochadi², Ganjar Razuni³

¹Department of Political Sciences, Universitas Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia ²Department of Sociology, Universitas Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia

³Department of Political Sciences, Universitas Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia
dianafawzia@yahoo.com; sigitrochadi@yahoo.com; ganjarrazuni@yahoo.com

Extended Abstract

MAIN IDEA

This qualitative case study explores the relations between high residents' mobility with the socio-cultural politics phenomenon occurring in an administrative entity. Employing Bruner's dominant cultural theory in an urban setting, the study analyzed social demographic of Batam city and its implication towards the practice of politics in the municipality, particularly during the election. Batam city is a city that benefits from a strategic geographic condition, as it is located in the international trade routes, next to Singapore and Malaysia who are deemed strong economic players, and also identified as part of the Indonesia's Special Economic Zones. As an industrial city and as part of the Indonesia's special economic zones, the residents of Batam city comparatively have higher mobility than residents in other Indonesian cities. Despite the high mobility, Batam municipal government has provided administrative recognition for all its residents, even for those who resides temporarily. These residents are entitled to have citizens identity card and family identity card. This citizenship policy may be viewed as a way to stimulate higher economic interactions; however this policy may have unintended consequences towards Batam's social demographic and political process.

The characteristics of Batam's social demographic is an urban community with high heterogeneity of social economic status and ethnicity – not just ethnicities from Indonesia, but also from neighboring countries (Suparlan, 1986a: 118 – 119). Batam's social demographic can be categorized as plural society (Furnival, 1948; Smith, 1974). The study inferred that there is no single dominating ethnicity in Batam's social demography, resulting in the absence of an

established local culture as well as locus of power among its community. These conditions, in accordance to Bruner, has categorized Batam as a city with absent dominant culture. It is argued that the citizenship policy where even temporary residents are entitled to certain citizenship privilege, has further cemented Batam as a city with no dominant culture.

The underlying premises is that a city with no dominant culture may have created a highly competitive climate for its residents - particularly in their process of obtaining, acquiring, and maintaining available resource. The opportunity for residents to obtain these resource through work is deemed not comparable with the availability of the resources itself, and highly reliant with the available opportunity of work in the labor market (Southall, 1973). It is inferred that Batam's residents experienced the above condition, and that they responded to this challenging work-life situation by organizing themselves into interest groups, formally as well as informally (Cohen, 1974: xvi-xviii). The form of interactions occurring amongst these groups in Batam's social demography can be viewed as ethnicity phenomena, that were built by psychological, economic and political variables (Cohen, 1974). Ethnicity becomes one of the contributing variables, and as it is closely correlated with other variables, it can also be observed through a political study where the relation between ethnicity with economic, social and politics are apparent.

For a heterogenous community such as Batam, ethnicity is an important cultural property to maintain the residents' identity, and thus existence, by preserving practices and tradition in the urban setting. This practice does not only functions as a cultural defense mechanism, but also to articulate their presence when they are forming social-cultural groups (Cohen, 1974: xviii). The hypothesis posed in this study is that that forming social-culture groups is a way for Batam's residents to strengthen its presence through ethnicity amidst a community with no dominant culture. This hypothesis is supported by the study finding that there are currently 27 socialcultural groups in Batam, (data Kesbangbol kota Batam, 2021). The study also found that amongst the 27 social cultural groups, are also included social-cultural groups of Melayu local community. This inferred that the needs to maintain cultural identity and existence within a community with no dominant culture, is not only recognized by immigrant residents, such as those coming from Padang, Jawa, Flores, Batak, Aceh, but also by the Melayu community who are deemed as the local and indigenous community of Batam city.

METHODOLOGY

The study location was in Batam city, in Kepulauan Riau province. Study commenced in February 2022, with field research undertaken within May to July 2022. Data was generated through observation and interviews with local stakeholders, including local government, the election committee, campaign team of for mayor candidate, as well as representatives from political party. The employed conceptual framework is Bruner's categorization of city with heterogenous social demographic (Bruner, 1974: 255-259). Firstly, a city with heterogenous social demographic yet still maintain a dominant culture. Secondly, a city with heterogenous social demographic yet does not have any dominant culture. The underlying components that serve as indicators for these categorizations are: resident's social demography, the presence of an established local culture and a clear distribution of locus of power. If a particular ethnicity dominates these three components, then a city is viewed to have a dominant culture.

CONCLUSIONS

Study findings inferred that high mobility of Batam's residents that were caused by influx of entrants from other Indonesian cities, or neighboring countries, had resulted in the absence of dominant culture. A condition, that in accordance to Furnival and MG Smith, only occurred in heterogenous community. This condition is then exacerbates by Batam's citizenship policy that are highly flexible in issuing identity cards for its residents. The study argued that Batam's social demographic condition posed as a challenge during the election. The general election commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*) of Batam municipality has not taken into account Batam's unique social demographic condition as part of its its strategy in updating its voters database – which includes the permanent voters list (*daftar pemilih tetap (DPT)*), the additional voters list (*daftar pemilih tambahan (DPTb)*), as well as the temporary voters list *data pemilih sementara (DPS)*. Study result inferred that Batam's complex social demographic; the oversight in Batam municipality general election commission working performance in taking into account

Batam's unique social demography; and the lack of coordination amongst relevant institutions in updating voters database, are the three main causes behind Batam's voters registration issue, where its result is viewed to be less accurate and accountable. The study viewed that for the way forward, the Batam municipal's

general election commission should sensitize itself with Batam's social demographic and acknowledge this condition in their situational analysis as bases in developing their strategy in strengthening voters data base in the upcoming election. The commission could also consider strengthening its recognition and coordination with the 27 social cultural groups in Batam as part of its strategy in strengthening voters' database. Although these social cultural groups do not possess strong political presence, they still possess sufficient presences to be recognized during the general as well as local election. The role of these groups, particularly in mobilizing masses during campaign and voting, is evident and should be taken into account as part of the commission's strategy in strengthening its voters database and to mitigate the effect of Batam's social demographic condition.

The study also argued that the work of the commission could be expanded beyond the aspect of voters' registration database, but also towards the election process. It is commonly observed that the locality of a political elite generally has higher influence in harnessing votes as opposed to the role of a political party's ideology. Given that most of Batam's residents are migrants, these residents do not share historic connection with candidates and this may affect the efficacy of the voting process. The commission could encourage candidates to provide more information about themselves and how their programs will impact Batam's residents as part of voters education program.

Keywords : residents, mobility; dominant culture; heterogenous community; social demography, established culture.