

# POPULATION DYNAMICS IN THE AREAS OF STATE BORDER: STUDY ON POPULATION MIGRATION IN THE DISTRICT OF TALAUD ISLANDS

**Burhan Niode**

*Sam Ratulangi University, Manado, Indonesia*

burhan.niode@yahoo.com

---

## Abstract

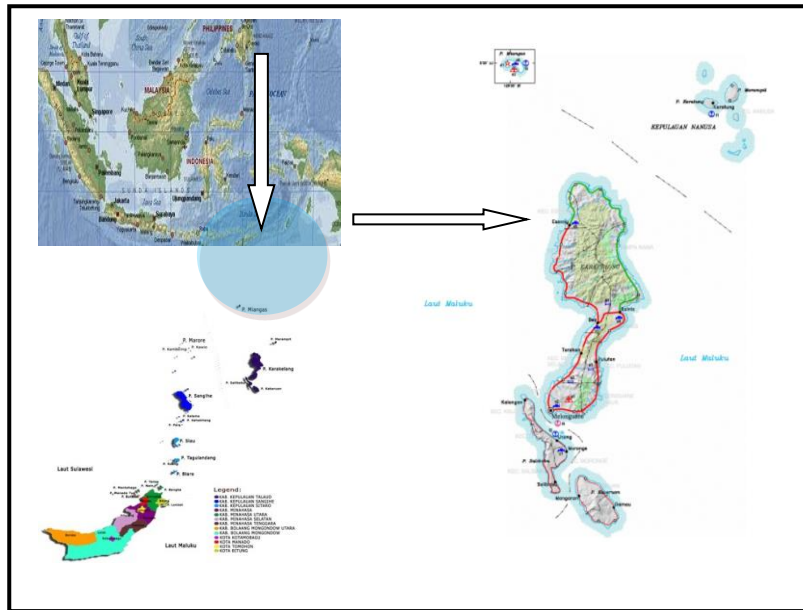
*Since the 1980s, descendants of people of Sangir-Talaud and Filipinos have migrated from southern Philippines to Indonesia. They are scattered in several areas in North Sulawesi Province namely the City of Bitung, the District of Sangihe Islands and the District of Talaud Islands. In the City of Bitung and in the District of Sangihe Islands they are treated as foreigners and get resistance from the local population. On the other hand, there are 321 migrants from southern Philippines in the District of Talaud Islands who have been confirmed as Indonesian citizens through the provision of Indonesian Identity Card (KTP) from 2010 to 2014. This study examines the identity of citizenship of migrants and driving and pulling factors the migration of the descendants of Sangir-Talaud and the Filipinos from the southern Philippines to the territory of Indonesia. This study applies a qualitative method, and implemented in the District of Talaud Islands. The data is collected through in-depth interviews and literature study. The informants are migrants from southern Philippine who have already obtained Indonesian citizenship. The samples used are purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Data were analyzed through three stages, namely reading the transcript, categorizing and contextualizing. The results show that: first, the identity of citizenship of migrants from southern Philippine settled in the District of Talaud Islands consists of : (1) Philippine citizen; (2) has an ID Card as an Indonesian issued by the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Davao City; (3) has no identity or ID Card as an Indonesian (undocumented citizens) although still descendant of people of Sangir-Talaud. Second, the driving and pulling factors that population migration from the Southern Philippines to the Talaud Islands region are: (1) economic problems in the area of origin; (2) security issues in the area of origin; (3) solicitation from certain parties. And third, this population migration can not be separated from the reason that they are in an area that has long been a cultural unity, so migration from the southern Philippine to the Talaud Islands region is not considered to be unlawful activity.*

**Keywords:** *Population Migration, State Borders, Citizens.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

One of the areas in Indonesia that has a sea border with the Philippines is the District of Talaud Islands, in North Sulawesi Province (see Figure 1. Map of Indonesia and the District of Talaud Islands). This border region has several problems. First, there is no agreement on the maritime boundary between Indonesia and the Philippines (*Tabloid Diplomasi* No. 61 VI, 2013: 09). Second, the existence of various illegal activities, such as illegal fishing, illegal trade and illegal entry (Salindeho & Sombowadile, 2008, 232-236; Ulaen, 2012, 133-134).



Sumber: Retrieved March 20, 2017, from  
Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=peta+talaud>.

Figure 1. Map of Indonesia and the District of Talaud Islands

The mobility of the populations who crossed the administrative boundary between Indonesia and the Philippines has occurred long before the two countries gained their independence, and this mobility did not bother the Dutch government ruling at that time since the issues of territorial boundary and the identity of the nation were not important and the Dutch government's interests were not disturbed (Ramos in Tan-Cullamar, 1993, 41; Ulaen, 2003, 17). After the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of the Philippines gained their respective independence in 1945 and 1947, these two nations did not immediately stop the dynamics of migration in the border area of these two countries.

In the early 1980s, the descendants of Sangihe-Talaud and the southern Philippines began to re-migrate to Indonesia both legally and illegally (Raharto et. al., 1993, 36). The migration of the population is still on-going, and the migrants are dispersed in various areas and cities in the Province of North Sulawesi, such as in Bitung City, the District of Sangihe Islands and the District of Talaud Islands. Their presence in Bitung (the capital of Bitung City), by the city government, is not allowed to obtain identity as citizen of Indonesia (WNI). In Tahuna (the capital of the District of Sangihe Islands) they are treated by the government as a foreign citizen because they do not have an identity as an Indonesian or as Philipinos. Even their presence is so unsettling that they got resistance from local residents for fishing activities in the area of the District of Sangihe Islands. In contrast, in the District of Talaud Islands there are about 321 migrants from the southern Philippines who have obtained citizenship status as citizens through the provision of identity or identity card during 2010-2014.

Studies focusing on migrants from the southern Philippines have been conducted by some researchers. First, Tan-Cullamar (1993), examined the Indonesian diaspora in the southern Philippines. Second, Third, Velasco (2010), examined the issues that occur in the border areas of Indonesia-Philippines, particularly in the border region of Indonesia. Third, Kimball et al. (2014), conducted a study on the identification and distribution of illegal border crossers of the southern Philippine origins in the province of North Sulawesi. Fourth, Pristiwanto (2014) examined the activities of border crossers in the border areas of Indonesia-Philippines. And fifth, Niode (2015), conducted a study on the implementation of the rules governing the mobility of people and goods in the border area between Indonesia and the Philippines.

The purpose of this study is to examine the citizenship of the migrants, the push factors and the pull factors of migration of the descendants of Sangihe-Talaud and the descendants of the Philippines from the southern Philippines to the territory of Indonesia, and the reasons for migrating to the Talaud Islands Region.

This research is conducted in the District of Talaud Islands. The District of Talaud Islands is selected as a research location for the following reasons: first, this district has 321 migrants from the southern Philippines who obtained their identity card as an affirmation of their Indonesian citizenship during 2010 - 2014. Secondly, this regency is geographically bordered by the sea which separates it with the Philippines so that this area becomes the origin of the Indonesian population who will migrate to the southern Philippines, as well as become the destination of migrants from the southern Philippines who will migrate to Indonesia.

## Literature Review

The concept of migration or displacement of existing residents is extremely diverse. The differences arise depending on the purpose of research and analysis that will be conducted by researchers concerned. This study uses the definition of migration from Shryock and Siegel (in Mantra, 2010, 173) that migration is a form of geographic or spatial mobility that involves permanent residential changes between particular geographic units.

Based on the geographical coverage area, Pressat (in Raharto, 1997, 32-33) classifies the migration into two, namely internal migration and international migration. Internal migration is a migration conducted by an individual or group whose scope is still within the country. While, international migration refers more to the cross-border migration. Thus, it can be concluded that the international migration is a migration that crosses the political boundary between countries. What distinguishes the international migration from the internal migration is that most international migration which is influenced by the socio-political climate of the country of origin, is more able to change the lives of the actors more drastically than the internal migrants because it is closely related to the implications of international migration to the social policy, politics, and economics (Weeks, 1998, 246).

Munir (in Demographic Institution of the Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia, 2000, 119-120) suggests that the push factors that cause people to migrate are:

- a) The decrease of natural resources availability in the regions of origin that can provide a reasonable income;
- b) The narrowing of employment in the area of origin due to the construction of facilities / infrastructure and the use of more recent machines dominating the activities compared to the use of human labors;
- c) The existence of political, religious, ethnic and customary discrimination in the area;
- d) Not compatible with the dwelling confines;
- e) The reasons for employment and marriage, where it is difficult to change careers in the area;
- f) saturation of the sectors in the regions of origin;
- g) Forces, that is the migration which is caused by that person has done / causes a disgrace that cannot be forgiven by the people in the area;
- h) Maintaining personal safety as a result of disputes, natural disasters, and so on.

The pull factors of migration according to Munir (in the Demographic Institution at the University of Indonesia, 2000, 120) are as follow:

- a) feeling superior in a new place or having a good opportunity or entering a suitable job;
- b) opportunities for better education / skills;
- c) facilities for environmental circumstances that feels safe and secure, peaceful and pleasant;
- d) Enforcement from others that are expected as a means of shelter;
- e) Activities in big cities, entertainment venues, cultural centers and centers of activity that give a distinctive color to villagers who had not previously witnessed and followed such a thing.

The economic factors are often regarded as the most fundamental factors that push people to do mobility or migration, but international migration is also related to the law of the recipient country

and the country of origin. In addition, political factors such as war, political disturbance and decolonization can actually cause individuals or groups to migrate across countries (Raharto, 1997, 32).

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research and conducted in the District of Talaud Islands. Of the nineteen sub-districts in the District of Talaud Islands, 3 (three) sub-districts were selected purposively as the research sites, including Sub-District of Melonguane, Sub-District of East Melonguane, and Sub-District of Beo. These three sub-districts were selected based on the consideration that the southern Filipino migrants in the District Talaud Islands are concentrated in these three sub-districts.

In accordance with the qualitative approach used in this study, the determination of informants was according to the objectives of the research and the selected informants could represent the settings, individuals and the diversity of the characteristics of the objects of research. Considering the need for data and information, the informants who were interviewed are village officials, sub-district officials and district officials (the Agency of Population and Civil Registry); as well as the migrants from the southern part of the Philippines who have gained status as the citizens of Indonesia. The sampling technique used for this study was purposive sampling and the informants' initials are used in order to preserve their confidentiality.

Data collection techniques employed for this study were in in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the data were analyzed qualitatively. In this qualitative research, the data have been analyzed through three (3) stages, namely: reading the transcript of the results of field research, classifying the data by categories, and interpreting the data through the process of contextualization (Maxwell, 1996, 78-79).

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### • *Citizenship Status*

The results of the study show that the migration of the population from the southern Philippines to the District of Talaud Islands consists of: first, the migration of Filipino descendants who still have the status as a citizen of the Philippines. And secondly, the migration of the Sanger-Talaud descendants. This second group migration can be divided into two categories, namely the migration of the population by those who have identity or identity cards as Indonesian issued by the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Davao city and those without identity or residence documents as an Indonesian.

A benefit for the migrants who have identity cards as Indonesian issued by the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Davao city is that they can gain direct access to the affirmation of their Indonesian citizenship through the receipt of valid identity card. This is revealed from the results of interviews with RM (an official) as follow:

*“For those who have the identity issued by the Indonesian Consulate in there (south Philippines) although it's only a kind of certificate, I allow them to apply for the Indonesian identity card or KTP, because they bring their identity card as Indonesian or the certificate, so that the identity card can be directly redeemed or replaced with KTP”.*

The statement from RM is also supported by AM (an official) who says that:

*“As I know, those who have identity cards as Indonesian citizens can be directly given the opportunity to obtain their identity card; there are no other additional requirements since they have the identity card given by Indonesian consulate in Davao. The consulate is a representative of Indonesian government, so the card issued by them is valid and can be used here”.*

On the contrary, for those who are descendants of Sanger-Talaud but have no identity card as Indonesian and or Filipinos cannot get direct affirmation of Indonesian citizenship.

• ***The push and pull factors of the migration of the citizens from the southern Philippines to Indonesia***

The results of the study show that the migration of people from the southern Philippines to Indonesia conducted by those who are still descendants of the Philippines was caused by the invitation from their wife or husband, or friends who are still descendants of Sanger-Talaud so that they take the decision to migrate to the District of Talaud Islands. AF (a migrant), for example, states the following reason for migrating: *“Wanting to have a better life. There was a friend who invited me, so I decided to come to Talaud. Besides, my wife is from Sanger. That is my reason to migrate to Talaud.”*

Similar reason is also stated by BLM (a migrant), who mentioned that his arrival to the District of Talaud Islands was related to the business competition in the area of origin (Philippine) and there was an invitation from a friend. Similarly, JM (a migrant), explains that the reason for moving to District of Talaud Islands is due to the invitation from the husband to manage the parents’ inheritance.

Whilst, the migration of the population conducted by those who are of Sanger-Talaud descent, especially those who have residence documents or identity cards as Indonesian issued by the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Davao city, was caused by similar reasons as the migration conducted by those who are still descendants of Philippines. HT (a migrant), states that his migration was due to: *“My children were eager to move to Talaud since our great-grandfather came from here.”*

Other reasons mentioned by AL (a migrant) and WM (a migrant), to move to Talaud are as follow:

*“The taxes there (the Southern Philippines) which were imposed to our family were high. After careful thought, we finally decided to move to Talaud. We can cultivate the great grandfather's coconut plantation here.”*

*“I am a fisherman and our family there (the southern Philippines) stayed in the garden, and we went to the city rarely as we doubt of its safety. I was robbed at the sea while fishing. We heard that the situation in Talaud is much better. So we moved.”*

From the statements above it can be seen clearly that there are multi-factors which became the reasons for the migrants of Sanger-Talaud descent who have identity card as Indonesian to move to Talaud Islands regency. These factors are: (1) the attachment to the ancestral land (Sanger-Talaud regions); (2) family encouragement; (3) The safety which is not guaranteed in the previous place; (4) uncertain income; (5) and the high taxes that must be paid.

While for migrants who do not have a residence document or id card as Indonesian people have a reason almost in line with the previous group. Generally the reason of this group of migrants is related to the economic and security problems in the area of origin or the Philippines, as well as the encouragement from certain parties in this case the wife, husband or child.

There are economic and security issues that cause the migrants from this group make the decision to migrate. AL (a migrant) states that:

*“In there (Philippines), the income of a fisherman is uncertain. We are traditional fishermen, our fishing equipment is simple and our boat is small. Thus our catch is limited and only for our daily needs. I am old and therefore I migrated to cultivate my heritage, the coconut plantation.”*

The statements relating to economic and security reasons are also mentioned by OM (a migrant) :

*“Over there (Philippines), we just look after the garden belonging to someone else. Our income is very small, limited for daily meals, we cannot buy other goods. There, we also tried to avoid of making mistakes, both with the landlord, the community, and the local foreman. If they chased us away then we would not be safe.No one can guaranteeour safety. Here, it is the opposite; we are kings in our own gardens.”*

While the encouragement of certain parties so that the decision to migrate can be traced from the statement below. AS (a migrant), states that: *“my husband invited us here. He comes from Bowonbaru (Talaud).”* Meanwhile, RB (a migrant) says that: *“We heard from our families who came*

*here first in 1995. They informed us that the employment is much better in Talaud and the safety is more guaranteed. So, we went to Talaud, and live in Bowonbaru.”*

Various arguments about the reasons for migrating from the southern Philippines to the District of Talaud Islands either by the isolated Filipino migrants or by groups of migrants of Sanger-Talaud descent are quite varied, ranging from economic reasons such as insufficient income, high taxes, unsupported security reasons, encouragement by close family (wife, husband, child, and friend), existence of inherited inheritance, and better life stimuli in the destination. Thus, the decision of migrants from the southern Philippines to migrate to the Talaud Islands region is at least influenced by the presence of factors in the origin and the factors that exist in the destination area. Those various factors can be the pull factors or push factors that come from the destination area.

- ***Reasons for migrating to the District of Talaud Islands***

The matters reviewed in this section are the reasons for choosing the territory of the District of Talaud Islands as a migration destination. This study is considered substantive because of the consideration that the migration of the population in the region is classified as the international migration because it has crossed the territorial boundaries of the country, as well as the agreement between the Indonesian government and the government of the Philippines that the mobility of the population and goods in the border areas in both countries must go through Border Crossing Entry and Exit Station.

The findings obtained from the in-depth interviews show that people with Sanger-Talaud descent and the descendants of the Philippines, who migrated from the southern Philippines and made the Talaud Islands Regency as their destination, assumed that the location of the destination has a common culture and tradition, which could give advantage to them as they could adapt easily. In addition, the migration from the southern Philippines to the Talaud Islands has been done by their ancestors.

The movement of the population has become a tradition that cannot be separated from the reason of why they populate in the area that has always been a cultural entity (Hayase, 2004). This is used as a reference for the residents who live in the border area between Indonesia and the Philippines so that migration from the southern Philippines to the territory of Talaud Islands is not considered as unlawful activity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The citizenship status of migrants from the southern Philippines consists of: (1) Filipino citizens (2) citizens who hold Indonesian identity card issued by the consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Davao City and (3) citizens who have no Indonesian identity card.

Factors that cause the migration from the Southern Philippines to the Talaud Islands are: (1) the economic and security issues in the area of origin; (2) the encouragements from certain parties.

The reason migrants migrate from the southern Philippine region to the Talaud Islands region because it assumes that the intended location has a common culture and tradition, which will make it easier for them to adapt and benefit them. In addition, migration from the southern Philippine to the territory of Talaud Islands has always been done by their ancestors.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The author would like to thank the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia that has funded this research.

## REFERENCES

- Hayase, S. (2004). *Mindanao ethnohistory beyond nation, Maguindanao, Sangir, and Bagobo society in East Maritim Southeast Asia*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Kimbal, M. L., Kaawoan, J., & Renkung, F. (2014). *Pemetaan warga non citizens asal Sangihe-Talaud di Propinsi Sulawesi Utara*. Laporan Penelitian Unggulan Perguruan Tinggi. Manado: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat (LPPM) Universitas Sam Ratulangi.
- Lembaga Demografi Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Indonesia. (2000). *Dasar-dasar demografi*. Jakarta: Lembaga Demografi Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Indonesia.
- Mantra, I. B. (2010). *Demografi umum*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design : An interactive approach*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Niode, B. (2015). Analisis terhadap perjanjian lintas batas antara Indonesia dan Philipina tahun 1975. *Prosiding Seminar Humaniora: Kearifan Lokal dan Pelestarian Nilai Budaya dalam Upaya Pembentukan Karakter Bangsa*. Manado: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Manado, Wilayah Kerja Sulawesi Utara, Sulawesi Tengah dan Gorontalo.
- Pristiwanto. (2014). *Pelintas batas Indonesia-Philipina: Di Kabupaten Kepulauan Sangihe*. Yogyakarta: Kepel Press.
- Salindeho, W. & Sombowadile, P. (2008). *Kawasan Sangihe – Talaud – Sitaro: Daerah perbatasan keterbatasan pembatasan*. Jogja : Puspada.
- Tan-Cullamar, E. (1993). The Indonesian diaspora and Philippine-Indonesian relations. *Philippine Studies*, 41 (1).
- Ulaen, A. J. (2003). *Nusa Utara, Dari lintasan niaga ke daerah perbatasan*. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- Ulaen, A. J. (2012). *Studi tentang sosial-budaya masyarakat daerah perbatasan: Studi kasus masyarakat di pulau Marore*. Yogyakarta: Kepel Press.
- Velasco, D. (2010). Navigating the Indonesian-Philippine border, the challenges of life in the border zone. *Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 25.
- Weeks, J. R. (1998). *Population: An introduction to concepts and issues* (7th ed). Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Undang-Undang Nomor 77 Tahun 1957 Tentang Persetujuan Mengenai Warga Negara Yang Berada Secara Tidak Sah Di Daerah Republik Indonesia Dan Republik Philippina.
- Tabloid Diplomasi No. 61 Tahun VI, Oktober – 14 November 2013, Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia.
- Agreement On Border Crossing Between The Republic Of The Philippines And The Republic of Indonesia In 1975.
- <https://www.google.com/search?q=peta+talaud>