

# Contribution Of Labour Mobility On Rural Economic Change

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Tulisan ini memfokuskan pada masalah migrasi non permanen mengingat peranannya yang cukup besar terhadap mobilitas tenaga kerja di pedesaan. Beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi mobilitas juga dipelajari. Dalam kaitan ini diketahui bahwa terdapat hubungan yang erat antara mobilitas penduduk pedesaan dengan ketersediaan kesempatan kerja baik di pedesaan (sektor pertanian) maupun di kota. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa faktor-faktor sosial ekonomi yang menyebabkan terjadinya mobilitas non permanen di Jawa antara lain, norma yang berlaku, pendapatan keluarga, keinginan meminimalkan resiko, ketimpangan spasial akibat sistem kapital serta pembangunan jaringan transportasi.

Meskipun terjadi peningkatan produksi beras dan pendapatan di pedesaan, akan tetapi sedikit sekali kesempatan kerja yang bisa diciptakan sehingga terjadi arus pergerakan tenaga kerja dari desa ke kota. Tiga faktor utama yang dijadikan bahan pertimbangan untuk melakukan migrasi, yakni: (1) jarak dan biaya; (2) pendapatan di tempat tujuan dan (3) ketersediaan kesempatan kerja di daerah asal. Yang menarik adalah cukup besarnya manfaat adanya pengaruh "trickle down" bagi keluarga di pedesaan akibat kenaikan pendapatan dari kegiatan sektor informal di perkotaan. Namun akibat yang ditimbulkan antara lain berkurangnya tenaga kerja di sektor pertanian pada saat permintaan tenaga kerja mencapai puncaknya (khususnya tanaman padi).

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Diketahui juga bahwa sektor pertanian masih merupakan sumber utama kesempatan kerja dan pendapatan bagi keluarga di pedesaan, akan tetapi proporsi dari keluarga yang mengandalkan pertanian sebagai sumber pendapatan dan kesempatan kerja cenderung menurun dari waktu ke waktu.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The role of temporary migration in providing a major source of income and employment for rural households in Java has been studied by many researchers such as Hugo (1977), Jellinek (1978), and Manning (1988). The increasing tendency of rural people to participate in urban economy in recent years particularly in Java's major cities was due to the growth of informal sector and manufacturing employment opportunities accompanied by more frequent and extensive public roads transport (Collier, et al., 1982 and Hugo, 1982).

There have been some reasons why rural employment creation in Java is of general interest. It is well-known that Java has long experienced not only in labour surplus with high level of rural population density but also in high incidence of rural poverty. Given the high level of labour intensity in farm operations, rapid economic growth is to be associated with a substantial movement of labour out of agriculture as Manning (1988) termed as "labour-displacing effects of technological and institutional change induced by the green revolution".

Based on the above phenomenon, three issues are addressed in this paper, (1) the forces causing the population mobility; (2) the contribution of urban work by temporary migrants to the rural economy; and (3) how individuals and households become increasingly dependent on non-agricultural employment.

This paper deals only with temporary migration for employment purposes because it was the most important source of labour mobility while permanent outmigration was not common and was very different in nature from temporary movement (Manning, 1987).

### II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Temporary migration like circulation, seasonal migration, and commuting within Indonesia have had a social and economic significance towards development. Unfortunately, this kind of mobility goes unrecorded in large scale demographic surveys and censuses (Hugo, 1982). Therefore, efforts have been made by reserchers to deal with this problem by conducting several studies in several parts of Indonesia to establish whether non permanent population mobility is a phenomenon of social, economic, and demographic significance in Indonesia.

It is not easy, actually, to distinguish between permanent and non-permanent population mobility. As quoted in Hugo (1982), Zelinsky (1971) defines conventional *migration* as "any permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" and *circulation* as "a great variety of movements usually short term, repetitive or cyclical in nature, but all having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long lasting change in residence". In Indonesia, both concepts of mobility are distinguished by the terms *pindah* and *merantau*. The former refers to as a permanent change of residence, whereas the latter to itinerant movement to look for work or trade, generally alone without one's family. Most of the studies showed that *merantau* was the dominant form of mobility in most villages in Java.

Further distinction can be made between *commuting* and *circular migration*. The former is defined as regular travel outside the village (usually for work or education) from 6 to 24 hours while the latter involves continuous but temporary absences of greater than one day. Even, some fieldworkers have adopted upper thresholds of continuous absence of 6 months or 12 months to distinguish between circular and permanent mobility.

### III. FACTORS INFLUENCING NON PERMANENT MOBILITY

Previous studies suggest that nonpermanent mobility, especially between village and city, has significant social and economic implications not only for the migrants involved but also their places of origin and destination. The following are socioeconomic factors influencing the increasing trend of commuting and circular migration in Indonesia.

#### 1. Social Norm

Many researchers stated that temporary migration has become institutionalized within some ethnic groups in Indonesia, so that it becomes the norm for particular people within that group to spend part of their lives outside their village birth. Some examples can be addressed like Minangkabau People of Sumatera; Acehese of Northern Sumatera; Dayak circular movement in Kalimantan; and Maduranese in East Java. Moreover, the institutionalization of a particular mobility operates not only on the scale of ethnic group but also on a regional and local scale.

It is particularly important to note regarding the outmigration and return migration which both are equally encouraged. In such a circumstance, tradition and institutionalization can also encourage stability and lack of mobility like what happened to Javanese people. In this respect it is interesting to note the argument of Mantra (1981) as

## AGRO EKONOMI

quoted in Hugo (1982) that the very strong attachment of the Javanese to their natal village make permanent displacement anathema to them, even in the face of bleak economic circumstances.

### 2. Family Income

It has been well-known that land shortage and pressure on agricultural resources in Java are very much high. Statistical data show that less than 50% of rural population in Java owns or has direct access to sufficient agricultural land to obtain subsistence level. As most of the rural households could not earn sufficient income to support themselves and their dependence, circular migration or commuting become a means for families to maximize their incomes by encouraging some members of the household to work in the village at times of peak labour demand and to seek work in the city or elsewhere at slower times while other members of the household remain to cope with limited village-based labour demands.

The reason of leaving dependents in the village home is that the migrants (mostly men) can effectively reduce the costs of subsistence in the city or other destination. Thus, by earning in the city but spending in the village means that the migrants maximize the utility gained from consumption as well.

### 3. Minimization of Risk

Due to the fact that urban employment offers little security in old age or in times of difficulty, it was imperative to move while retaining contacts with rural society. The West Java study done by Hugo (1982) found this to be an important consideration among movers. A circulation strategy keep the mover's options in the village completely open so that risk of not being able to earn subsistence is reduced by spreading it between village and city income opportunities.

Moreover, as mostly experienced in Java, many of Java's rural dwellers do not have sufficient surplus to allow them to take the risks that permanent migration often involves. Therefore, a mobility strategy that minimizes such risks obviously has more appeal under such circumstances.

### 4. Spatial inequalities

Population mobility can be regarded as a response to broader sociostructural changes associated with the uneven penetration of capital, which has created substantial sectoral, class, and spatial inequalities. Forbes (1980) as quoted in Hugo (1982) has shown that circulation

is a result of the incomplete penetration of capital. Consequently, if the wage labour sector should expand, or in another words, if agriculture should become increasingly capitalized, the circulation may well give way to another form of mobility. This makes it possible especially in Java's rural areas due to the impact of major "modernizing" and commercializing changes in agricultural technology and practice (White, 1976).

### 5. Transportation development

Transportation cost, time taken and distance from origin to destination are part of elements to the movers in deciding whether or not to migrate and where. Therefore, one of the most fundamental distinctions between nonpermanent and permanent forms of population mobility is the relative significance of the journey between place of origin and destination.

In this case, the revolution of the availability of public transport over most of rural Indonesia such as the extension of roads and poliferation of vehicles of many types, especially buses and minibuses have led to greatly increased spatial mobility for a wide spectrum of Indonesia's rural dwellers. It is clearly understood that the transport development has facilitated the concurrent upswing in circular migration and commuting.

## IV. NON PERMANENT MOBILITY AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

The difficulty of furnishing accurate estimates of the extent of commuting and circular migration in Indonesia is due to the fact that census and most conventional large-scale surveys are designed to exclude the bulk of nonpermanent movement. It was Hugo (1982) who provided the example of the 1971 Census where the criteria of "migrants" in that census excluded most short-distance and short-term movers. The extent to which the temporal criteria adopted in the census excluded population movements of significance can be gauged from field survey evidence.

Therefore, it is interesting to present a study conducted by Hugo in 1975 and 1978 in 14 West Java villages to distinguish the types of non permanent mobility. The study which primarily concentrated on population movement from village to the major metropolitan centers of Jakarta and Bandung has identified several distinction, including commuting over distances of up to 50 km, to participate in full-time urban-based employment or irregularly to engage in work supplementary to

## AGRO EKONOMI

village-based jobs. Circular migration, whereby movers do not change their usual place of residence in the village but are absent at an urban destination for periods longer than a single day can be associated with permanent full-time employment at the destination, but usually involves non permanent work in the informal sector of the urban economy.

This study concluded that circular migration usually maintain same village-based employment. The frequency with which they migrate is determined by (1) the distance involved and the costs of traversing it; (2) their earnings at the destination; and (3) the availability of work in the home village. It was stated that much circular mobility is seasonal, occurring during the extended periods of limited job opportunity between planting and harvesting rice during the wet and dry seasons. It was reported also that there was significant long-distance circular migration from West Java to the outer islands to work on plantations or oil/mineral development projects, often under contract and involving absences of up to two years. In the 14 study villages, three-quarters of the families were partly dependent on income sources outside the village, mostly to Jakarta and Bandung.

Jellinek (1978) in her study of petty traders in Jakarta have pointed clearly the importance of nonpermanent migrants in that city. One of the interesting result is that the *pondok* system whereby circular migrants (usually from the same region of origin) cluster together in tiny cramped rooming-houses (*pondok*) own by a *tauke* (boss), who also provides them with credit and equipment needed to set themselves up as mobile traders. It was pointed out that the *pondok* dwellers were usually both petty traders and circular migrants who came into the city from the village merely to seek work but saw their permanent home as being in the countryside where their wives, children and few possessions remained. It was found that of more than 200 mobile traders interviewed, all but one was a circular migrant, and she suggests that if her study is representative of mobile traders in Jakarta then there must be hundreds of thousands of circular migrants engaged in petty trading alone, in addition to those who work as day laborers, pedicab drivers etc.

With respect to daily commuting, Koentjoroningrat (1975) in his study of villages south of Jakarta, recognized widespread nonpermanent movements to the capital, including daily commuters who are absent only during the day or for two to five days and "temporary nonseasonal" migrants who are forced to leave their families for several weeks or months. The fact that many people are moving into the area surrounding Jakarta in order to commute to the city is evidenced in the preliminary results of the 1980 census, which showed that the three *kabupaten* (regencies) adjoining Jakarta had annual population growth rates be-

tween 1971 and 1980 of 4.6 percent, 4.04 percent, and 3.6 percent compared with the national rate of 2.33 percent (Biro Pusat Statistik, 1981).

There are, at least, three circumstances of obtaining in Jakarta (1) a huge metropolis with a large and expanding informal sector providing many job opportunities with flexible time commitments; (2) a relatively easy entry; and (3) linked by a reasonably cheap and efficient transport to most parts of the province. These conditions were conducive to nonpermanent mobility.

A number of studies in other parts of Indonesia, however, have produced evidence of similar patterns of mobility in quite different contexts. Mantra (1981) as quoted in Hugo (1982) in his study of movement out of two villages in a very densely settled Central Java-Yogyakarta region identified commuting (much of it by bicycle) as the major form of mobility. It was argued that nonpermanent migration is of such significance among the Javanese that they have several distinct concepts of such movements. *Nglaju* is used for those who travel to a place but return back to their home within the same day; *nginep* for people who stay in another place for several days before returning; and *mondok* for those who lodge in a destination community for several months or years. *Merantau* refers to those who go to another island for a relatively long period but eventually return back to the origin community. Term *pindah* is used for residents who migrate to another place.

To comprehend the analysis, it is important to know the different types of non permanent mobility in different areas in Java as indicated by Hugo (1982) of the following fact. Within the province of Central Java, there appear to be two main systems of non permanent mobility. In the western part, the patterns are similar to those in West Java with substantial circular migration from such areas as Kedu, Cilacap, Tegal and Purwakarta. In the eastern part, however, the bulk of movement is commuting and, to a lesser extent, circular migration to the major cities such as Semarang, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta. In East Java Province, the most mobile group are the Maduranese, many of whom have moved, either permanently or temporary, from their small island north-east of Java to mainland East Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi.

There have been some evidence of rural economic change particularly in Java with respect to non-permanent mobility. Based on Susenas data, Manning (1987) pointed out that in early 1980s, it was estimated that approximately 40 % of all employed individuals were engaged in non-agricultural work as their 'major activity' as contrast to the household survey in 1983 which was nearly 70 % of household income obtained from this source. By using the micro level data of West Java, this trend is quite similar to those of Susenas data. In 1976 about 60 % of

household income obtained from non agriculture and increased to be 70 % in 1983 (Appendix 1).

Another interesting thing was that in 1983, both farming and labouring had declined considerably in importance compared to 1976 although the majority of households regarded agriculture as the major source of income (Appendix 1). This was supported by Jones (1984) explaining the relative importance of trade sector as the major migrant activity.

The shifting employment from agriculture to non agriculture was associated with a substantial increase in the proportion of households deriving from outside the village as Manning (1987) noted that Jakarta, Bandung, and even Semarang in Central Java seem to have provided a major share of the income increment earned by landowning classes. As indicated in Appendix 2, over 50 % at least one member working outside the village in 1983 compared with less than 30 percent in 1976. Rural work, which had dominated all work outside the village in 1976, was also much less important in 1983. Employment in all urban locations now accounted for over 60 percent of households working outside the village and involved over 35 percent of all households.

In relation to the linkages between urban work and agriculture, it can be stated that there was no clear trend that those employed in urban areas were becoming totally dependent on urban work. In this case, agriculture quite substantially as the *major* source of household income among the increasing numbers of families who had found a niche in the urban economy.

As indicated in Appendix 3, the trend of the relative importance of agricultural work and incomes among migrant workers are clearly understood. A high proportion of individual workers were engaged in some work in agriculture (mainly in rice farming) in both 1976 and 1983, underlining the fact that to some extent, engagement in the urban economy continued to be at least, seasonal for most urban workers. However, the proportion of individuals for which agriculture was a *major source* of employment, or of household incomes, was much smaller and had declined over time. The change was especially noteworthy in the case of household incomes. In 1976 nearly 70 % of migrant households earned a major share of their income from agriculture, but by 1983 this had declined to 45 percent, largely as a consequence of urban work replacing rice farming as the major source of household income.



### V. CONCLUSIONS

Five major conclusions can be derived from the previous discussion as follows:

1. There are some socioeconomic factors causing non permanent mobility in Java such as: norms, maximization of income and utility for consumption, minimization of risk, spatial inequalities, and transport development.
2. Temporary migration has become institutionalized within some ethnic groups in Indonesia, so that it becomes the norm for particular people within that group to spend part of their lives outside their village birth.
3. Three main factors determine the frequency of which they migrate, namely (1) the distance involved and the costs of traversing it; (2) their earnings at the destination; and (3) the availability of work in the home village.
4. Much circular mobility is seasonal in nature, occurring during the extended periods of limited job opportunity between planting and harvesting rice during the wet and dry seasons particularly during the *paceklik* months.
5. Agricultural work still become a major source of employment and income for rural households. However, the proportion of individuals for which agriculture was a *major source* of employment, or of household incomes had declined over time.

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## AGRO EKONOMI

*Appendix 1. Source of Household Income in the Past Year, WestJava Villages, 1976 and 1983 <sup>a)</sup>*

<i>Source of Household Income</i>	<i>1976</i>	<i>1983</i>
<i>Farming only</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Farm labouring only</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Non-agriculture only</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Farming+Farm labouring</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Farming+Non-agriculture</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Farm labouring+Non-agriculture</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Farming+Farm labouring+Non-agriculture</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>At least same income earned in:</i>		
<i>Farming</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Farm labouring</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Non-agriculture</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>68</i>

*Source : Chris Manning (1987).*

*Note : a) Agro-Economic Survey, Partial Census of West Java Villages 1976 and Recensuses 1983.*

## AGRO EKONOMI

*Appendix 2. Distribution of Households and All Employed Persons by Location of the Work in the Past Year, West Java Villages, 1976 and 1983 <sup>a)</sup>*

<i>Location of Work in the Past Year</i>	<i>Outside village</i>		<i>All location</i>	
	<i>1976</i>	<i>1983</i>	<i>1976</i>	<i>1983</i>
<b>A. Percentage of Households with Members Working</b>				
<i>In Own Village Only</i>			71	42
<i>Work Outside the Village</i>			29	58
<i>Outside the Village:</i>				
<i>In rural areas</i>	67	35	19	20
<i>In rural and urban areas</i>	2	5	1	3
<i>In urban areas</i>	31	60	9	35
<i>Kecamatan / kabupaten town</i>	(12)	(24)	(4)	(14)
<i>Major cities</i>	(19)	(36)	(5)	(21)
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100
<b>B. Percentage of Individuals Working</b>				
<i>In Own Village Only</i>			78	69
<i>Work Outside the Village</i>			22	31
<i>Outside the Village:</i>				
<i>In rural areas</i>	72	40	16	12
<i>In rural and urban areas</i>	*	*	*	*
<i>In urban areas</i>	28	60	6	19
<i>Kecamatan / kabupaten town</i>	(13)	(23)	(3)	(7)
<i>Major cities</i>	(15)	(37)	(3)	(12)
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100

Source: Chris Manning (1987).

Note : a) Agro-Economic Survey, Partial Census of West Java Villages 1976 and Recensuses 1983.

\* Individuals only asked the location of one activity the village.

## AGRO EKONOMI

*Appendix 3. Percentage of Individuals Engaged in Agriculture  
Among Persons Employed in Urban Areas, West Java,  
1976 and 1983 a)*

<i>Urban workers</i>	<i>Farming</i>	<i>Farm Labouring</i>	<i>All Agriculture</i>
<i>Percentage with some involvement in Activity</i>			
<i>Individuals:</i>			
<i>1976</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>68</i>
<i>1983</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Households:</i>			
<i>1976</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>1983</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>898</i>
<i>Percentage in which activity was major source of Work / Income</i>			
<i>Individuals:</i>			
<i>1976</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>1983</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Households:</i>			
<i>1976</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>1983</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>45</i>

*Source: Chris Manning (1987).*

*Note : a) Agro-Economic Survey, Partial Census of West Java Vil-  
lages 1976 and Recensuses 1983.*