

## Repatriation Adaptation Strategy Surinamean Java in Tongar Village Nagari Aia Gadang West Pasaman

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### ABSTRACT

This research discusses the adaptation strategy of Javanese Surinamese repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman. The aim of this research is to describe the initial obstacles faced by Javanese Surinamese repatriates in Tongar Village and to describe the adaptation strategies of Javanese Surinamese repatriates in Tongar village. This research method used is qualitative research. Data collection techniques are field observations, interviews and documentation. The theories used are Michael P. Todaro's migration theory and John W. Bennet's adaptation theory. The findings of this research are that Javanese Surinamese repatriates who were in Tongar Village faced obstacles such as language, economics, land ownership and difficult road access when they came to Tongar, then the repatriants adapted to their new environment by means of cultural adjustments, interaction processes, job options, road repairs. Therefore, these repatriates have their own way of continuing to survive in Tongar Village, they have also started to get used to socializing and are used to their new environment, so that the Javanese Surinamese repatriates can survive to this day in Tongar Village.

**Keywords:** *Repatriation, Strategy, and Adaptation*

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## INTRODUCTION

Suriname is a country in South America. The Dutch colonial government in Suriname began bringing in laborers from Java in 1890. After an agreement was reached, a permanent sending of laborers to Indonesia was carried out. Javanese workers who went to Suriname aimed to improve their lot. Javanese people generally live on the poverty line on the island of Java and they already know what they will do and what they will get as contract workers in Suriname according to information from workers or labor brokers (Susanti, 2016: 5). Indonesian workers in Suriname are employed on various coffee, cocoa, sugar cane plantations and in bauxite mines owned by ALCOA (Aluminium Company of America), with contracts for 5 years under "punale-sanctions". Javanese workers work 6 days a week, 7 hours in the garden and 10 hours in the factory, with wages for men over 16 years old getting 60 cents, while women and children aged 10-26 years old get 40 cents. .

After the 5 year contract period expires, they have the right to be returned to their homeland, but those who do not wish to return to Indonesia may extend their contract period for another year, or continue working as free laborers (Hardjo, 1989: 11).

Suriname Javanese are a Javanese tribe who have long lived in Suriname, South America. West Pasaman is one of the locations used as a migration location. One of the migration locations designated by the West Pasaman government is the Tongar Transmigration Settlement Unit (UPT). Tongar is the name of a small village located in Nagari Air Gadang, Pasaman District, Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra Province. The residents who occupy UPT Tongar are Surinamese repatriates who returned to Indonesia. They intended to return to the island of Java, but their request was not approved by the Indonesian government, and instead they were sent to West Sumatra. The people who first settled in the Tongar area were Javanese Surinamese repatriates. However, some of them moved to Java for various reasons such as employment, livelihood and adaptation processes. After the arrival of Surinamese Javanese repatriates to the Tongar area, other ethnic groups emerged such as Minang, Mandailing, Nias, Batak and others.

According to the KBBI, repatriants are people who have been returned from refugee camps. Citizen remigration or repatriation activities are of course motivated by several objectives which of course vary for each citizen. The purpose of the return of the Javanese Surinamese people to the Tongar area is because their work contracts have expired in Suriname. Apart from that, these Javanese Surinamese repatriates heard the echoes of independence, which made them immediately return to Indonesia. The journey of Javanese Surinamese repatriates returning to Indonesia took approximately one month by ship. Then they also migrated from Suriname to the Tongar area at their own expense. It was recorded that the number of original Javanese Surinamese repatriates still living in Tongar was 8 people, along with their descendants, approximately more than 100 people. In 1954, Javanese Surinamese repatriants migrated to the Tongar area. Surinamese Javanese repatriates cleared the land, built houses and founded the village of Tongar in Pasaman district. . Their social and cultural life is integrated with the life of the Minangkabau people and also the Trans-Javanese people and other ethnic groups such as Batak, Minang, Nias, and others. This ultimately forms a pattern of relations between ethnic groups that allows cultural mixing to occur (Apretasia, 2017: 5-7). The arrival of Surinamese Javanese repatriates in Tongar was welcomed by the local community. The traditional welcoming ceremony was carried out by the Wali Nagari along with ninik-mamak, clever scholars, religious scholars, elders and local community leaders on February 13, 1954. After this ceremony, the new arrivals were officially accepted as new residents and as anak-kemenakan, ninik-mamak Nagari Aia Gadang (Hardjo, 1989: 43).

Surinamese Javanese repatriates were given 2.500 ha of land by the regional government. Surinamese Javanese repatriates brought tools such as tractors, saws and diesel for electricity where they would live. Initially the language used by Surinamese Javanese repatriates was Javanese, and the local people used Minang. Initially, language use experienced obstacles due to differences, so an adjustment process was carried out regarding language use. Language is the main intermediary tool for humans to transmit or

adapt a culture, which humans use to communicate and interact both verbally and in writing. The arrival of Surinamese Javanese repatriates and Tongar people as well as the influx of other ethnicities into the area, of course have different linguistic cultures and require other ways to communicate in their daily lives.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted using qualitative research. The research object in this study was Surinamese Javanese Repatrians in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman. This research was carried out in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman. Primary data in this research is data collected directly by research from the first source or the research object itself in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village. Secondary data in this research is a source of additional information that is relevant to complete research writing about Javanese Surinamese Repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman. Next, the data collection that the author carried out was observation which focused on interviews with sources and taking documentary evidence where the researcher observed and interpreted about Surinamese Javanese Repatrians in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman. Data analysis includes: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. History of Surinamese Javanese Repatriation in the Tongar Village of Aia Gadang**

S. M Hardjo in the book Bunga Rampai entitled "From Suriname to Tongar" wrote that in February 1953 the Tanah Air Foundation, represented by Salikin Mardi Hardjo, returned to Indonesia at his own organization's expense with the aim of discussing further the return of around 1000 Surinamese Indonesians. , that the Indonesian people in Suriname have been gathered in one forum called the Tanah Air Foundation and aim to return to their homeland of Indonesia. The missions and proposals submitted by the Tanah Air Foundation organization were accepted by the government of the Republic of Indonesia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs and Migration. The proposal submitted received a complete and positive response that the Government of the Republic of Indonesia did not mind accepting part of the return of the Indonesian people in Suriname to the fold of the Republic of Indonesia.

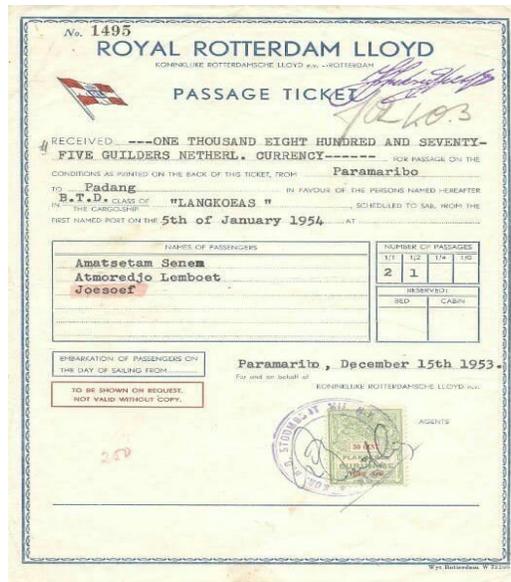
Specifically, the opening of the Suriname repatriation village was signed by the Tanah Air Foundation (YTA). The land where the repatriates from Suriname are sheltered is the Kenagarian Aia Gadang customary land in the Pasaman District area, West Pasaman Regency which has been handed over to the TK Government. II, Pasaman Regency by the Wali Nagari, traditional leaders along with ninik mamak and local nagarian elders on May 8 1953. Apart from that, assistance was also received from the Transmigration Bureau, including the establishment of SOIL CONSERVATING FARMING by the TATA EARTH office. This attention was marked by a visit from the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia on September 9 1955, Drs. Mohammad Hatta, Minister of Social Affairs and Governor of Central Sumatra. The number of repatriate families who came

from Suriname was 316 heads of families consisting of 1018 people. Their age and origin can be classified as follows (Bunga Rampai Dari Suriname ke Tongar, 1989).



**Figure 1: Suriname Monument**

This monument was created on February 14 1954 and is a symbol made by Surinamese Javanese repatriates when they arrived in Tongar. This monument marks the beginning of their arrival in Tongar Village, Nagari Aia Gadang. The monument was inspired by Monas, but the elders themselves did not want to say it was a copy of Monas. The existence of this monument indicates that there are still Javanese Surinamese descendants in Tongar Village.



**Figure 2: Ship Tickets**

According to the information obtained, it turns out that the ship cannot be rented by charter. Each passenger is expected to buy their own ticket to return to Indonesia. Payment to a person is determined according to the value of Suriname Guilders.



Figure 3: Ship carrying Javanese Surinamese repatriates

Thanks to cooperation and hard work as well as understanding from all members of the management as well as assistance from the Indonesian Representative, the day before K.M.Langkuas arrived at the location, all 300 family members were ready to gather in Paramaribo City. January 4, 1954 all members began to leave the Paramaribo City dock.

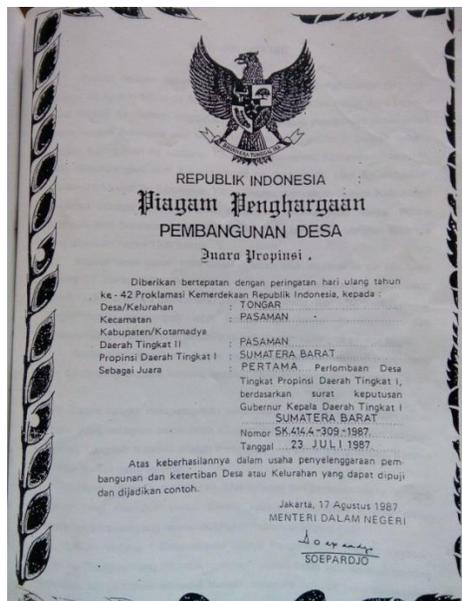


Figure 4: Tongar Village Award Charter

Tongar Village has experienced a phase of change during the time there were Surinamese Javanese repatriates, this change was in the field of government. Initially, Kejorongon became a village in 1983 and received assistance in repairing and paving roads down to its

alleys in 1985. For its activities and cooperation, Tongar Village received an award as the best and most advanced village in 1987.

## **B. Obstacles for Surinamese Javanese Repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman**

### **1. Language**

Surinamese Javanese repatriants who live in Tongar Village experience difficulties in terms of language, for example in communicating with the indigenous community, namely Minang, because when they worked as laborers in Suriname they were used to using Dutch and Ngoko Javanese. This change of location resulted in differences in the language used. Repatriants who live in Tongar Village experience difficulties in terms of language, because the native people who live to communicate with the native community use Minang language, but Javanese Surinamese repatriates are used to using Dutch and Ngoko Javanese.

### **2. Economy**

In the past, Javanese people who went to Suriname were employed as laborers on plantations such as coffee, cocoa and sugar cane. When the sugar plantations were still experiencing their glory, they were employed in the plantation sector, but when the glory of the sugar plantations declined they switched to work in the bauxite mining sector in Moengo, Paranam and Biliton. Some of them also left plantations and chose to start their own businesses in villages in Suriname as small farmers. Due to limited farming capabilities and unsuitable soil structure, the repatriates experienced crop failure. The civil war that occurred in 1957-1959 contributed to the hampering of farmers' efforts to cultivate their land. The large number of fields that were not taken care of and the lush weeds caused Javanese repatriates to experience total crop failure. Surinamese Javanese repatriates who could not farm began to leave the Tongar area.

### **3. Land Ownership**

In the process of distributing agricultural land, the Javanese Surinamese repatriates felt disappointed because they did not get land close to their homes, not only that, in the distribution of yards, the distribution of housing materials also happened like that. After the civil war broke out in 1959, security was restored but the lives of Javanese Surinamese repatriates were still in a dire condition. In 1968, an additional population of 101 heads of families, consisting of 400 people, was brought back as a population migration from the island of Java. The presence of the group was placed on land or areas belonging to the repatriant members voluntarily and handed over to the group an area of two hectares for each head of family.

### **4. Difficult Road Access**

Surinamese Javanese repatriants who live in Tongar Village also experience difficulties in accessing roads. The distance from Tongar to the market takes quite

a long time because the village is still filled with forests and tall trees. In the past there was only one bridge whose ribbon opening was inaugurated by the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia Drs. Mohammad Hatta, because of this this bridge was named the Hatta Bridge. The situation in Tongar Village is very quiet, with no vehicles passing through, making it difficult for repatriates to travel anywhere. Surinamese Javanese repatriates once a week sell their garden produce to the market on shoulders, sometimes they even use carts. Because the road is not asphalted and is still in the form of a forest, there are only a few who have vehicles.

### C. Adaptation Strategy for Surinamese Javanese Repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman

#### 1. Cultural Adjustment

After several years, new residents came in from the island of Java, with this the number of ethnicities living in Tongar Village increased, such as the Batak, Minang and Javanese ethnicities. Surinamese Javanese repatriates introduce their typical food to the people living in Tongar Village.



Figure 5: *Viado* Cake

*Viado* cakes are usually available at weddings and other big events. The typical food at this event was *viado* cake, *viado* itself is a typical Surinamese food which is shaped like a wasp's nest and some also call it like pizza. This cake is usually made by Surinamese Javanese descendants, until now the descendants of Surinamese Javanese repatriates still maintain the authenticity of the *viado* cake recipe. Even though there are differences in terms of culture between the Javanese and Minang tribes, they still maintain good friendly relations and maintain mutual tolerance between them.

#### 2. Interaction Process

Surinamese Javanese repatriants living in Tongar Village initially found it difficult to communicate with other people due to language barriers. The school

building is provided for children from the Javanese Surinamese Reptarian community to study, but when they first enter school they have to adapt to the surrounding environment, including the language. The children spoke Dutch when they lived in Suriname while when they arrived in Tongar Village they were not very fluent in communicating with others. The language in Tongar Village itself is diverse, this is because many generations have entered. Surinamese Javanese repatriates living in Tongar Village are already starting to become fluent in Minang and Batak languages. This can be seen when they interact with others, they still have difficulty in the pronunciation process because their accents are definitely different between Minang and Javanese people.

### **3. Job Choice**

Surinamese Javanese repatriates started farming to continue their lives, for those who were not used to farming they started learning so they could continue living where they live now. Tongar's fertile soil makes their harvests quite fruitful. In 1987, water pipes or irrigation began to be dug into the village. A year later, registration was held for assistance with rice field printing. So a Savings and Loans Cooperative was formed which aims to help farmers who need capital loans with the lowest possible interest. Since the establishment of the Makmur Cooperative, the basic necessities of the people of Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang have become very abundant. In the end, the excess needs are sold on the free market. It could be said that their lives began to prosper with the existence of this cooperative. Day by day it became more rapid, until in 1983 there was already a rice healer in Tongar Village. The majority of people living in Tongar Village today are farmers, and most of them already have their own oil palm plantations.

### **4. Road Repair**

In the 90s, the process of making roads or asphalt in Tongar Village had begun, this made the Surinamese Javanese repatriates who lived in Tongar Village happy and excited about this. So that repatriates do not have difficulty carrying out activities outside Tongar Village, they do not need to bother if they want to go to the market to shop for basic necessities and other needs. The road construction process in Tongar Village occurred twice, initially in the 90s and secondly in the 2011s.



**Figure 6: Tongar Road which has been Asphalted**

In 2011 the asphaltting process was evenly distributed in Tongar II. Surinamese Javanese repatriates no longer feel like they live in the forest, because road construction and electricity have entered Tongar Village. The road repair process is the most important thing in supporting the mobility of the Javanese Surinamese people. Javanese repatriates who generally work as farmers really need good road access to sell and buy their needs in areas outside Tongar. Improvements are getting more and more attention every day, starting from road repairs, electricity starting to enter residential areas, and the construction of mosques and health facilities, which indicates that Surinamese Javanese Repatrians are carrying out an adaptation process that is developing gradually.

In accordance with the thoughts of Bennett (1976: 247-248), the basic assumption of adaptation develops from an evolutionary (gradual) understanding which always sees humans as always trying to adapt to their environment, both biologically or genetically as well as socially and culturally. Javanese repatriates carry out adaptation strategies so that they can survive in the new environment in their place. Cultural adjustments are carried out by Javanese repatriates by learning to know the culture of the surrounding community. The use of different languages between Javanese repatriates and the surrounding community so that to overcome this problem Javanese repatriates adapted by learning to use the language used by the people in Tongar Village. Job choices began to vary, initially Javanese repatriates only worked as farmers, but nowadays Javanese repatriates' job choices have begun to vary, such as farmers, civil servants and traders. Road access in Tongar Village is difficult, so to overcome this problem the local government is carrying out road improvements to make it easier for Javanese repatriates when traveling outside Tongar Village.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the research entitled "Adaptation Strategy for Surinamese Javanese Repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman" can be concluded that there are several obstacles for Surinamese Javanese Repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, namely: language, economics, land ownership and poor road access. Furthermore, the adaptation strategy for Surinamese Javanese Repatriates in Tongar Nagari Aia Gadang Village, West Pasaman, is: cultural adjustment, interaction processes, job choices, and road improvements.

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