



The Influence of the Sofifi Pier Development in Tidore, 1975–2010

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This article analyzes the physical as well as social issues surrounding the development of the Sofifi pier between 1975 and 2010. After more than three decades of investment, the pier became intra- and interprovincial hub for passengers as well as cargo ships transporting commodities such as cloves, nutmeg, copra, cocoa, cassava, bananas, fruits, livestock, cement, iron, sugar, rice, and flour. As such, the pier succeeded in connecting the Halmahera island to those of Ternate and Tidore. Yet, it only achieved doing so after a windy development taking over three decades. In 1975, the Sofifi pier was constructed using various funds from the government of Tidore. The pier was developed further by the municipality of Sofifi in 1982. In 2006 and 2010, the government of Tidore invested into the pier once more to bring it to its current state. The spurious development of the pier led to incomplete peripheral infrastructure and decreased shipping frequencies. Moreover, the pier's geographical surrounding troubled the distribution of commodities and products from the regional political center on Tidore Island.

Keywords: Pier Development, Trade, Sofifi, Tidore.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sofifi is strategically located on the central western coast of Halmahera, exactly between Ternate and Tidore. The development of the pier is hence important for maritime transport between these three islands. What is more, Sofifi also became a transit area for both people and goods entering or leaving the North Maluku province. The establishment of Sofifi as both an intra- and interregional hub was strongly connected to its new role as the administrative center of the provincial government. Both politically and economically, the pier became the new heart of the North Maluku province.¹

In 1975, the construction of the pier was initiated through NGO assistance. The construction of the Sofifi pier was deemed necessary to ease the loading and unloading of goods and people and the increasing naval traffic from and to the area. The nearby inhabitants named the pier after the Sofifi village for its limited facilities only served local trade. Few warehouses and insufficient parking space made the pier incapable to accommodate wider shipping networks. Matters changed when Sofifi was turned into the new capital of North Maluku province in 1999. New access roads were built to the municipalities of East Halmahera, Central Halmahera and North Halmahera, yet the pier remained unchanged for half a decade to come.²

This study analyses the transformation of the Sofifi pier from a local to a provincial hub through a historical perspective. Hence

two periods are recognized. First, the period between 1975 and 2005, when the Sofifi pier was managed by the Sofifi municipality. Second, the period between 2005 to 2010 when the pier was managed by the city of Tidore.

2. METHOD

This study using historical method to analyze the development of Sofifi pier, it is acknowledged the using of primary and secondary sources. It conducted by examining various annual reports from the government officials, such as *syahbandar* [harbour master] Sofifi Office, and Transportation Bureau office of Tidore. The collected data then analyzed by historical method and assisted using economic approach. There are four steps of historical method. *First* is heuristic or collecting sources. *Second* is criticism to criticize all collected sources both internal (authenticity) and external (credibility) sources. *Third* is interpretation, this stage requires objectivity from the author, especially in terms of subjective interpretation of historical facts. *Fourth* is historiography, is the process of rewriting historical events.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Development of Pier Sofifi in 1975–2010

The Sofifi pier was initially constructed in 1975 using piles of coconut tree trunks and common wooden poles of 50 by 2.5 meters in size and dug approximately 5–6 meters below

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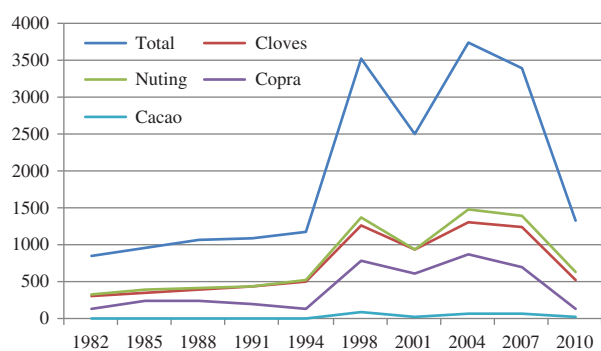


Fig. 1. Total freight of cloves, nutmeg, copra, and cacao through Pier Sofifi in 1982–2010 (in tons).

sea level. The pier accommodated two wooden motor boats of approximately 20 meters in length, a depth of 1 to 1.5 meters and an average loading capacity of 7 to 8 tons. This initial pier construction did not have any supporting facilities. In 1982, the Sofifi pier was reconstructed and expanded in size. The Sofifi municipality enhanced the pier construction by using piles and wooden *ulin* plank floor. Measured approximately 65 by 4.5 meters and dug about 4 to 5 meters below sea level. The pier could simultaneously accommodate four wooden motorboats with an average size of 25 meters, a depth of 1.5 to 2 meters and a shipping load of 9 to 10 tons. While stevedoring, the wooden motorboats docked to the left and right side of pier.³

In 2006, additional facilities were added to the Sofifi pier such as waiting rooms, parking lots, toilets and showers, as well as electric lighting by the city of Tidore financed by regional budget (APBD), with a total cost of Rp. 1.734.517.000.⁴ In 2010, the city of Tidore Island transformed the pier into a semi-permanent port built from concrete pillars and ironwood planks, using a budget of Rp. 1.853.785.000.⁵

3.2. The Pier Freight Capacity Between 1982 and 2010

The reconstruction of Sofifi pier in 1982 eased cargo trade and increased the number of both passenger and cargo ships. It allowed the commodities of Halmahera to be transported elsewhere. Among these are plantation crops, such as cloves, nutmeg, copra, cocoa, and food crops such as banana, cassava, sago, fruits, and livestock such as cattle, goats, and chickens. The 1982 reconstruction also allowed new goods to be unloaded at Sofifi pier, among which industrial products such as rice, sugar, flour, and others. The increased traffic of goods and commodities

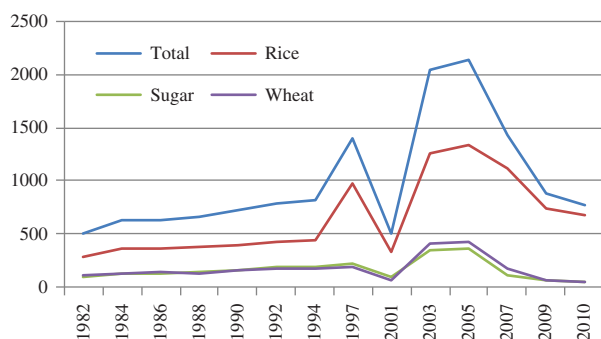


Fig. 2. Total Goods Production entry through Pier Sofifi in 1982–2010 (in tons).

established a complementary supply and demand chain between the islands of Halmahera, Ternate and Tidore. The relatively densely populated islands of Ternate and Tidore needed a supply of agricultural and plantation products, while Sofifi and its surrounding areas required industrial goods from the two cities. At the same time, the reconstruction opened the North Moluccan market to products further oversea. Rice, sugar, flour, and other agricultural product needed to be imported from Surabaya and Bitung—located in North Sulawesi—as well.⁶

Between 1975 and 1998, loading and unloading of goods at pier Sofifi were mainly stirred by the markets of Ternate and Tidore. The Ternaten public market was open every Tuesday and Saturday, while the public market in Tidore opened every Wednesday and Sunday. These market schedules created fixed patterns in trade, which only changed when the Ternate market started opening daily in 1998. The new daily demand from Ternate encouraged daily shipping by the wooden motorboats at Sofifi pier as well. Goods now became transported from the Sofifi pier early in the morning and were scheduled to reach Ternate before noon. Next to arbitrary opening times of the market, this schedule was also directed by the favorable sailing weather in the morning. The change to daily shipping extended the range of goods loaded at pier Sofifi to cloves, nutmeg, cacao, copra, sago, coconut, cassava, banana, vegetables, fruits, and livestock.⁷

As apparent from Graph 1, the transport of nutmeg, copra and cloves from Sofifi pier increased significantly halfway during 1994–1998. The transport of cocoa had a delayed and much less numerous increase due to the much higher popularity and profitability of nutmeg and cloves cash crops. However, by 2001 even these goods were shipped less due to the religious conflicts occurring between 1999 and 2000.⁸ The transportation of commercial commodities had recovered by 2004. Yet, it soon decreased again between 2007 and 2010 due to the introduction of a ferry in 2006, as can be seen from Graph 1.2.⁹

The development of pier Sofifi could be seen in 1982 until 1998. It was supported by several factors. Firstly, the geographical factor, is about to the position of the Sofifi pier which is close to Ternate and Tidore island. It was being the factor that increase the development of the pier. Because of the pier's position, the society of Halmahera island who want to go to Ternate and Tidore mostly through that pier. Secondly, Sofifi is one of the regions that produces plantation commodities such as nutmeg, cloves, copra and cacao. Those commodities which were freighted from pier Sofifi would be sold in Ternate and Tidore. That made pier Sofifi always busy with loading and discharging activity.

4. CONCLUSION

As already mentioned above, loading and unloading goods at Sofifi pier since began 1982 when port infrastructure been developed. In 1999, it had decreased even stalled when religious conflict occurred in North Maluku. However, in 2001–2002 the loading and unloading activities run smoothly until 2007. The operational of ferry resulted a decrease volume of loading and unloading goods at the port. Although ferry activities used another port, but it required modern and practical facilities, so that people at the time were more likely to use ferry boats to carry out freight and passenger. Commodities that had been transported and disassembled at Sofifi include cloves, nutmeg, copra, chocolate, sweet potatoes, bananas, vegetables, fruits, and

livestock; Meanwhile they were also dismantled commodities such as rice, sugar, flour, salt, cement, iron, and others. In addition, Sofifi pier were also used for passenger traffic from Sofifi to Ternate and Tidore.

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