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DEKAN FAKULTAS EKONOMI DAN BISNIS



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- Arsip.

## The Influence of Social Transformation on Community Welfare in the Super Priority Tourism Destination Area Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia



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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to analyze social transformation and its impact on the welfare of the community in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara. Labuan Bajo is one of Indonesia's super priority tourist destinations, renowned for its natural beauty, known as the Island of a Thousand Sunsets and Komodo National Park. The approach used is qualitative, involving observations and in-depth interviews with informants. Social capital significantly influences the community in Labuan Bajo, as they utilize social capital for mutual assistance and cooperation based on trust and the sharing of positive information. The community also demonstrates motivation that fosters innovation. Thus, community innovation is closely correlated with the motivation they possess in achieving their welfare.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Transformation; Social Capital; Innovation; Motivation; Welfare; Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara.

### INTRODUCTION

Located in West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Labuan Bajo is renowned for its beautiful natural and cultural conditions. This ethnically diverse town is surrounded by hills and savanna landscapes that enhance the exotic views, especially during sunset. However, it is unfortunate that these conditions have not yet improved the living standards of the local community, let alone reach a decent and prosperous level.

Labuan Bajo has significant potential to become a reliable tourist destination. Therefore, both the central and local governments have designated Labuan Bajo as one of the leading tourist destinations since 2019, aiming to increase revenue through equitable tourism development in Indonesia and to create job opportunities. Nevertheless, disparities still exist between income and living expenses for the people of Labuan Bajo.

**Table 1: Growth of Minimum Wage in Labuan 2018-2022**

Year	Nominal (Minimum Wage)	Change (%)
2018	1.795.000	0.00%
2019	1.950.000	7.95%
2020	1.950.000	0.00%
2021	1.950.000	0.00%
2022	1.975.000	1.27%

*Source: Secondary Data, Gatra.com, processed 2022.*

The high prices of food raw materials in West Manggarai Regency, particularly in Labuan Bajo, are attributed to the elevated fuel prices and the fact that most food supplies are still imported from outside East Nusa Tenggara. Economic difficulties are also reflected in the BPS survey results, which indicate that many living conditions are still inadequate, with the majority dominated by materials such as zinc, bamboo, wood, straw, palm fibers, and only a small portion made of concrete with tiles and asbestos.



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## Introduction

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Labuan Bajo has significant potential to become a reliable tourist destination. Therefore, both the central and local governments have designated Labuan Bajo as one of the leading tourist destinations since 2019, aiming to increase revenue through equitable tourism development in Indonesia and to create job opportunities. Nevertheless, disparities still exist between income and living expenses for the people of Labuan Bajo.

from outside East Nusa Tenggara. Economic difficulties are also reflected in the BPS survey results, which indicate that many living conditions are still inadequate, with the majority dominated by materials such as zinc, bamboo, wood, straw, palm fibers, and only a small portion made of concrete with tiles and asbestos. In fact, household consumption and expenditures, as well as living conditions, are indicators of family welfare.



Figure 1 Scenic View of the Islands in Labuan Bajo

Table 1 Growth of Minimum Wage in Labuan 2018-2022

Year	Nominal (Minimum Wage)	Change (%)
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The high prices of food raw materials in West Manggarai Regency, particularly in Labuan Bajo, are attributed to the elevated fuel prices and the fact that most food supplies are still imported

Interesting aspect of the community in Labuan Bajo lies in their social capital, which includes trust, norms, and networks. This social capital has already existed within the community but has not been optimally utilized. It should be leveraged by the people of Labuan Bajo in their daily lives to overcome hardships (Hanita, 2023). The presence of mutual trust, kinship, and a sense of community acts as a support system for the community, especially during challenging times (Putnam and Robert, 2000). The social capital among the people of Labuan Bajo, combined with their natural environment and cultural context, motivates them to take action to meet their daily needs and innovate, creating breakthroughs in the form of valuable services and products.



**Figure 2 Observation and Q&A at Kosambi Market, Old Market, and Fish Auction Site**

Social capital plays a crucial role in encouraging the community to innovate in pursuit of welfare, as evidenced by their sense of togetherness in engaging in joint ventures, exchanging ideas and skills, and collaboratively providing electricity using solar power, especially in remote areas. However, these innovations remain local and have not yet fully enabled the community to achieve prosperity; external support, particularly from local and central governments, is necessary. The driving force behind the innovations undertaken by the people of Labuan Bajo stems from their social capital, fueled by their motivation to complement each other's shortcomings. This motivation serves as a catalyst for the community to turn the challenges they face into collective opportunities for growth. Based on this background, the author conducts research to assess the extent to which social transformation impacts the welfare of the community in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara.

## Literature Review

### A. Social Transformation

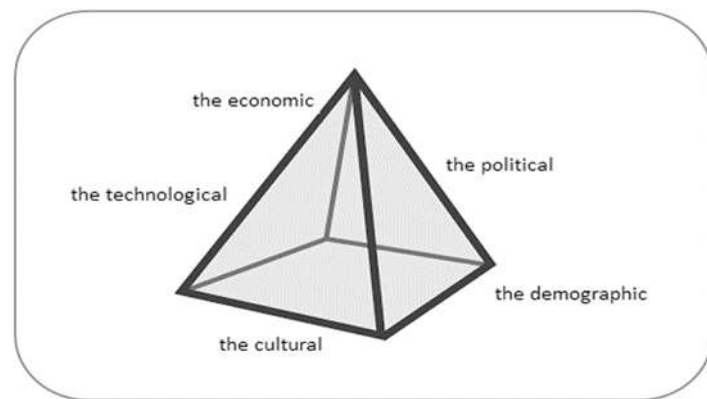
According to De Haas et al. (2020), social change is generally defined as a process of shifting or changing the order/structure within society, encompassing shifts in mindset, attitudes, and social life aimed at achieving a better livelihood. Social change or transformation involves changes in the interactions between individuals, organizations, or communities related to social structures or patterns of values and norms.

Social transformation encompasses five aspects:

1. Politics: Defined as the organized control over society.
2. Economics: Defined as the accumulation and use of land, labor, and capital in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
3. Technology: Defined as the application of knowledge through the implementation of procedures, skills, and techniques.
4. Demography: Defined as the structure and spatial distribution of the population.
5. Culture: Defined as the shared beliefs, values, norms, and customs held by a group of people.

Understanding these dimensions of social transformation is

crucial for analyzing the dynamics within communities, such as those in Labuan Bajo, and for fostering sustainable development that enhances the well-being of the local population.



**Figure 3 Five Aspects of Social Transformation**

Referring to the research by Arslan (2022), the tourism consumption process can also create social change. This process begins when tourists leave their homes, visit a destination, and concludes when they return. It starts with the desire to travel, followed by the consumption of products and services, perceptions, choices, decision-making, purchasing, and experiencing the trip, ultimately culminating in an overall evaluation of the entire process.

According to research by Hassan and Sharma (2022), technology and tourism are interconnected. The interaction between these two elements plays a crucial role in the growth of tourism mobility. Furthermore, the study conducted by Rabie (2023) posits that social change in society is not merely an outcome or product but rather a process. Economic and cultural conditions can significantly influence community life, including social behavior, ways of thinking, actions, and more. Understanding these dynamics is essential for recognizing how tourism can act as a catalyst for social transformation within communities, such as those in Labuan Bajo.

### B. Social Capital

Narayan and Michael (2016) identify six aspects of social capital: (1) groups and networks; (2) trust and solidarity; (3) action and cooperation; (4) information and communication; (5) social cohesion and inclusion; and (6) empowerment and political action. There are three types of social capital topology: (1) bonding social capital; (2) bridging social capital; and (3) linking social capital. Social capital facilitates more effective interactions and cooperation among individuals within a community. For example, social capital as a social connector refers to the ability to facilitate relationships between people and groups with different identities (Narayan and Michael, 2016).

Social capital is also encapsulated in three key concepts from Pierre Bourdieu's research (1995): (1) Field; (2) Capital; and (3) Habitus. The types of capital mentioned include: (1) economic capital; (2) social capital; (3) cultural capital; and (4) symbolic capital.

According to Chan et al. (2021), the aspect of social inclusion is a blend of modern and traditional values and norms. Modern values include rationality, efficiency, meritocracy, professionalism, and individuality. These values underpin both

hard and soft skills, technical and practical knowledge about business and management, as well as professional personality traits and work experience.

Based on research by Raja (2014), social capital is a desired feature of social structures. It consists of informal institutions that influence shared collective values and benefits among individuals. Generally, social capital encompasses the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds of individuals within a group.

Community closeness is measured not only by social structure but also by mood, perceptions, and feelings of solidarity (Chotib and Beti, 2018). This solidarity unites members or individuals through moral relationships, feelings of responsibility, and commonality in ethnicity, religion, and background (Fathy, 2019; Qian and Yin, 2019). Social cohesion is also influenced by beliefs and principles, community organizations, rules, interactions, and social bonds, as well as social patterns. Despite differences in theories, social capital can enhance the quality of relationships based on familial ties (Nurbaiti and Chotib, 2020).

### C. Innovation

The definition of innovation, according to Nicholls et al. (2019), is a new idea aimed at addressing unmet social needs, successfully fulfilling these needs as a problem-solving approach. In everyday activities, innovation can encompass ideas, specific regulations, and new organizational forms. This type of innovation is related to changes in social relationships and often focuses on rebalancing the power gaps of economic inequality within society (Hussain et al., 2014).

According to Thiangtam et al. (2016), innovation is a factor that creates competitive advantage for businesses. Innovations within companies can be classified into product innovation, service innovation, and process innovation. Social innovation differs from economic innovation in that it is not about introducing new types of production or exploiting new markets per se, but rather about satisfying new needs that are not met by the market.

Suryana (2013) argues that innovation, in essence, represents a new value addition for users. The object of innovation is a form of added value in its products, services, or processes. Innovation is always depicted in terms of technical solutions that are more socially acceptable. It creates advantages in forms such as process innovation, methods, technologies, and managerial products.

Social innovation can be a collaborative and creative process where group members learn together, create, and formulate necessary rules to enhance cognitive, rational, and intellectual skills within an organization. It encompasses new practices (concepts, policy instruments, new forms of cooperation and organization), methods, processes, and regulations developed and/or adopted by citizens, customers, and politicians to meet social demands and solve social issues, thereby enabling communities to transform towards a more prosperous life. Social innovation acts as a symbol of hope and aspiration for individuals in society, fostering greater welfare.

### D. Motivation

The motivation theory utilized in this context is the Hygiene Factors theory by Herzberg and Frederick (1968), as well as Adair (2006), which is divided into two factors:

1. **Extrinsic Motivation:** This includes material aspects such as salary, wages, incentives, bonuses, and benefits that can be quantified in monetary terms.
2. **Intrinsic Motivation:** This encompasses non-material aspects such as praise, recognition, opportunities for career development, and self-actualization. Interpersonal relationships within a community also play a significant role in motivating individuals to achieve.

Motivation is defined as an action that encourages or influences individuals to fulfill their desires and is viewed as a psychological process triggered by the emergence of needs (Tamara et al., 2020). This definition is supported by Lapsomboonkamol et al. (2020) and Sudaryono et al. (2015). Wahjosumidjo (1987) emphasizes that motivation is crucial, as it is a psychological process arising from both internal and external factors, aimed at fostering growth in the future.

Positive motivation represents an optimal combination of both types of motivation, where individuals not only gain material satisfaction to meet their basic needs but also have the opportunity for self-expression and actualization. This dual approach allows individuals to work and strive in a secure and comfortable environment.

### E. Welfare

Alatartseva and Barysheva (2015) argue that welfare can be measured from two perspectives: (1) the objective side, where welfare is quantifiable in material terms, and (2) the subjective side, where welfare represents each individual's inner experience rather than material wealth. Welfare is understood as a framework for life and social existence, encompassing both physical and mental well-being (Ogwumike et al., 2018). According to Abdullahi et al. (2021), welfare is a prerequisite for fulfilling the material, spiritual, and social needs of citizens, enabling them to live and develop adequately to meet their social responsibilities.

The objective aspects of welfare include:

- 1) Having a job that provides sufficient income to meet basic needs such as clothing, food, and housing.
- 2) Accessing nutritious food and healthcare, as well as education.
- 3) Living in suitable housing conditions.

The subjective aspects encompass psychological, spiritual, and social well-being. This dimension typically refers to an individual's ability to maintain a balanced lifestyle between work and family, foster interpersonal relationships, engage in social networks, and receive community support. It also includes the individual's relationship with the divine and the practice of faith.

When an individual experiences both objective and subjective welfare, they are considered to be thriving and living a healthy life, both physically and spiritually, free from stress. This holistic approach to welfare emphasizes the importance of integrating material and non-material aspects to achieve a comprehensive understanding of well-being.

## Research Method

The fundamental and crucial steps in collecting qualitative data involve identifying informants from pre-selected respondents who can provide comprehensive information, in line with purposive



sampling methods. This targeted sampling strategy focuses on selecting research participants or specific locations and determining the appropriate sample size.

In-depth interviews with verbal questions are conducted with three representative informants as specified. In addition to these interviews, the researcher employs phenomenology to analyze the qualitative data obtained. The research model, through a phenomenological approach, emphasizes the personal experiences of individuals, focusing on those who have directly encountered the phenomena or events under study (Creswell, 2019).

This methodology allows for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of informants, facilitating insights into their perspectives and the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. By utilizing this approach, the research aims to capture the nuances and complexities of the subjects' experiences, contributing to a richer analysis of the social transformation and welfare in Labuan Bajo.



**Figure 4 In-Depth Interview Process**



**Figure 5 Phenomenological Stages with In-Depth Interviews of Informants**

## Results and Discussion

Social transformation is a crucial aspect of community development, alongside economic transformation, as viewed through social capital, innovation, and the motivation of individuals to improve their lives and achieve greater prosperity. This research indicates that social capital enhances the well-being of the community, particularly in the context of tourism development, where people engage in sharing, seeking information, and helping each other. This collective effort enables local families and relatives to benefit from the influx of both foreign and domestic tourists visiting Labuan Bajo.

With the presence of social capital, individuals who were once unaware have gained understanding, those who lacked skills have become skilled, and they have begun to exchange information

and support one another in knowledge transfer. This exchange empowers them to create and earn income from the tourism sector. Social capital fosters local innovation and has a positive correlation, as the community now shares equal opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge related to tourism, enabling them to market their products and services, such as local cuisine, crafts, and traditional clothing.

This transformation is exemplified by local entrepreneurs like Ibu Latifah, who is involved in micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM), and Bapak Ali Sehidun, the owner of a travel business. Additionally, community leader Father Marcelinus Agot plays a vital role by providing revolving funds and establishing cooperatives to support the financing of local UMKM actors. Together, these efforts reflect a community-driven approach to leveraging social capital for sustainable development and enhanced welfare.



**Figure 6 In-Depth Interview at the Production Site of a Local Culinary UMKM**

"Since Labuan Bajo was designated as a super priority destination, the community's profession has shifted from fishing to tourism. Fishing boats have been converted into tourist vessels; while not all have made the switch, it's safe to say that over 70% are moving towards the tourism business. Income has increased, but expenses have also risen significantly. Culturally, there are many celebrations here, so people need a lot of money for such events. Thus, becoming wealthy in Labuan Bajo is indeed challenging. There is a clear change; for example, those who were once fishermen are now tourism operators. We always encourage tourism operators to improve quality, such as safety and offering affordable prices, to attract more tourists. Social capital has changed my life for the better because building relationships with others has had a significant impact on me. From social capital, I've learned the importance of being generous; I started trading in 2008. With the rise of various training programs, more women are engaging in trade without feeling embarrassed. This social capital is crucial, especially in terms of mutual assistance and sharing new information. Our cultural philosophy is rooted in cooperation. When viewed from the income perspective, social capital has significantly impacted the welfare of the Labuan Bajo community, possibly by around 50%. However, challenges remain: many in the community still have low educational levels, and tourist interest in visiting the tourist villages is still quite lacking, which limits our motivation to innovate."— **Mr. Ali Sehidun, Member of Parliament, 42 years old, father of three.**

"Another innovation we've implemented is opening a carpentry workshop and inviting skilled workers from Jepara to teach

the community how to create high-quality wood products, allowing our local human resources to earn money and compete in the market. The wood here is excellent. From a health perspective, we have 22 community health centers. We're striving to avoid reliance on government funds and encouraging the community not to depend on the central government. We've established 17 waiting rooms for expectant mothers, where low-income individuals can stay for free two days before and two days after giving birth. Many of our initiatives have received support from individuals donating their resources; I believe this reflects the impact of social capital, which fosters innovation. However, there are challenges; some people are afraid to start. It's essential to live orderly and measured lives, and we can borrow from banks, but it takes courage to accept risks. In this social structure, social capital, which emphasizes mutual support, significantly influences our daily activities. Here, we help each other—neighbors, family members—so our needs can be met. We share willingly; even if someone has little, they are willing to share. The environment here is comfortable because social capital fosters interaction and mutual assistance, creating a sense of ease. This allows our community to expand socially and engage in positive interactions."— **Mr. Marcellino Ogot, Pastor, 74 years old, responsible for over 1,000 people.**

"Making traditional Labuan Bajo food a flagship product in Manggarai is my goal. The more friends I have, the more experiences I gain, and we must share love with one another. I motivate myself to be an empowered woman, one who is independent, emphasizing that a woman's quality is essential. In a marriage, both partners should maintain balance. I have a deep passion for trading, but currently, the trading conditions in my area are still limited. Now, I have my own brand, and it's well-known because I've been in this micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector for a long time. I'm increasingly motivated by my business because it provides me with a good income, and I plan to pass this down to my children. The government supports MSME operators with low-interest loans. Whenever there's a gathering, I share my experiences and knowledge with others. I leverage available opportunities as part of my innovation, and I motivate them to start their businesses not only when problems arise but to begin now. I teach them how to apply for bank loans and manage their finances effectively. Interacting directly with the community inspires them—not just in monetary terms, but they are motivated by a genuine concern for change. Social capital has transformed my life for the better. What keeps me going is faith; without faith in our endeavors, efforts may be in vain. But when we have faith, we can remain calm, knowing that God has a plan. The presence of my peers in this profession makes me feel comfortable."— **Mrs. Latifa, MSME operator of traditional Labuan Bajo food.**

## Conclusion

Social transformation is evident in the community of Labuan Bajo, especially after it was designated as one of the Super Priority Destinations (DSP). However, this status has not yet translated into improved prosperity for the local population. The geographic conditions of Labuan Bajo, being a remote area, contribute to the high cost of living, which has not been matched by the income levels reflected in the local Minimum Wage (UMR). In other words, the anticipated trickle-down effect from Labuan Bajo's DSP status has yet to materialize. The high distribution costs associated with transporting basic goods negatively impact the purchasing power and financial allocation of the community for

meeting their daily needs.

The quality of human resources (HR) remains a concern, as local residents prioritize fulfilling primary needs (such as food) over education and health services. Additionally, uneven infrastructure development—such as paved provincial roads, street lighting, and access to clean water and electricity, particularly in coastal areas—hinders the community's ability to improve their quality of life.

Despite these limitations, social capital significantly impacts the transformation of Labuan Bajo's community toward achieving better welfare. Social capital enables the community to move from incapacity to capability, helping them navigate daily challenges and hardships. The local culture of "guyub" (togetherness) positively influences the transformation of those with limited economic resources, facilities, skills, and education. The strong sense of mutual trust and the sharing of positive information across different faiths help lighten the burdens faced by families and relatives.

However, the innovations emerging from Labuan Bajo are not yet sufficient to fully facilitate the community's transformation toward greater prosperity. These innovations require external support from local government and related parties, given the geographic remoteness of Labuan Bajo from the national capital, Jakarta. The roles of community leaders, both traditional and religious, are crucial in addressing everyday issues, including economic challenges, skill development, knowledge sharing, networking for career opportunities, and business ventures. Word-of-mouth communication proves to be highly effective in the daily lives of residents, especially during cultural gatherings. Leaders play a vital role in motivating the community, not only regarding economic and educational aspects but also in addressing environmental issues they face.

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# The Influence of Social Transformation on Community Welfare in the Super Priority Tourism Destination Area Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze social transformation and its impact on the welfare of the community in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara. Labuan Bajo is one of Indonesia's super priority tourist destinations, renowned for its natural beauty, known as the Island of a Thousand Sunsets and Komodo National Park. The approach used is qualitative, involving observations and in-depth interviews with informants. Social capital significantly influences the community in Labuan Bajo, as they utilize social capital for mutual assistance and cooperation based on trust and the sharing of positive information. The community also demonstrates motivation that fosters innovation. Thus, community innovation is closely correlated with the motivation they possess in achieving their welfare.

**Keywords:** Social Transformation; Social Capital; Innovation; Motivation; Welfare; Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara.

## Cite this article:

## Introduction

Located in West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Labuan Bajo is renowned for its beautiful natural and cultural conditions. This ethnically diverse town is surrounded by hills and savanna landscapes that enhance the exotic views, especially during sunset. However, it is unfortunate that these conditions have not yet improved the living standards of the local community, let alone reach a decent and prosperous level.

Labuan Bajo has significant potential to become a reliable tourist destination. Therefore, both the central and local governments have designated Labuan Bajo as one of the leading tourist destinations since 2019, aiming to increase revenue through equitable tourism development in Indonesia and to create job opportunities. Nevertheless, disparities still exist between income and living expenses for the people of Labuan Bajo.

from outside East Nusa Tenggara. Economic difficulties are also reflected in the BPS survey results, which indicate that many living conditions are still inadequate, with the majority dominated by materials such as zinc, bamboo, wood, straw, palm fibers, and only a small portion made of concrete with tiles and asbestos. In fact, household consumption and expenditures, as well as living conditions, are indicators of family welfare.



Figure 1 Scenic View of the Islands in Labuan Bajo

Table 1 Growth of Minimum Wage in Labuan 2018-2022

Year	Nominal (Minimum Wage)	Change (%)
2018	1.795.000	0.00%
2019	1.950.000	7.95%
2020	1.950.000	0.00%
2021	1.950.000	0.00%
2022	1.975.000	1.27%

Source: Secondary Data, Gatra.com, processed 2022.

The high prices of food raw materials in West Manggarai Regency, particularly in Labuan Bajo, are attributed to the elevated fuel prices and the fact that most food supplies are still imported

Interesting aspect of the community in Labuan Bajo lies in their social capital, which includes trust, norms, and networks. This social capital has already existed within the community but has not been optimally utilized. It should be leveraged by the people of Labuan Bajo in their daily lives to overcome hardships (Hanita, 2023). The presence of mutual trust, kinship, and a sense of community acts as a support system for the community, especially during challenging times (Putnam and Robert, 2000). The social capital among the people of Labuan Bajo, combined with their natural environment and cultural context, motivates them to take action to meet their daily needs and innovate, creating breakthroughs in the form of valuable services and products.





**Figure 2 Observation and Q&A at Kosambi Market, Old Market, and Fish Auction Site**

<sup>1</sup> Social capital plays a crucial role in encouraging the community to innovate in pursuit of welfare, as evidenced by their sense of togetherness in engaging in joint ventures, exchanging ideas and skills, and collaboratively providing electricity using solar power, especially in remote areas. However, these innovations remain local and have not yet fully enabled the community to achieve prosperity; external support, particularly from local and central governments, is necessary. The driving force behind the innovations undertaken by the people of Labuan Bajo stems from their social capital, fueled by their motivation to complement each other's shortcomings. This motivation serves as a catalyst for the community to turn the challenges they face into collective opportunities for growth. Based on this background, the author conducts research<sup>1</sup> to assess the extent to which social transformation impacts the welfare of the community in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara.

## Literature Review

### A. Social Transformation

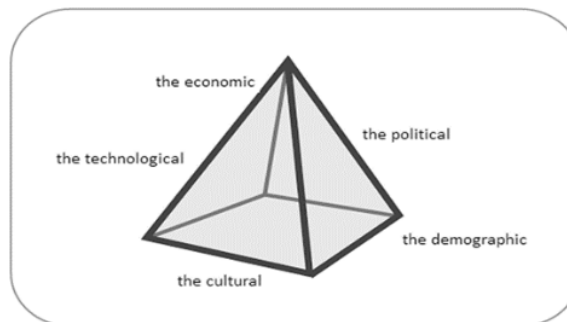
According to De Haas et al. (2020), social change is generally defined as a process of shifting or changing the order/structure within society, encompassing shifts in mindset, attitudes, and social life aimed at achieving a better livelihood. Social change or transformation involves changes in the interactions between individuals, organizations, or communities related to social structures or patterns of values and norms.

Social transformation encompasses five aspects:

1. Politics: Defined as the organized control over society.
2. Economics: Defined as the accumulation and use of land, labor, and capital in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
3. Technology: Defined as the application of knowledge through the implementation of procedures, skills, and techniques.
4. Demography: Defined as the structure and spatial distribution of the population.
5. Culture: Defined as the shared beliefs, values, norms, and customs held by a group of people.

Understanding these dimensions of social transformation is

crucial for analyzing the dynamics within communities, such as those in Labuan Bajo, and for fostering sustainable development that enhances the well-being of the local population.



**Figure 3 Five Aspects of Social Transformation**

Referring to the research by Arslan (2022), the tourism consumption process can also create social change. This process begins when tourists leave their homes, visit a destination, and concludes when they return. It starts with the desire to travel, followed by the consumption of products and services, perceptions, choices, decision-making, purchasing, and experiencing the trip, ultimately culminating in an overall evaluation of the entire process.

According to research by Hassan and Sharma (2022), technology and tourism are interconnected. The interaction between these two elements plays a crucial role in the growth of tourism mobility. Furthermore, the study conducted by Rabie (2023) posits that social change in society is not merely an outcome or product but rather a process. Economic and cultural conditions can significantly influence community life, including social behavior, ways of thinking, actions, and more. Understanding these dynamics is essential for recognizing how tourism can act as a catalyst for social transformation within communities, such as those in Labuan Bajo.

### B. Social Capital

Narayan and Michael (2016) identify six aspects of social capital: (1) groups and networks; (2) trust and solidarity; (3) action and cooperation; (4) information and communication; (5) social cohesion and inclusion; and (6) empowerment and political action. There are three types of social capital topology: (1) bonding social capital; (2) bridging social capital; and (3) linking social capital. Social capital facilitates more effective interactions and cooperation among individuals within a community. For example, social capital as a social connector refers to the ability to facilitate relationships between people and groups with different identities (Narayan and Michael, 2016).

<sup>1</sup> Social capital is also encapsulated in three key concepts from Pierre Bourdieu's research (1995): (1) Field; (2) capital; and (3) Habitus. The types of capital mentioned include: (1) economic capital; (2) social capital; (3) cultural capital; and (4) symbolic capital.

According to Chan et al. (2021), the aspect of social inclusion is a blend of modern and traditional values and norms. Modern values include rationality, efficiency, meritocracy, professionalism, and individuality. These values underpin both

hard and soft skills, technical and practical knowledge about business and management, as well as professional personality traits and work experience.

Based on research by Raja (2014), social capital is a desired feature of social structures. It consists of informal institutions that influence shared collective values and benefits among individuals. Generally, social capital encompasses the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds of individuals within a group.

Community closeness is measured not only by social structure but also by mood, perceptions, and feelings of solidarity (Chotib and Beti, 2018). This solidarity unites members or individuals through moral relationships, feelings of responsibility, and community in ethnicity, religion, and background (Fathy, 2019; Qian and Yin, 2019). Social cohesion is also influenced by beliefs and principles, community organizations, rules, interactions, and social bonds, as well as social patterns. Despite differences in theories, social capital can enhance the quality of relationships based on familial ties (Nurbaiti and Chotib, 2020).

### C. Innovation

The definition of innovation, according to Nicholls et al. (2019), is a new idea aimed at addressing unmet social needs, successfully fulfilling these needs as a problem-solving approach. In everyday activities, innovation can encompass ideas, specific regulations, and new organizational forms. This type of innovation is related to changes in social relationships and often focuses on rebalancing the power gaps of economic inequality within society (Hussain et al., 2014).

According to Thiangtam et al. (2016), innovation is a factor that creates competitive advantage for businesses. Innovations within companies can be classified into product innovation, service innovation, and process innovation. Social innovation differs from economic innovation in that it is not about introducing new types of production or exploiting new markets per se, but rather about satisfying new needs that are not met by the market.

Suryana (2013) argues that innovation, in essence, represents a new value addition for users. The object of innovation is a form of added value in its products, services, or processes. Innovation is always depicted in terms of technical solutions that are more socially acceptable. It creates advantages in forms such as process innovation, methods, technologies, and managerial products.

Social innovation can be a collaborative and creative process where group members learn together, create, and formulate necessary rules to enhance cognitive, rational, and intellectual skills within an organization. It encompasses new practices (concepts, policy instruments, new forms of cooperation and organization), methods, processes, and regulations developed and/or adopted by citizens, customers, and politicians to meet social demands and solve social issues, thereby enabling communities to transform towards a more prosperous life. Social innovation acts as a symbol of hope and aspiration for individuals in society, fostering greater welfare.

### D. Motivation

The motivation theory utilized in this context is the Hygiene Factors theory by Herzberg and Frederick (1968), as well as Adair (2006), which is divided into two factors:

1. **Extrinsic Motivation:** This includes material aspects such as salary, wages, incentives, bonuses, and benefits that can be quantified in monetary terms.
2. **Intrinsic Motivation:** This encompasses non-material aspects such as praise, recognition, opportunities for career development, and self-actualization. Interpersonal relationships within a community also play a significant role in motivating individuals to achieve.

Motivation is defined as an action that encourages or influences individuals to fulfill their desires and is viewed as a psychological process triggered by the emergence of needs (Tamara et al., 2020). This definition is supported by Lapsomboonkamol et al. (2020) and Sudaryono et al. (2015). Wahjosumidjo (1987) emphasizes that motivation is crucial, as it is a psychological process arising from both internal and external factors, aimed at fostering growth in the future.

Positive motivation represents an optimal combination of both types of motivation, where individuals not only gain material satisfaction to meet their basic needs but also have the opportunity for self-expression and actualization. This dual approach allows individuals to work and strive in a secure and comfortable environment.

### E. Welfare

Alatartseva and Barysheva (2015) argue that welfare can be measured from two perspectives: (1) the objective side, where welfare is quantifiable in material terms, and (2) the subjective side, where welfare represents each individual's inner experience rather than material wealth. Welfare is understood as a framework for life and social existence, encompassing both physical and mental well-being (Ogwumike et al., 2018). According to Abdullahi et al. (2021), welfare is a prerequisite for fulfilling the material, spiritual, and social needs of citizens, enabling them to live and develop adequately to meet their social responsibilities.

The objective aspects of welfare include:

- 1) Having a job that provides sufficient income to meet basic needs such as clothing, food, and housing.
- 2) Accessing nutritious food and healthcare, as well as education.
- 3) Living in suitable housing conditions.

The subjective aspects encompass psychological, spiritual, and social well-being. This dimension typically refers to an individual's ability to maintain a balanced lifestyle between work and family, foster interpersonal relationships, engage in social networks, and receive community support. It also includes the individual's relationship with the divine and the practice of faith.

When an individual experiences both objective and subjective welfare, they are considered to be thriving and living a healthy life, both physically and spiritually, free from stress. This holistic approach to welfare emphasizes the importance of integrating material and non-material aspects to achieve a comprehensive understanding of well-being.

## Research Method

The fundamental and crucial steps in collecting qualitative data involve identifying informants from pre-selected respondents who can provide comprehensive information, in line with purposive



sampling methods. This targeted sampling strategy focuses on selecting research participants or specific locations and determining the appropriate sample size.

In-depth interviews with verbal questions are conducted with three representative informants as specified. In addition to these interviews, the researcher employs phenomenology to analyze the qualitative data obtained. The research model, through a phenomenological approach, emphasizes the personal experiences of individuals, focusing on those who have directly encountered the phenomena or events under study (Creswell, 2019).

This methodology allows for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of informants, facilitating insights into their perspectives and the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. By utilizing this approach, the research aims to capture the nuances and complexities of the subjects' experiences, contributing to a richer analysis of the social transformation and welfare in Labuan Bajo.



Figure 4 In-Depth Interview Process



Figure 5 Phenomenological Stages with In-Depth Interviews of Informants

## Results and Discussion

Social transformation is a crucial aspect of community development, alongside economic transformation, as viewed through social capital, innovation, and the motivation of individuals to improve their lives and achieve greater prosperity. This research indicates that social capital enhances the well-being of the community, particularly in the context of tourism development, where people engage in sharing, seeking information, and helping each other. This collective effort enables local families and relatives to benefit from the influx of both foreign and domestic tourists visiting Labuan Bajo.

With the presence of social capital, individuals who were once unaware have gained understanding, those who lacked skills have become skilled, and they have begun to exchange information

and support one another in knowledge transfer. This exchange empowers them to create and earn income from the tourism sector. Social capital fosters local innovation and has a positive correlation, as the community now shares equal opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge related to tourism, enabling them to market their products and services, such as local cuisine, crafts, and traditional clothing.

This transformation is exemplified by local entrepreneurs like Ibu Latifah, who is involved in micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM), and Bapak Ali Sehiden, the owner of a travel business. Additionally, community leader Father Marcelinus Agot plays a vital role by providing revolving funds and establishing cooperatives to support the financing of local UMKM actors. Together, these efforts reflect a community-driven approach to leveraging social capital for sustainable development and enhanced welfare.



Figure 6 In-Depth Interview at the Production Site of a Local Culinary UMKM

"Since Labuan Bajo was designated as a super priority destination, the community's profession has shifted from fishing to tourism. Fishing boats have been converted into tourist vessels; while not all have made the switch, it's safe to say that over 70% are moving towards the tourism business. Income has increased, but expenses have also risen significantly. Culturally, there are many celebrations here, so people need a lot of money for such events. Thus, becoming wealthy in Labuan Bajo is indeed challenging. There is a clear change; for example, those who were once fishermen are now tourism operators. We always encourage tourism operators to improve quality, such as safety and offering affordable prices, to attract more tourists. Social capital has changed my life for the better because building relationships with others has had a significant impact on me. From social capital, I've learned the importance of being generous; I started trading in 2008. With the rise of various training programs, more women are engaging in trade without feeling embarrassed. This social capital is crucial, especially in terms of mutual assistance and sharing new information. Our cultural philosophy is rooted in cooperation. When viewed from the income perspective, social capital has significantly impacted the welfare of the Labuan Bajo community, possibly by around 50%. However, challenges remain: many in the community still have low educational levels, and tourist interest in visiting the tourist villages is still quite lacking, which limits our motivation to innovate."— **Mr. Ali Sehiden, Member of Parliament, 42 years old, father of three.**

"Another innovation we've implemented is opening a carpentry workshop and inviting skilled workers from Jepara to teach



the community how to create high-quality wood products, allowing our local human resources to earn money and compete in the market. The wood here is excellent. From a health perspective, we have 22 community health centers. We're striving to avoid reliance on government funds and encouraging the community not to depend on the central government. We've established 17 waiting rooms for expectant mothers, where low-income individuals can stay for free two days before and two days after giving birth. Many of our initiatives have received support from individuals donating their resources; I believe this reflects the impact of social capital, which fosters innovation. However, there are challenges; some people are afraid to start. It's essential to live orderly and measured lives, and we can borrow from banks, but it takes courage to accept risks. In this social structure, social capital, which emphasizes mutual support, significantly influences our daily activities. Here, we help each other—neighbors, family members—so our needs can be met. We share willingly; even if someone has little, they are willing to share. The environment here is comfortable because social capital fosters interaction and mutual assistance, creating a sense of ease. This allows our community to expand socially and engage in positive interactions."— **Mr. Marcellino Ogot, Pastor, 74 years old, responsible for over 1,000 people.**

"Making traditional Labuan Bajo food a flagship product in Manggarai is my goal. The more friends I have, the more experiences I gain, and we must share love with one another. I motivate myself to be an empowered woman, one who is independent, emphasizing that a woman's quality is essential. In a marriage, both partners should maintain balance. I have a deep passion for trading, but currently, the trading conditions in my area are still limited. Now, I have my own brand, and it's well-known because I've been in this micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector for a long time. I'm increasingly motivated by my business because it provides me with a good income, and I plan to pass this down to my children. The government supports MSME operators with low-interest loans. Whenever there's a gathering, I share my experiences and knowledge with others. I leverage available opportunities as part of my innovation, and I motivate them to start their businesses not only when problems arise but to begin now. I teach them how to apply for bank loans and manage their finances effectively. Interacting directly with the community inspires them—not just in monetary terms, but they are motivated by a genuine concern for change. Social capital has transformed my life for the better. What keeps me going is faith; without faith in our endeavors, efforts may be in vain. But when we have faith, we can remain calm, knowing that God has a plan. The presence of my peers in this profession makes me feel comfortable."— **Mrs. Latifa, MSME operator of traditional Labuan Bajo food.**

## Conclusion

Social transformation is evident in the community of Labuan Bajo, especially after it was designated as one of the Super Priority Destinations (DSP). However, this status has not yet translated into improved prosperity for the local population. The geographic conditions of Labuan Bajo, being a remote area, contribute to the high cost of living, which has not been matched by the income levels reflected in the local Minimum Wage (UMR). In other words, the anticipated trickle-down effect from Labuan Bajo's DSP status has yet to materialize. The high distribution costs associated with transporting basic goods negatively impact the purchasing power and financial allocation of the community for

meeting their daily needs.

The quality of human resources (HR) remains a concern, as local residents prioritize fulfilling primary needs (such as food) over education and health services. Additionally, uneven infrastructure development—such as paved provincial roads, street lighting, and access to clean water and electricity, particularly in coastal areas—hinders the community's ability to improve their quality of life.

Despite these limitations, social capital significantly impacts the transformation of Labuan Bajo's community toward achieving better welfare. Social capital enables the community to move from incapacity to capability, helping them navigate daily challenges and hardships. The local culture of "guyub" (togetherness) positively influences the transformation of those with limited economic resources, facilities, skills, and education. The strong sense of mutual trust and the sharing of positive information across different faiths help lighten the burdens faced by families and relatives.

However, the innovations emerging from Labuan Bajo are not yet sufficient to fully facilitate the community's transformation toward greater prosperity. These innovations require external support from local government and related parties, given the geographic remoteness of Labuan Bajo from the national capital, Jakarta. The roles of community leaders, both traditional and religious, are crucial in addressing everyday issues, including economic challenges, skill development, knowledge sharing, networking for career opportunities, and business ventures. Word-of-mouth communication proves to be highly effective in the daily lives of residents, especially during cultural gatherings. Leaders play a vital role in motivating the community, not only regarding economic and educational aspects but also in addressing environmental issues they face.

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