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THE SURVIVAL OF ACEHNESE TRADITIONAL MARKETS IN THE MODERNIZATION ERA

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Abstract
This article examined the sustainability aspects of traditional markets from a socio-anthropological perspective. The author aimed to demonstrate that fundamental changes occur due to the convergence of two economic systems in contemporary society. In the research process, the author employed qualitative research methods using an ethnographic approach. The research took place in Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, which is located in the western region of the Republic of Indonesia. The study subjects included traders, market visitors, and the surrounding community. Data collection techniques involved interviews, direct observations, and literature reviews. The collected data were analyzed ethnographically by categorizing and connecting all the data to obtain subtopics and their meanings. The research findings revealed the existence of subcultures and societal customs that have been organized and passed down through generations. Traditional markets now coexist with the influences of modernization.

Keywords: The Acehnese Value; Traditional Market; Modernization Era.
A. Introduction

The sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization is a phenomenon of coexistence. In addition to being caused by the fact that people have long been active in the market to meet basic needs, sustainability is also influenced by direct social interactions in the market space. The challenges faced by the community about traditional markets and the emergence of modernity have resulted in a certain segmentation among consumers, particularly the regular customers at the “Uroe Peukan” traditional market. This segmentation leads to a separation between producers and consumers, which contrast with the characteristics of modern markets that are formal and only involve the circulation of selling without directly purchasing products from the community. On the other hand, traditional markets offer direct buying and selling interactions between producers and consumers.

When the era of modernization arrived, traditional markets persisted in society by offering access to local products and services not all found in modern stores. In addition, traditional markets provide lower prices and more personal services than modern markets (Waterbury, n.d.; Hermanto et al., 2018; Purnomo et al., 2018). In traditional markets, sellers offer various local products that can meet people’s basic needs, such as clothing, fruits, household appliances, local snacks, livestock, and handicrafts. In addition, distribution and transportation services are also part of the activities that contribute to the traditional market (Aliyah et al., 2020; Sumampouw & Mawuntu, 2020; Suryo, 2007). These products and services influence sustainability so that traditional markets can support the local economy (Alexandro & Uda, n.d.-a; Ariyani, 2019). The sustainability of traditional markets in the modernization era today has emerged with its resilience in the presence of products that are always needed by the community and market activities that align with the social culture.

So far, studies on traditional markets tend to look at the general conditions of community activities in the business system and the orientation of traditional markets in the midst of society (Davies et al., 2022;
Traditional markets also see that ownership is very important, where every buyer will feel a sense of ownership when they see the desired item. In addition, openly established social interactions illustrate traditional markets’ existence.

Four tendencies from studies about traditional markets can be affirmed by the lack of dimensions specifically looking at the sustainability of traditional markets in the modernization era. The sustainability of the values and culture of the community in traditional markets as a social activity is a sub-culture of society that has existed for a long time. First, traditional markets tend to be seen in structural aspects that include organizational structure, pricing structure, and social interaction processes (Jeong & Ban, 2020; Jung et al., 2021; Rahman et al. et al., 2020; Rizki & Murtinah, n.d.; Song et al., 2022). Second, traditional markets are seen in behavioral aspects, including consumer behavior and factors influencing purchase interest (Clemons & Gao, 2008; Ilhami & Abbas, 2022; Rana & Paul, 2017; Singh & Verma, 2017).

Third, traditional markets are seen in economic aspects that include differences between traditional markets and modern markets, potential traditional markets in the community, and spending trends (Yusuf et al., 2022; Amiq, n.d.; Ariansty, 2017a, 2017b; Nelwan et al., 2017; Septiari & Kusuma, 2016; Suyono et al., 2016). Fourth, traditional markets are seen in marketing aspects, including product uniqueness and marketing models (Asmayadi & Hartini, 2015; Muftiadi & Maulina, 2016; Prihatiningtyas, 2017a; Suryadarma, 2011). From the existing studies, the portrait of the sustainability of traditional markets in the modernization era does not extensively examine the values and culture that can support their existence. The presence of elemental products sold and direct interaction provides an important point in looking at the sustainability of traditional markets as a sub-culture that still survives in society (Rasyid et al., 2023).

This article aims to address the shortcomings of existing studies by examining how the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of
modernization has experienced coexistence. Traditional markets are not only seen as a support for local economies on the one hand but on the other hand, traditional markets are seen as a basic activity that continues to be practiced by the community (Yusuf et al., 2022; Anderson, 1980; Dewey, 1962; Dominique-Ferreira et al., 2022; Linares & Bye, 2016; Suryo, 2007).

Specifically, this paper answers how the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization is represented as a local tradition of the community, where traditional markets have experienced coexistence with the development of the times. With the existence of elemental products that are always offered, traditional markets open up spaces for open interaction for communities who engage in direct activities in traditional markets. Understanding the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization provides a role model when looking at community traditions through local trade. It serves as a lesson learned for social researchers when looking at traditional markets as a cultural activity.

We argued that the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization does not cause the decline of their existence but rather exists in coexistence. Thus, the sustainability of traditional markets persists as a local tradition of the community in fulfilling their basic needs. When modernization enters the community’s life, traditional markets experience coexistence through product consumption and social interaction adaptation.

The process of product consumption adaptation can be seen as the community’s effort to consume various new products, even though local products are still maintained in the traditional market. These products are accepted and used by the community for their needs. Social interaction within the community still occurs directly at the traditional market location, and this interaction provides a symbolic interpretation that the traditional market is a social space to bind open relations between people. Thus, the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization is coexistence between community traditions and the development of the times as a pattern of activity within the traditional market space.
B. Method

This research focuses on two characteristics of traditional markets in Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The first is a traditional market that sells various basic products, and the second is a traditional market that sells livestock. The tradition of “Jak Ue Peukan” (which means “going to the market once a week”) among the people has preserved their sub-culture and habits. The activities of the people in their daily lives are closely related to their habits of obtaining their daily needs and social interactions. Thus, these habits are believed to influence the sustainability of traditional markets as a representation of their world. Therefore, traditional markets in Bireuen reflect these two characteristics and continue to exist within the community.

This study uses a qualitative ethnographic approach. According to Spradley (1979), the ethnographic approach can describe culture to understand the way of life of cultural owners from their perspective, as stated by Bronislaw Malinowski. The main basis of this approach can refer to qualitative research in which researchers try to understand and explore the meaning of individuals or groups for interpretation (J.W. Creswell, 2014). Ethnographic studies can be applied to observe social behavior, interaction, and perception within certain groups, teams, organizations, or communities (Reeves et al., 2008). Therefore, this study uses an ethnographic approach to examine the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization.

The data collection process was conducted from April to July 2021. Various data were collected, including the overall activities of the community, such as buying and selling practices, social relations between traders and buyers, and the values the community believed, which contributed to traditional markets becoming a subculture within the larger economic system. After gathering all the data from specifically selected informants who represented the needed data, the author conducted several informal interviews and repeatedly cross-checked the information with various literature sources as a means of data triangulation.
The data collection was done holistically at the research location. The data obtained came from interviews, direct observations, and literature studies. Interviews were conducted with seven informants, consisting of 3 traders, three market visitors, and one community member directly involved in the traditional market. Observations were made when the researcher entered and explored the traditional market to get an overview of the market activities. Books and journal articles were referred to as literature studies to support the arguments presented in this writing. Through observation, interviews, and literature study, the researcher obtained primary and secondary data to explain the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization.

The research employed ethnographic data analysis to connect every data obtained during the fieldwork. Sorting and connecting each data were conducted to gain cultural meanings so that the main ideas of this research can be seen (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, ethnographic data analysis can provide insights into the sustainability of traditional markets in the current era of modernization.

C. Result and Discussion
1. Result
   a. The Traditional Market as a Social Gathering

   The traditional market as a social gathering had an impact on its sustainability. In the traditional market, people meet with their close relatives, friends from the same village, or neighbors and greet each other. This was directly explained by informants when the researcher asked, “Who did you meet when you were in the market?” as explained by Ridha and Abdul Aziz, livestock traders at Geurugok traditional market:

   “…We often meet village people when in the market. Among those we meet, some visit the market to socialize without the intention of buying, some want to know the current livestock market prices, and some specifically want to buy livestock... When we meet at the village coffee shop, we talk about people who raise livestock in several areas around the village. When in the market, we talk about who among the professional livestock traders are selling” (Interview, May 15, 2021).
Teuku Zia, a market visitor, shared similar experiences:
“…In the Geurugok livestock market, I have met village people who were buying livestock, I have also met my former schoolmates who were selling livestock, and the same when I visited the peukan center, I have met my neighbor who was buying fresh vegetables when I was in the market...when meeting with my schoolmates, we talk about the past memories that reflect the happiness we shared” (Interview, May 20, 2021).

Tuti, as a market visitor, also explained:
“…I just met my neighbor who was visiting this market.... We asked each other what items we wanted to buy here? I was looking for a new school bag for my child, and Arif (my neighbor) was looking for fresh fruits and instant noodles” (Interview, June 6, 2021).

The accidental social gatherings give the idea that the traditional market is not unfamiliar in its existence in the community.

Familiarism that focuses on face-to-face encounters has shown the existence of traditional markets as a social space. In addition to direct face-to-face encounters, they discuss similar topics as when they are in their village. This condition occurs as a response to their usual proximity to the conditions of the village when they are in the market. For example, when a trader meets with villagers, they discuss the conditions between them or the context relevant to the village conditions, which has become a discourse on communication when they meet in the market space. With face-to-face encounters, both parties have built a communication that is represented in the social conditions of the village.

In general, encounters in traditional markets between sellers and buyers, between buyers and buyers, or even between sellers and sellers happen because of a pre-existing relationship. This is created because the condition of traditional markets as a social space can build interactions and relationships directly and openly. This means that people can interact with anyone in a traditional market. For example, a trader can meet with a soldier, a parking attendant, a farmer, a fisherman, and so on when they are in the market. Similarly, a buyer can meet relatives, friends, village
residents, neighbors, and so on when they are in the market. Therefore, traditional markets can provide a social meeting space for everyone.

b. The Availability of Basic Needs for The Community

The availability of basic needs for the community is provided in traditional markets. Traditional markets provide products that are constantly needed by the community in their daily lives, ranging from primary needs to secondary and tertiary needs. As observed by the author, buyers search for household necessities for their daily lives when traditional markets are active. Vegetables, fish, rice, fruits, traditional snacks, clothing, and kitchenware continue to be in demand and sold by traders. As explained by Amir, a clothing vendor in “Uroe Peukan” market: “I sell several types of clothing for women, such as house dresses, Islamic clothing, skirts, children’s pants, as well as school shoes and socks. For men, I sell t-shirts, Liwee pants, shirts, shorts, and underwear” (Interview, June 25, 2021).

Maksal, a market visitor, also conveys the same, “In this market, there are many vendors selling items such as clothing, fruits, vegetables, rice, kitchen utensils, used motorcycles, household appliances, used bicycles, traditional medicines, snacks, and woven mats as local handicrafts. Here, there are also parking services, delivery services for goods and passengers, and electronic device repair services” (Interview, May 23, 2021).

Putri, another market visitor, stated, “This week I bought a house dress for myself, which is worn at home. My original intention in coming here was to buy kitchen supplies, but earlier, I saw the house dress and was interested in buying it after purchasing the kitchen supplies” (Interview, July 20, 2021). The prices of goods in traditional markets are also relatively low, as stated by Putri. “I bought a house dress for Rp. 30,000 from a price of Rp. 40,000. I negotiated with the seller until they gave me that price. In my opinion, the prices in this market are relatively low compared to prices in stores, and here we can bargain, unlike in malls or other stores where prices are fixed” (Interview, July 20, 2021). The availability of basic products in traditional markets has provided access for the community to meet their daily needs.
Traditional markets offer easy access to various products still relevant to people’s daily lives. All types of products offered are useful for the elementary needs of the community, such as clothing, household appliances, rice, snacks, used vehicles, livestock, and so on. In daily life, the need for these products is still seen as a necessity that people constantly consume or use. The usefulness of the products is adapted to specific conditions. If people buy kitchen equipment such as vegetables, fruits, fish, and rice, that need is always needed daily. However, if people buy clothes, shoes, pants, and skirts, that need is needed once or twice a month or even more. However, when people buy used vehicles, handicraft products, and other technological goods, this context is adapted to the community’s needs without counting the time. Likewise, when people buy livestock, their needs can be seen in the consumption orientation that focuses on Islamic holidays in the tradition of Aceh society. Therefore, traditional markets provide access for people to obtain basic needs, which are categorized according to the required daily, monthly, or more conditions.

The presence of these products can provide the existence of traditional markets in the community. Traditional markets located in the center of sub-districts or at intersections as community activities in a region have provided access for rural or coastal communities to visit them once a week. The products offered mostly give meaning to the community’s access to fulfill their daily lives. With the ease of technology and information the community utilizes, visiting traditional markets to find what they need is helpful. When in doubt about buying a product, buyers can access product information online to see the product details. Likewise, if someone buys livestock from a cow trader, transportation services using pick-up trucks have helped bring the livestock back to the buyer’s home. Thus, the products offered can provide the existence of traditional markets within the community.

Essential products accessed by the community are available during the “Uroe Peukan” event and can also be accessed at traditional markets that operate daily. Daily traditional markets are located in the bustling centers of
the community, such as intersections and central areas. In many areas, traders are still selling essential products similar to those at “Uroe Peukan”. However, the specific presence of “Uroe Peukan” is not only seen in the availability of essential products but also as a collective value of the community regarding social space access.

c. Traditional Market: The Comfortable Zone for The Society

In addition to providing access to basic needs, traditional markets provide a space of comfort for society when they are in the market. The comfort of society in the market is significantly shown through symbols of interaction. This can be seen when people visit the market with similar levels of clothing that do not show caste differences. In the market, many people wear ordinary clothes in their daily lives. This means that people do not wear luxurious clothes like when they visit parties or formal spaces that require them to look attractive and neat. This equality in clothing provides comfort for people when they are in the market. Many homemakers seek household necessities, as this is essential for their families. Similarly, fathers and teenagers also engage in activities within the traditional market. Some of them are traders themselves or laborers who seek daily income.

Another condition is also seen when market visitors greet each other, which can strengthen relationships between them, as explained by a Muslim as a member of society: “When in the market, buyers and sellers interact with each other. Sellers offer goods to buyers, and if buyers are interested, direct communication will occur during the bargaining process” (interview, July 23, 2021). Like a livestock trader, Ridha said, “I will smile when buyers visit my booth. I will start a conversation and offer the animals I sell. I try to offer animals so that buyers are interested, and then we will start the bargaining process for the price” (interview, June 26, 2021). The comfort of society in the market can provide social harmony.

The equality in clothing in traditional markets provides a collective value that can bind interactions between individuals. The level of social equality can measure symbolic relationships. Before active interactions occur between individuals, they must have felt a basic level of comfort.
based on the equal clothing they wear. With equality in the traditional market, the continuity of social interactions appears safe and comfortable as a dimension of social life within a community.

Greeting and chatting among people in the traditional market reinforce relationships between individuals. Those who meet will open up with smiles and greetings that can create stronger relationships. A vendor builds closeness with buyers to invite them to the bargaining process. The closeness built is initiated by a greeting, a smile, and attention toward one another. Similarly, the encounters among buyers in the traditional market are a response when interacting without planning. This condition also indicates that traditional markets provide opportunities for social openness to anyone without limitations. With various conditions that occur, the comfort of the community has given an interactive aspect to the continuity of traditional markets as part of the community's social activities.

2. Discussion

The traditional market sustainability in the modern era is shown to occur due to the persistence of sub-culture and activity habits practiced by the community in their daily lives. The living conditions in the traditional market coexist with the modern era. The three main factors described above are elements of the current sustainability of traditional markets. In addition to being caused by the persistence of elemental products that are always needed by the community, it is also caused by the comfort of interactions experienced by the community in the traditional market. The modern era has penetrated the community's life and has also undergone adaptation efforts to facilitate community activities. With community habits and sub-cultures, traditional markets have emerged to coexist with the modern era.

The sustainability of the traditional market is a “sign” that the modern era does not always negatively influence the local cultural conditions of the community. However, this condition has eventually experienced coexistence that can help community activities. Community life in the village can be represented in the life of the traditional market, and
social interactions have long been in contact with modernization in their daily lives.

The basic needs based on personal or group needs can provide product sales resilience for traders at prices that can be decided when in the bargaining stage. Social interactions that tend to bring color to the rural dimension give significance to social relations based on kinship elements. With modernization adopted by the community in the traditional market system, its sustainability has emerged as a holistic coexistence in the community’s life that cannot be separated.

The life of society in the era of modernization has shown an alternative ease in all activities due to technological advancements (Matondang, 2019). The presence of technology has helped society in various ways, such as communication, transportation, information, and so on. People can also access various information and services easily and quickly. In addition, modernization has also helped people to improve their quality of life with various necessary conditions.

Internet facilities and mobile phones have made communication between people much easier and faster, enabling people to share information, access online services, and communicate with others in various regions. In addition, transportation technology has made long-distance travel easier and faster. This has allowed many people to travel to various places quickly. This condition is evident in traditional markets, which overall people have consumed as part of their activity convenience. Therefore, the technology present in society can facilitate people's activities, especially in traditional markets.

Traditional markets can maintain the social identity of a region. In addition to its impact on local economic resilience, traditional markets also impact cultural resilience that the community has long adopted. Through the role of technology in society, the sustainability of traditional markets can impact their development. It can facilitate people’s activities in doing business in traditional markets. Traditional markets can also maintain society’s cultural values and norms through social interactions and essential products that are always needed as their consumption orientation. With the
continuity of traditional markets in society today, their sub-culture and habits can be well-preserved.

The presence of cultural values inherited from past generations in a region has integrated traditional markets (Rofiah, 2022). According to Santoso & Irawati (2015), traditional markets play an important role in maintaining the identity of a region with the presence of social values in traditional markets. Various aspects that become the local community's dimensions are seen in traditional market activities, such as daily conversations in the village, life issues, plans, and various other hot issues. Similarly, when buyers and sellers communicate, it also takes the form of verbal and non-verbal communication (Asi & Karani, 2021). Traditional markets are not only defined as buying and selling transactions of goods and services but also provide social dimensions that stem from the culture of the community in a region (Alexander, 1987).

In Acehnese society, cultural values derived from Islamic teachings have fostered their activities. Honesty and openness are evident when sellers and buyers engage in bargaining interactions. On the other hand, Islamic norms are also observed when the community carries out commercial transactions. These transactions are conducted as symbolic transfers of ownership rights for the purchased products. With Islamic values and norms in the community’s activities, traditional markets can be interpreted as a tradition that provides a sense of comfort and familiarity for the people.

Indeed, cultural values such as bargaining and the commercial transaction ceremony (akad) should be preserved as Islamic values practiced by the community for generations. These values hold significance in maintaining the cultural heritage and traditions of the Acehnese people, as well as reflecting the Islamic principles embedded in their daily lives.

D. Conclusion

This study indicates that the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization is closely tied to the condition of coexistence. Traditional markets have survived until now due to the presence of subcultures and societal habits in carrying out their activities within the
market space. On the other hand, modern products have assisted the community in their daily activities. While modern products are commonly found in modern market models in certain locations, traditional and modern markets have their respective segments. Therefore, they coexist and continue to thrive through adaptation to the conditions of the social system and structure.

On the one hand, traditional markets often discuss buying and selling goods or services and the conditions of traditional market activities that are seen structurally. However, on the other hand, the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization can illustrate specific impacts on cultural resilience and local social values in the community that can foster solidarity together. This condition contributes to the impact of modernization amid a community that tends to coexist with their way of life. Therefore, the issue of the sustainability of traditional markets in the era of modernization that can coexist together can add new knowledge in cultural anthropology as an effort to understand cultural behavior in a region.

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