

MINANGKABAU ETHNIC SURVIVAL STRATEGY IN SURAKARTA CITY

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Abstract: *Minang ethnic is known as an ethnic who has a habit to inter-island migration (merantau). One of the traditional market that there are many Minangkabau ethnic people in Surakarta, namely Nusukan Market Surakarta. As a newcomer, the Minangkabau ethnic has a distinctly different culture with the Javanese. Therefore, Minangkabau ethnic needs a strategy to be able to survive and still exist as a minority group. The purpose of this research is to know the survival strategy of Minangkabau ethnic in traditional market. Data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interviews, and documentation. This study used qualitative research methods. The data analysis model uses interactive analysis from Miles and Heberman. The results showed that Minangkabau ethnic use social capital to maintain their life, such as norm, trust and social network. In the norms capital, the Minangkabau ethnic follow the prevailing norms in the community and obey the rules. Honest attitude is an important trust capital, in order to establish a harmonious communication with fellow traders and interact with others. Network capital is built by fostering good relationships with all people and incorporated in regional social groups.*

Keywords: *Minang Ethnic, Social Capital, Traditional Market.*

Introduction

Merantau or inter-island migration means the interaction process of the Minangkabau community with the outside world. inter-island migration is used as an arena to learn about life. Through inter-island migration, maturity of a person in the bitter and sweet life can be tested. Inter-island migration can increase one's dignity in the custom environment. Inter-island migration as a form of journey to another places is almost a necessity for every single *orang*

Bujang (the name for a boy in Minangkabau ethnic), because by proving his success in the inter-island migration, the orang Bujang is more likely to succeed in various matters concerning customs, such as marriage, honour, status in a tribe, and so forth (H. Geertz, 1967: 84 in Kato, 2005: 147). Another factor that influences the growth of inter-island migration culture is the existence of a verse that reads:

*Karantau madang di hulu
Babuah babungo balun
Marantau Bujang dahulu
Di rumah baguno balun*

This verse suggests the Minangkabau youths to inter-island migration, because they are considered not able to provide great benefits in the hometown. The meaning of inter-island migration in this case does not mean to expel its citizens away from the hometown, but rather aims to broaden the horizons by going to another place. Going temporarily is expected to strengthen the understanding of the values and the indigenous of Minangkabau with a comparable value comparison outside its indigenous territory, so that his appreciation and respect for his own custom and culture deepened and rooted. (Marta, 2014). According to Bungo and Hussin (2011), merantau (inter-island migration) and trading are common traditions that have become part of the culture of Minangkabau society. Unlike the Javanese community, if the Minang community is known for inter-island migration, then the Javanese people is the opposite. The Javanese proverb says: *mangan ora mangan sing penting kumpul* (eat or not, the important thing is to gather), it means that gather becomes the main need rather than eat, in fact that eat is more important than just gather. This proverb has been deemed irrelevant because of the changing times. Furthermore, this proverb means that the Javanese family and society need to maintain a sense of unity and entity, so that they are not separated by the circumstances.

In the Indonesian Dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), inter-island migration means sailing or looking new place to live in the overseas lands or going to other country to earn a living, knowledge, and so forth. The tradition of inter-island migration of Minangkabau people is better known to many people than any other region in Indonesia. This identification is seen from the number of restaurants using the label of Padang Restaurant, which is found in almost all cities in Indonesia. In the meantime, there are very few businesses that use the name of the owner's hometown.

The concept of inter-island migration is not just to go to new place, in order to find a better life, but also to encourage migrants (people who travel to other places) together to build the motherland, after inter-island migration. One of the major regional organizations from West Sumatra is Sulit Air Sepakat (SAS). Sulit Air is the name of an area in Solok Regency, West Sumatra. The headquarter of the SAS Organization is located in Jakarta and has a number of branches in major cities in Indonesia. The SAS has a high concern for the development of the Sulit Air area. The development of Sulit Air area in the field of facilities and infrastructure can not be separated from the efforts undertaken by its migrants.

There are two Minangkabau ethnic organizations located in Solo City, namely SAS (Sulit Air Sepakat) Solo Branch and IKM (Ikatan Keluarga Minang) Solo Raya. Members of both organizations consist of people who are from Minangkabau ethnic or have a Minangkabau cultural background, because of marriage. Bonds originating from one region have fostered a sense of unity and entity of Minangkabau people, who migrate to Solo. In general, these Minangkabau ethnic people migrate to new place, in order to trade or work with the hope of

economic improvement and some people migrate to new place, due to school. Poerwadarminta (1985: 220), in the Indonesian Dictionary, says that “trade is synonymous with commerce while the one doing so is called trader”. Meanwhile, according to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Daring* (Online Indonesian Dictionary), trader is those earning living by means of trading (<https://kbbi.web.id/dagang>). Generally, Minangkabau ethnic people living in Northern Solo run business in trading area such as selling shoes, bags, garments, household appliances, electronic appliances, and etc. There are 10 Minangkabau ethnic household head trading in Nusukan Traditional Market, all of which come from Sulit Air, a village located in Solok Regency, West Sumatra. Considering the research conducted, they have left for Surakarta since a long time ago and tried to survive by trading in the market as their primary livelihood to meet their family’s need. A respondent named Dang Bastian explained the beginning of his journey to Solo City. At that time, Dang Bastian and his wife went to Solo City to visit his family. When they were walking in the traditional market, they were offered a space of kiosk in the traditional market. Dang Bastian, who does not have any business, finally accepted the offer.

Minangkabau ethnic traders have traded in the market for tens years. As a minor group, Minang ethnic traders fight for their survival perseveringly. Their surviving strategy is fruitful and it can be seen from their business’ progress or success leading them to have their own residence and family and prefer settling in Solo to going back to their original place. Trading they operated is finally is a hereditary business because when parents die, the business will be continued by their children. It occurs, among others, in Minangkabau ethnic traders named Ida and Emmy. They are two siblings continuing their parents’ business because their parents have died. Similarly, Minangkabau ethnic trader named Wati Darma is the one continuing her business due to her parents’ death.

As a social creature, human being always adapts to his/her environment condition. Minangkabau people living in Nusukan Traditional Market have significantly different culture; therefore a strategy is required to survive and to keep existent in their minority. Adaptation strategy is the way taken by individuals in the attempt of adapting to new environment. This adapting strategy is as same as the one does in socialization process resulting in conformity. Conformity is the form of interaction in which an individual treats other as the group’s expectation (Sunarto, 2004:175, Pederson, 1998, Philips, 2009, Parekh, 2002, Guibernau, 2010). Meanwhile, the strategies in adapting process are very important to individuals encountering new environment, either natural or social environment (Riady, 2004). Similarly, to Minangkabau people in Nusukan Traditional Market, their existence in a new place is a challenge to survive in foreign environment. The need for adaptation is a form of attempt to survive amid the community with different culture.

Traditional market is a reflection of social life existence in a certain area. Market is a cultural center, in which any type of behavior expression and value inherent to society is expressed within it. Market, according to Susilowati (2003: 55), is the place where seller and buyer meet to do transaction or to exchange commodities. In formal economy, market system is a form of economic order reflected on institutions, by generating an interdependent movement as economic and non-economic processes. Traditional market, according to Nasution in Wardoyo (2011: 5), is the traditional (hereditary) selling place, where the sellers and the buyer meet and the commodities traded are dependent on the buyer (consumer)’s demand, the price specified is the one agreed through bargaining process, and the sellers as the producer offer a price slightly higher than the standard price (Wardoyo, 2011: 5).

Traditional market plays an important role in the attempt of building nationality insight to contribute to building a form of future culture independent of its traditional root. While bargaining process occurs in traditional market, it is not found in modern market. In modern market, there is no bargaining process because the buyer will buy product according to the price labeled on the product. As the minor group, Minangkabau traders fight for their survival perseveringly. Their surviving strategy is fruitful and it can be seen from their business' progress or success leading them to have their own residence and family and to settle in Surakarta comfortably.

Method

The object of research was the Minangkabau ethnic settled foreigners trading or selling in Nusukan Traditional Market Surakarta. The approach used in this research was descriptive qualitative approach, attempting to reveal and to understand the reality existing in the field corresponding to the real condition in the field. The types of data used were primary and secondary ones. The purpose of this research is to know the strategy of survival of Minangkabau ethnic at Nusukan Traditional Market. The object of this research is the Minangkabau ethnic, because it is a minor group in the majority Javanese ethnic environment.

Data source included informant, the one considered as knowledgeable and mastering the problem to be studied and willing to give information to the author; written data source included book, archive, newspaper relevant to the problem studied, and research site. Data validation was carried out using data triangulation, the data validating technique utilizing some other thing out of the data for checking purpose as the control data over the data (Moleong, 1991: 178). Techniques of collecting data used were observation, in-depth interview, and document study. Meanwhile, data analysis was conducted using an interactive model of analysis from Miles and Huberman (1984: 23).

Result and Discussion

One of very important capitals in maintaining business sustainability in informal sector is social capital. Social capital concept was originally introduced by a France sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, in early 1980s. Bourdieu in Suwartika (2003) defines social capital as an entire resource, either actual or potential, that an individual can possess owing to the presence of well-maintained institutional relation network. The meaning implied is that an individual can obtain both material and non-material benefit or resource from others as long as he/she can build a good relationship institutionally with those ones. Meanwhile, Putnam (1993) defines social capital by referring to "the characteristics of social organization such as social network, norms, and trust facilitating coordination for something having mutual benefit. Network is a regular, consistent and longstanding social relation; such the relation involves not only two individuals, but also many individuals. Trust is something builds on the social relations in which there is a regulation that can be discussed in the sense that the regulation contains an open space to achieve the expectation to achieve. Norm is a regulation inherent to a social relation functioning as a control over an activity.

Social capital can be used as a surviving strategy for market sellers. Social capital consists of three pillars: norm, trust, and social network. Norm is related to the rule among fellow sellers and how the rule enables the sellers to survive. Trust emphasizes on whether or not the sellers' length of time spent for operating their business affect others' trust in them, what the trust level is between fellow settled foreigners coming from different origin areas and

between those coming from same origin areas in order to survive in business. Meanwhile, network is intended to see whether or not the Minangkabau ethnic settled foreigners becoming the sellers can establish relation based on certain activity, whether or not business duration affects the network they have, and how many nodes a seller has so that those three pillars have relation to the surviving strategy in informal sector. Therefore, to find out the surviving strategy of Minang ethnic people in Nusukan Market, social capital can be analyzed in relation to the three basic problems: norm, trust, and social network.

Nusukan Market

Nusukan Market located in Captain Pierre Tendean street, Kelurahan Nusukan, Banjarsari Sub-District of Surakarta City has been established since 1985. After several-time renovation, in 1986 there was a change in its land width resulting from the liberation of land on which formerly Kelurahan Office and Nusukan Theater stood. In 2004, Nusukan Market was burnt and reconstructed in 2006. Nusukan Market provides a variety of daily needs, either food or clothing. Market activity starts on early morning to night. Most vegetable sellers come from outside Solo city, such as Boyolali, Sragen, Purwodadi, and Karanganyar.

Kinship values are established in Nusukan Market through interaction and communication within society, between fellow sellers or between sellers and buyers in bargaining process. Nusukan Market is built on a land in 6,531 m² wide with two storied building. The first floor is 4,666 m² wide and the second is 4,326 m². It contains 207 kiosk and 710 stands with 23 market officers. The location of Nusukan Market is very proximate to people settlement and it is very important because the location determines an activity's effectiveness and efficiency or in other words, distance is something vital in determining a market location. Therefore, traditional market is not only an economic support, but also a cultural asset to be preserved.

Minangkabau ethnic sellers are a part of market activity. They consist of 6 male sellers and 4 female sellers, with mean income of IDR 100,000 – IDR 200,000 per day. Such the amount of seller income and expense is considered as sufficient to meet their daily life need. Generally, the sellers vend every day, but on certain moments such as wedding ceremony, death or other purposes, they will close their kiosk temporarily as necessary.

Surviving Strategy of Minangkabau Ethnic People in Nusukan Market

Norm is a rule representing right and wrong values. Norm is the basic capital in Javanese people's life, as it governs living intercourse to achieve society orderliness. Javanese people hold on two principles constituting a normative framework in intercourse and interaction. They are: concord and respect (Suseno, 2003: 38). Concord principle aims to achieve harmony; therefore, any thing that can generate a conflict can be avoided as much as possible. To achieve concord, Javanese people develop norm of conduct or etiquette governing all forms of interaction.

As a minority group trading in Nusukan Market and settling around the market, Minangkabau ethnic people should follow the prevailing norms, including the rule prevailing in market or in surrounding society environment. Minangkabau traders are those having custom, so that they realize the importance of cultural and moral values in every behavior including trading behavior to achieve success. The Minangkabau ethnic traders will be subjected to the compulsory government regulations such as order, right and obligation to

undertake. In addition, respecting each other and cooperation among the fellow sellers should be done. Therefore, a trader should not only vend their commodity smartly to the buyers, but also show off good ethics to everyone. As suggested by a trader named Ibu (Mrs.) Liswati (60 year).

Since I started my business, I always attempted to do good deed, to be honest and friendly to all buyers. The buyers not only buy some commodity but also assess the sellers. If the sellers give good service, they will come back certainly (Interview with Ibu Liswati, June 17, 2017).

Although Ibu Liswati is ill now, but her struggle spirit to trade is very high. Business activity has been conducted since she and her husband stepped their foot in Surakarta for the first time in 1975. High work ethos and friendliness to everyone make Ibu Liswati a successful person in Minangkabau ethnic neighborhood in Nusukan Market. A woman with three children and two grandchildren is now managing her business along with one of her children. In the beginning of her arrival at Surakarta City, Ibu Liswati is the street sellers (*pedagang kaki lima*) around Nusukan Market by selling clothing, shoes, and bags. Her friendliness, honesty, and helpfulness make her commodity sold out in the market.

Although she has settled for a long time in Surakarta, she still maintains Minangkabau custom. Generally, this seller group will communicate with their fellow Minangkabau people using Minang language. However, they will communicate with Javanese native people using mixed Javanese and Minang languages. As the manifestation of their love to their homeland, on certain times such as *lebaran*, a variety of typical Minangkabau meals and menu are served at home. Minangkabau sellers also uphold the norms or rules prevailing within society and involved in a variety of activities in their neighborhood. Minangkabau people's participation in social life can be seen from their intimacy with their neighbors. When there is a neighbor befallen with calamity, they will help them eagerly; they will attend wedding ceremony, and make a visit of condolence when someone dies, and etc. The principle of inter-island migration of Minangkabau people is *Dimano bumi dipijak, disinan langik dijunjuang, dimano sumua dikali disinan aia disauak, dimano nagari diunyi disinan Adat dipakai*. This principle implies that the Minangkabau custom teachings can be practiced anywhere, as long as they are good at adapting to the society, where they live.

A trader's key to success is honesty; honesty is a main capital in trading. Honesty will result in trust. It is also true for the Minangkabau ethnic sellers. The trust in the sellers can be seen from the length of time they take to operate their business and the trust between fellow settled foreigners coming either from the same or the different areas in order to survive. Considering the result of research, Ibu Liswati is a settled foreigner who has operated her business in Nusukan Market since 1975 or it has been 42 years. Meanwhile, other settled foreigners have settled in Surakarta for 20-30 years and all of them live around Nusukan Market in which they operate business. The relationship between native sellers and Minangkabau ethnic sellers has been established closely and they help each other in both trading matters and interpersonal relation. Even, kiosks as their business site are located adjacently. The relationship between settled foreigners coming from different areas has been established in daily life among the fellow sellers. Minangkabau Culture teaches their society to adapt to the environment where they live. It is just like a Minangkabau proverb "*di ma bumi dipijak, di sinan langik di junjuang*" (where the earth is stood on, there the sky is upheld) meaning that we should follow the rule prevailing in new local residence area or in foreign area in order to be acceptable to the local society. The presence of newcomers impacts on the shift of social change brought about by the newcomers. Social change is considered as a concept involving

all aspects of society life at individual, group, and society levels (Bungin, 2006). In Minangkabau Ethnic society, the social change can be seen from different behavior, language and culture.

Social capital of network is the one supporting the settled foreigners to survive. Minangkabau Ethnic settled foreigners in Nusukan Market build good relation not only with their fellow market traders (sellers), but also with their fellow Minang ethnic sellers residing in Surakarta City. A form of relation established is to join a social society organization called SAS (*Sulit Air Sepakat*) of Solo Branch. In addition to joining SAS, some of these Nusukan Market sellers also join IKM (*Ikatan Keluarga Minang*) organization in Solo Raya. While the members of SAS consist of those coming from Sulit Air, those of IKM come from Sumatera Barat (West Sumatera) and domicile or reside in ex-Surakarta residency area (Solo, Wonogiri, Klaten, Boyolali, Karanganyar, Sragen).

The presence of kinship in Solo Branch of SAS and IKM Solo Raya societal organization makes Minangkabau Ethnic sellers feel more secure, comfortable, and composed due to the shared origin areas. Minangkabau ethnic sellers coming from the same area have high trust in each other. Such the relation becomes more intense because the organization (SAS and IKM) conduct monthly meeting routinely as the means of connecting *silaturahmi* bond.

The Minangkabau ethnic traders' length of time to reside and trade in Nusukan Market leads this ethnic group to have communication network in the market. Minangkabau Ethnic people then join the association of Nusukan Market voluntarily. Their good societal social behavior and attention to the association leads one of Minangkabau settled foreigners to occupying the position of administrator or even the head of association. The association called *Paguyuban Pedagang Pasar Nusukan* (PAPPAN or Nusukan Market Sellers Association) is the one the members of which are market sellers. Some Minangkabau Ethnic people becoming the administrators of PAPPAN are Ganto Suaro, SE (Head) and Hendrison (Secretary). PAPPAN is the communication medium between sellers and Nusukan Market Service as the stakeholder of government. The relationship between PAPPAN and Market Service makes the communication run smoothly and responsibly. It can be seen from the involvement of PAPPAN's administrators in the development of government policies. It is done to anticipate agitation. PAPPAN is an association containing Nusukan Market sellers as the members and one of its activities is to help solve problem its members deal with.

The surviving strategy taken by Minang ethnic people in Nusukan People is followed by an effective marketing communication strategy to achieve the maximum result, including giving good, face-to-face service and outdoor media. Customer (buyer) service is something the traders or sellers should have; it includes self-competency, interesting appearance, and respect to the customers (Barata, 2004:211-212). Those three elements should be implemented to attract the customers' attention. The customers want not only product or commodities, but also the sellers' attitude and attention and the sellers' attention contributes to determining the buyers' purchasing decision.

Interpersonal communication often occurs in traditional market environment constituting the place, where sellers and buyers meet and bargaining process occurs. Through face to face communication, an individual can find out others' reaction. A seller will find out immediately the buyer's reaction when he/she mention a certain amount of price. Whether the buyer feels that the product price is expensive, cheap or normal can be seen clearly. A seller should give the best service to the buyer. Friendliness is reflected on greeting, smiling, and

respect to the buyer tolerantly, and doing bargaining activity friendly. As suggested by a respondent named Ibu Liswati, friendliness is needed to attract the customers' attention. If we treat the customers friendly, they will be happy. If they are happy, they will buy our product happily and will come back again to buy our product. Media is a means of delivering message. The message delivered by Nusukan Market sellers is related to any kind of products sold. Generally, market sellers have used outdoor media to attract the buyers' attention, as indicated with the writings posted in front of the kiosk. The use of advertisement media is an intermediary to communicate a message to the target audience aiming to inform and to persuade the buyers, in order to be interested in the product advertised.

Conclusion

1. Surviving strategy should be taken to enable the Minangkabau ethnic settled foreigners to survive and to adapt to the surrounding people condition. The strategy involves complying with norm or rule prevailing, upholding the trust given, and establishing network relation with those competent.
2. Minangkabau ethnic traders (sellers) still maintain and preserve their original culture. It can be seen from their attitude and behavior when they see those coming from the same area in which they use their Minangkabau dialect, prefer eating their local food to eating Javanese food and join social locality organization such as SAS (*Sulit Air Sepakat*) and IKM (*Ikatan Keluarga Minang*) in Solo Raya.

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