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### Flea Market in Minangkabau Community: The Expression of Social and Cultural

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**Abstract**

The flea market constituted a specific phenomenon in the context of market formation. Some social, cultural, and structural backgrounds trigger the formation of a flea market. This research aimed to uncover the processes of forming the flea market in Bukittinggi as a part of the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra, Indonesia. By applying the qualitative method, data were collected from observations and in-depth interviews with informants from the Bukittinggi flea market. The 14 informants participating in this research were the flea market's managers, sellers, and buyers. The thematic observations were carried out regularly to capture the real conditions and the discussions among the community members. The data analysis and triangulation refer to Miles and Huberman's model. The findings confirm Ager's approach to market formation. The flea market was formed through three simultaneous processes: spontaneous, autonomous, and state-governed market creation. The stages of the flea market formation were orientation, contraction, and cohesion (involving state actors, sellers, and buyers). The cultural barriers in the orientation process were removed during the contraction stage through various social constructions and the state's involvement in market redefinition. The cohesion was formed by upholding the community's cultural traditions.

Pasar loak merupakan fenomena khas dalam konteks pembentukan pasar. Ada beberapa latar belakang sosial, budaya, dan struktural yang memicu pembentukan pasar loak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap proses pembentukan pasar loak di Bukittinggi sebagai bagian dari komunitas Minangkabau, di Sumatera Barat, Indonesia. Menggunakan metode kualitatif, data diumpulkan dari pengamatan dan wawancara mendalam dengan informan dari pasar loak Bukittinggi. Ada 14 informan yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini adalah manajer, penjual, dan pembeli pasar loak. Pengamatan tematik dilakukan secara teratur untuk melihat kondisi nyata dan diskusi di antara anggota komunitas. Analisis data dan triangulasi mengacu pada model Miles dan Huberman. Temuan dalam kajian ini menegaskan pendekatan Ager's terhadap pembentukan pasar. Pasar loak dibentuk melalui tiga proses simultan: penciptaan pasar spontan, otonom, dan diatur oleh negara. Tahapan pembentukan pasar loak meliputi orientasi, kontraksi, dan kohesi yang melibatkan aktor negara, penjual, dan pembeli. Hambatan budaya dalam proses orientasi dihilangkan pada tahap kontraksi melalui berbagai konstruksi sosial dan keterlibatan negara dalam redefinisi pasar. Soliditas kohesi terbentuk dengan mempertahankan tradisi budaya masyarakat dalam kegiatan pasar.

**Keywords:** civil society; market mechanism; social construction; state policy

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# Artikel Jurnal JSW (Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo)

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## Flea Market in Minangkabau Community: The Expression of Social and Cultural

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### Abstract

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## Introduction

Flea markets do not appear without human involvement. They are man-made and influenced by the existing market, the state, and the community (Damsar 2017; Damsar and Indrayani 2018). The creation of markets can be impromptu, organized by the state, or self-regulated (Aspers 2011). When organized by the state, a market is created based on the government's interests, with the regulation, taxation, ethics, distribution, and other aspects of management controlled by the government. When self-regulated, various actors come together and create a market without the state's direct involvement.

Past sociological studies have examined the creation of markets (Achrol and Kotler 1999; Aspers 2006, 2011; Azarian 2005; Fligstein 2001, 2005, 2009; Johanson and Vahlne 2011; Koçak, Hannan, and Hsu 2014; Möllering 2017; Sierp 2009; White 2004). For example, White (2004) focused the research on the reinvention of markets as opposed to their creation or emergence. Fligstein (2001, 2005, 2009) examined the organized creation of markets. Möllering (2017) presented a general framework for analyzing the transformative processes of the market constitution and described the development of the solar power market in Germany. Koçak et al. (2014) observed the emergence of market orders through audience interaction and vanguard influence. Aspers (2006) discusses the market formation in the fashion sector. In brief, past studies have examined various aspects of market creation, but none have examined the formation of a flea market.

In a subsequent study, Aspers (2011) examined the different market formation processes. He found that markets may be

created spontaneously, in an organized fashion, or both. In spontaneous market-making, the stages are orientation, contraction, and stabilization. In organized market-making, the process starts with a contraction stage, where market actors decide what to do. After that, the market gradually stabilizes and reaches a cohesion phase. If the cohesion phase is not reached, the market will experience a crisis or change, which may result in it sinking or disappearing. Meanwhile, if the market does not stabilize in an organized formation, it will return to the contraction phase.

In line with White's argument, Aspers believes that interaction between actors entails exchanges of identities, especially when triggered by the need for control (2011). According to Simmel, such an exercise of power indicates rivalry among stakeholders in the market, creating a visible struggle (Schützeichel 2013). Struggles in the market are not only related to trading activities (bargaining) (Marshall 2013) but also related to the culture where the market is located. As much as being neutral, culture can also facilitate or hinder market development (Swedberg 2010).

Research on markets in Minangkabau society has not been extensive. Among the few are studies by Effendi (2005) on the system, role, and function of the Minangkabau traditional market, Zuzmelia et al. (2007) on the resilience of the Minangkabau market in cinnamon trading, and Damsar (2017) on the socio-cultural construction of the market. Meanwhile, research on the formation of a flea market in the Minangkabau community has never been conducted. This paper intends to fill the gap.

Referring to Aspers' idea about market formation, the question in this study is whether the idea holds in the context of a flea market.

Furthermore, considering Swedberg's idea about a culture that can facilitate or complicate market development, the questions are 1) what cultural barriers exist at the orientation stage of flea market formation? 2) what socio-cultural processes remove these cultural barriers in the contraction stage? 3) whether Minangkabau cultural items facilitate or expedite market cohesion that leads to stabilization? and 4) what roles does the state play in forming flea markets?

These questions are answered through field research in one of the Minangkabau communities (Effendi 2005), which happens to be highly entrepreneurial. The field research was conducted at the Bukittinggi flea market. Bukittinggi was chosen because it has the largest flea market in West Sumatra Province. The research was conducted through a qualitative approach, with data collected from observations and interviews. Fourteen (14) informants participated in this study: four traders, seven visitors, and three flea market managers. The participants were selected randomly. They were approached at the research site and were willing to be interviewed. Meanwhile, the observations were conducted regularly at the flea market to capture the real conditions and the conversations. The events observed include bargaining between traders and buyers, conversations between traders, and the buyers' behaviours.

This study's triangulation and data analysis refer to the model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The data analysis was carried out continuously until the data were exhausted and no new data or information was found. The stages of the analysis were data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification.

### The Culturally Constrained Orientation

The Bukittinggi flea market has existed since the Dutch colonial era. Traders sold secondhand goods bought from people who urgently needed money. Consumers' purchasing power was also low at that time. Since they could not afford to buy new things, secondhand goods became a better alternative. Even though the flea market has existed for a long while, the development was slow. Until the 1980s, there were only around five secondhand goods traders. In 1982, there were six secondhand traders, four traders at Pasar Lereng, one at Pasar Bawah, and another in front of the Lima Hotel. These are the expressions of the informants.

"I have been trading used goods since 1994; the results are enough to make a living, including my children's college." (T1: a trader)

"In the past, people were reluctant to go to this market, but since the monetary crisis, many buyers have come to this market." (T1: a trader)

Another informant said:

"In the past, people did not call it a flea market because there were only a few sellers, and the space was limited. Because of this condition, there is no need for special management and task manager to organize the seller." (M1: market manager)

It could be argued that the actors' orientation toward the Bukittinggi flea market was beginning to grow since the monetary crisis. However, such orientations, especially among market visitors, could not be cultivated because of cultural barriers. The image of flea markets and secondhand goods has been negative, so people may not want to be associated with them. Some expressions of the informants proved this statement.

“We do sell used goods from Singapore and Hong Kong. People have a negative view of used goods and don’t want to look at them, let alone buy them. They are ashamed once people know that they wear used clothing.” (T3: trader)

Other informant said related to the change in the image of used goods:

“In the past, we called the items that were sold as *rombengan*,<sup>1</sup> but now many young people who came here called them boutiques. Of course, we are happy to hear that because our goods are compared to goods in stores (boutiques).” (V2)

Based on the statement above, it appears that the flea market among the Minangkabau people has experienced a shift in impression. Previously, flea markets were viewed negatively because they were associated with the poor. However, the current trend shows that flea markets are given a positive impression and become an alternative place to shop. Even in language, flea markets are called by very special terms, namely boutiques. Thus, the flea market has become a shopping choice among the Minangkabau people.

A flea market among Minangkabau community was stigmatized as “*pasa misikin*” (a market for the poor), so people avoided it. They did not want to be associated with poverty. Some even avoided crossing the street where a flea market was located. Even the lower middle class wanted to stay clear from the association, and so did the upper middle class. The image of poverty stuck until the 1980s. Only poor people were involved in flea markets, either as buyers of secondhand goods for consumption or as sellers of belongings because they urgently

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<sup>1</sup> Indonesian word meant items (clothing tools) that are old (used, junk); goods sold by junkmen; junk

needed money. It is stated by one of the flea market managers:

“Society’s association of flea markets with the poor discourages people from developing trading and buying flea goods. Maybe worry about being called poor.” (M3)

Aside from the image of poverty, the negative image of secondhand goods also became a cultural barrier. In the Minangkabau community, secondhand goods were known as “*rombengan*,” which had negative connotations, such as low quality, ragged, dull, and ugly. Therefore, when someone wanted to consume secondhand goods from a flea market, they bought them at discretion to avoid embarrassment. When they were known to consume secondhand goods, they gave the impression that the goods were not from a flea market, claiming them to be given by a relative or a family member. They felt less embarrassed using hand-me-down items their families gave them. Noticing the negative image, sellers tried to provide as much privacy as possible. They concealed the identities of buyers or traders (who sold their belongings to flea market sellers) to prevent them from being stigmatized. Sellers designed their outlets to be hidden from passersby.

Another barrier to the development of flea markets was the association of one’s belongings, such as clothes, bicycles, bags, etc., with privacy and self-identity. Therefore, selling one’s belongings was comparable to selling oneself. People avoided selling their belongings despite the need for money, which meant a low supply of secondhand goods. As such, the growth of flea markets was also slow. It is expressed by one of the visitors:

“In the past, people did not want to wear rags sold at flea markets because they saw

that the items were used by someone else, or had been used by someone else. They see it as inappropriate.” (V5)

It can be understood from Lury’s (2011) perspective, stating that privately owned objects have a social life and a historical value because it is related to a moment in one’s life. Objects have a pragmatic function, meaning, and symbol of social relationships because people can build relationships by exchanging objects.

The Lury’s statement (2011) is very relevant if it is reflected in the way the Minangkabau people view used objects sold at flea markets. They see that the objects in the market have been used by other people, so that the objects are associated with their owners. In a context like this, if other people use other people’s objects, then the user’s self-image becomes dissociated. The user of the item becomes someone else.

#### **The Flea Market Contraction: Overcoming Cultural Barriers**

In the early 1990s, the Bukittinggi City government relocated the flea market to Aur Tajungkang Market. The relocation boosted the number of traders to a dozen as the supply of goods increased substantially, especially from abroad, such as in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea. However, the increase in the number of traders and supply of goods was not followed by an increase in the number of buyers. Most of them were young people who looked for secondhand branded items from abroad.

Significant developments occurred in 1997 when Indonesia entered a recession due to the monetary and economic crisis, followed by a political and social crisis. Under this condition, the community adopted strategies to navigate

the crisis, such as minimizing expenses by purchasing goods from the flea market. Therefore, the demand for secondhand goods skyrocketed. With a high turnover, sellers could apply for financial support for trading activities at the flea market. New merchants emerged in the Pasar Bawah area, and the market became livelier. The surrounding areas became crowded, and the existing roads were congested. This situation prompted the city government to review market spatial planning, resulting in a decision to relocate the market to a wider area. The new flea market relocation area is the Pasar Atas area, starting—from around Pasar Lereng, which consists of Pasar Maco, Belakang Pasar, Pasar Putih, and Pasar Ikan—to Jenjang Empat Puluh area. In 1998, when the new area could no longer keep up with the growth of the flea market, the sellers asked the city government for permission to use the area around Pasar Wisata—an area between the road on the shopping side of Blok E (*Pasar Wisata*) and the parking area—as an extension of the flea market. The permit application was granted by the city government.

The number of traders grew rapidly during the economic crisis, which began with the monetary crisis in 1997. In the first year, the number of traders was estimated to have increased to 100 people. In 2001 there were about 150 traders on weekdays and around 200 people on ‘the market days’ (Wednesdays and Saturdays) and weekends (Sundays). The estimated total turnover at the Bukittinggi flea market on weekdays was around IDR 30 million, while on market days, it was around IDR 100 million. The peak was during the “*tanggal muda*” or in the week of salary disbursement, with turnover reaching IDR 150 million. Another peak was at the beginning of

the new school year, when traders of goods related to students' needs, such as school bags, increased dramatically.

Unlike the 1980s, this time, the increase in the number of traders was followed by an increase in the number of visitors. In 1995, the number of visitors was 50-100 daily. In 1998, it increased to approximately 1500-1750 per day. On the market days, Wednesdays and Saturdays, the number of visitors could reach 10,000. In 2001, it was estimated that the number of visitors to the Bukittinggi flea market at various locations was around 25,000-50,000 on market days. Meanwhile, on weekdays, it was around 10,000-15,000. These visitors come to the flea market for various purposes: getting a good bargain, sightseeing while shopping, purchasing branded items at low prices, etc.

The development of the Bukittinggi flea market is not only about the number of sellers and the increasing turnover but also in terms of quality, i.e., the merchants' specialization. At Pasar Putih, sellers specialize in bags, shoes, and hats. At Pasar Atas, Pasar Lereng and Belakang Pasar, sellers specialize in ties, dolls, belts, and clothing. Meanwhile, Pasar Aur Tajungkang specializes in refurbished and repackaged secondhand items which look like new items. The prices in this section are higher than the prices at Pasar Atas.

All the changes above were driven by redefining flea markets. In the 1990s, secondhand goods enthusiasts in West Sumatra, especially those searching for clothing and accessories, started to use the word "boutique" to refer to the flea market, which was associated with trading exclusive, luxury, and special items. One of visitors said:

"Five clothes in this market are the same price as one new clothes sold in Pasar Atas. People don't know that these clothes are rags, when they've been washed and ironed, they look like new clothes," (V6)

Another visitor of flea market stated:

"I am traveling to Bukittinggi not just for traveling, but I am also shopping for branded goods such as Lee, Eastpak, Jansport, Giordano, Polo, Guess, Hanes, Replay, DKNY, it's fun for me. Just imagine, getting the dream branded item found here, at a very low price, how happy." (V7)

It appears from the explanation above that there has been a change in the socio-cultural construction of the flea market. The change is a change from a negative image to a positive one. The use of the term boutique from the flea market is one proof of the socio-cultural reconstruction. Entertainment and tourism orientation is another new phenomenon (Hazlan, Ismail, and Jaafar 2019). Economic considerations to obtain branded goods but at low prices is another tendency in society. Thus, it can be concluded that the existence of a flea market has been reconstructed socio-culturally to become the chosen and targeted place

The social construction of a flea market into a boutique shifted the image of a flea market from negative to positive. The "poor market" image was socially reconstructed into a "boutique." This reconstruction was a form of a community strategy to handle the social stigmatization of buyers and sellers of secondhand goods. The prolonged monetary and economic crisis lowered the purchasing power of the lower middle class. Their spending allocation might not be prioritized for clothing but for other more pressing basic needs. They compromised with the situation by adopting the alternative: secondhand clothing. This economic motivation,



combined with the changes and expansion of the flea market, provides a leeway to tear down the cultural barriers. The community's redefinition of the flea market as a problem-solving strategy had succeeded in changing the image and driving the development.

The actors actively involved in the redefinition of the flea market were the young generation interested in lifestyle and fashion. They constructed the definition by using the term "boutique" in their daily conversations. They were proud to wear clothes and accessories that look luxurious, vintage, and fashionable and admitted that they bought them from the "boutique," which meant the flea market. In an economic crisis, young people still paid attention to fashion, even if it means purchasing secondhand goods from the "boutique." This trend caught on, and the older generation imitated what had been socially constructed by the youth.

The redefinition of the flea market removed the cultural barriers to development. As stigmatization disappeared or was minimized, people were no longer ashamed to purchase flea markets items. Through the social construction of the meaning of the flea market, they form an impression that the clothes and accessories they wear are luxurious, trendy, and vintage.

The new meaning of the flea market removed the barriers that prevent people from entering and leaving the flea market. Without the stigma, "good for use" items offered at the flea market no longer had a negative connotation. The community was rendered by the socio-cultural burden when they wanted to purchase the items. This positive meaning has made consumers of secondhand items have a positive image of themselves, i.e., consumers of boutique goods. They associated themselves as

a group of actual boutique goods users. In other words, the social construction of the meaning of the flea market has eliminated the poverty association attached to the flea market visitors.

The image of secondhand goods as "*rombengan*," which are ragged and low quality, was lifted along with the social reconstruction of the flea market. The flea market goods were then considered vintage, trendy, fashionable, and exclusive. This redefinition removes the stigma of used goods. Users even felt they were part of the luxury fashion world (Damsar 2017).

Likewise, the image of consumer goods as personal items was also shifted. It was no longer seen as an identity and representation of self but viewed as a commodity. With this removal of cultural barriers, selling personal belongings became easier. The members of society, especially those from the lower layer, who needed money urgently, could sell their items without having to bear the social burden. This trading in the flea market could be a solution to the financial problems they were facing.

Likewise, upper-middle-class members could sell their belongings at the flea market. They might have different purposes, for example, to relieve the storage space instead of to gain economic benefit, but the process would be the same, i.e., without the social stigma. This contribution by the upper-middle-class group can also reconstruct the meaning of personal belongings and redefine the situation and social conditions associated with an item. Due to the limited storage, one's items are sold, which makes selling goods pragmatic and non-personal. In other words, consumer goods' meanings were shifted. An item could function not only as part of one's self-identity but also as a commodity that could be traded in the market.

This social construction has changed the meaning of certain personal items into something neutral, especially household items and collectives such as magazines, batteries, and tires. As an item has a neutral meaning, personalization is no longer attached to second-hand goods. Therefore, these used goods have developed into commodities that sell well in the flea market, with no more questions of self-identity.

However, goods that are worn, such as clothes, ties, footwear, accessories, and others, remain hard to sell. The prices of worn items sold to flea market sellers are meagre. If not in dire need of money, people hardly sold their personal worn belongings to the flea market. Meanwhile, the upper middle class rarely did that.

Thus, this study corroborates the findings by Damsar and Indrayani (2016) and Storr (2010), stating that markets are socially constructed.

### **The Flea Market Cohesion**

The cultural barriers that existed during the orientation period of the flea market formation were removed through various social processes, such as the social construction of flea markets as “boutiques” and the social construction of secondhand items as boutique items during the contraction period. With the removal of cultural barriers, stigmatization disappears. Visitors to the flea market became more varied, including professionals such as lawyers, civil servants, police, local legislative members, and soldiers.

The flea market cohesion is strengthened through various activities that preserve the Minangkabau traditions: bargaining and “*rancak di labuah*.” First, bargaining is an integral part of the Minangkabau culture. All goods in Bukittinggi could be even cheaper with

a good hagggle. This is common knowledge shared by anyone who has been to the market. Most people who shop at Bukittinggi feel dissatisfied if they do not try bargaining. Therefore, bargaining is one element of satisfaction in the transactions for buyers. From this point of view, bargaining can be seen as a market culture in Minangkabau. Even though the merchants at the flea market have set an average price for their items, buyers will still bargain. From the perspective of Geertz (2018), bargaining is a clue to the existence of asymmetric information between sellers and buyers, which keeps buyers uninformed about the fair price. Therefore, buyers try various ways and bargaining strategies to secure the best deal. Therefore, in a modern market society, every item to be sold must be given a price tag because the availability of information on an item is a consumer right that must be respected. With the information, the buyer knows the limits of their power.

There were several strategies to bargain at the Bukittinggi flea market. The first was to refer to past purchases for comparisons. Past experiences or even referring to someone else’s experiences, which show a lower price, could be used as a strategy to bargain with a seller at the flea market. The second is by showing all the money. When a seller offers an item for a certain price, the buyer bargains by showing all the money left in their pocket. A buyer used this strategy to purchase the item at a lower price, even though that might not be the only amount of money left. The third is by pledging to be a loyal customer, a common method to create a patron-client relationship in an equal sense. Geertz (2018) also found this phenomenon as a strategy to reduce asymmetric information. The fourth is by persevering in the bidding and gradually increasing the bid prices. Then, a

buyer would state the last bid and offer the seller to either take it or find another buyer.

The second tradition is maintaining the image of *"rancak di labuah."* This essentially means personal branding to portray a high-end lifestyle. One cannot consume above the means without sufficient resources, so they solve this by buying fake or secondhand branded items. This image is known in Minangkabau society as *"rancak di labuah."* According to Gerke (Damsar 2017), this is symbolic consumption. The middle class, especially the lower group, cannot afford branded items, so they consume them symbolically through the consumption of the meaning attached to the brands. For example, they buy branded goods that are not authentic (copyright) or branded goods but secondhand purchased at flea markets. Around 130 clothing brands were estimated to be circulating at the Bukittinggi flea market. Almost all world-famous company brands can be found, such as Quick Silver, Ocean Pacific, Polo, Ovieta, Arrow, Reebok, Guess, Elle, Replay, Adidas, Hanes, Nike, Eastpak, Ellesse, Dunhill, Billabong, Levi's, Lee, Giordano, DKNY, Starter, Jansport. There was also designer clothing, such as Giant Franco Ferre, Pierre Cardin, Gianni Versace, Calvin Klein, etc.

As mentioned above, these branded goods are consumed to elevate the consumer's social standing, as the brand becomes a symbol of wealth. For example, a buyer would buy the "501" brand made in the USA. Most of these consumers are young people who live in cities such as Padang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh. They buy brands cheaply at flea markets to improve their image in the eyes of the public. Aside from teenagers and students, civil servants might also consume famous brands as

they perceive them as symbols of certain images. One of informant said:

"For me going and buying any items in flea market is joyful. I can get many branded items in a very cheap price." (V1)

Cultural continuity occurs through bargaining and *"rancak di labuah"* self-image. This finding shows how a tradition is maintained or perpetuated in a community, especially the Minangkabau community. Continuity of tradition allows a society to remain relevant and survive in the modern world and rampant globalization. Cultural continuity also maintains cultural diversity. This is what is often overlooked by many modernization researchers, where tradition is seen as ugly and morally wrong (Kato 2005; Naim 2013).

The continuity of Minangkabau culture at the flea market supports the formation of a flea market cohesiveness, where buyers and sellers carry out economic activities that go hand-in-hand with socio-cultural activities. The flea market is no different from other markets in Bukittinggi, such as Pasar Atas, Pasar Wisata, and Pasar Maco. The stage of flea market cohesion is maintained even though the supply of secondhand goods has been greatly reduced at the Bukittinggi flea market.

#### **The Contribution of Civil Society, Markets, and the State**

The establishment of the Bukittinggi flea market involved the role of the markets, civil society, and the state. The demand for secondhand goods encourages the supply of these commodities. The demand and supply mechanism encourages the formation of a flea market. Through a complex set of exchanges,

the economic activities among people who are distant and unaware of each other's existence can be regulated. Price is the key to this mechanism, known as a self-regulating market.

Meanwhile, the market's role in forming a flea market is only limited to delivering its presence in the community. However, the acceptance of the flea market occurs through the civil society movement, which creates socio-cultural initiatives such as the social reconstruction and redefinition of the meaning of flea markets and secondhand goods. Meanwhile, the state's role in structuring the locations and providing new buildings for expanding the flea market is a form of economic empowerment for small traders. The state's role through the policy of the Bukittinggi city government is important in boosting the city's economy. The flea market has also become a tourist destination. People come to the city to visit the Bukittinggi flea market.

The formation of the Bukittinggi flea market undergoes three stages of development as proposed by Aspers, namely orientation, contraction, and cohesion. This research concludes that the formation of the flea market at Bukittinggi is neither spontaneous market-making nor state-managed market-making nor self-managed market-making. The state's role is essential in addition to the role of the socio-cultural economy of the community in moving the flea market as an economic institution in society, especially in the contraction phase. It could be concluded that the market formation in Bukittinggi is a mix of state-managed and self-managed market-making. This hybrid type can be called mix-governed market making, namely the formation of markets driven by traders, visitors, and the state's involvement.

## Conclusion

The flea market is formed through three stages: orientation, contraction, and cohesion. At the orientation stage, cultural barriers appear in the form of stigma associating the flea market with being poor and secondhand goods with rags. In addition, the meaning of personal items as part of self-identity is also a barrier to the development of a flea market. These cultural barriers are removed through social construction and redefinition at the contraction stage. This includes the shifts in the meaning of flea markets to become boutiques, secondhand goods to become boutique goods, and secondhand goods as neutral objects with no personal meaning attached to them. The contraction phase was strengthened by the state's role through the relocation of the flea market to a more strategic and wider location. The flea market's cohesion is fostered through a bargaining tradition and a "rancak di labuah" image.

The policy implication of this research is that the city government should not immediately close an emerging marketplace for reasons of damaging the city's beauty, order, and security. On the other hand, it is necessary to study whether an emerging economic phenomenon can be developed through policy intervention. In addition, this research provides an idea about the need for a research agenda on market formation in urban areas such as the makeshift market or "pasar kaget," a market that appears only a few hours in the morning or at night; or the weekly market, a market that appears once a week in a middle-class residential area.[]

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