

SOSIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF STREET BOOK VENDORS IN THE KWITANG BOOK MARKET 2002 – 2008

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the socio-economic conditions of street vendors in the Kwitang Book Market in the period from 2002 to 2008. The purpose of this research is to find out in depth the development of the used book trade, socio-economic dynamics, and identification related to the regulation that occurs in the Kwitang Book Market. The type of method used in this study is the historical method. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, archival tracing and media reports compared with literature reviews. This study shows that the Kwitang Book Market has experienced an increase in economic activity influenced by location, transportation, and developing popular culture. The social dynamics that occur between street vendors at the Kwitang Book Market are characterized by the close relationship between traders who form social capital to support the sustainability of their businesses. The dynamics that occurred must stop when the government implemented a control policy to restore sidewalks as green open spaces. This of course has a significant impact on traders who have to give up their livelihoods.

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INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic dynamics refers to the form of changes that occur in the social life of the community in a wide range that are influenced by economic factors including income, growth, and economic change. According to Syani, 2002 Socio-economic are the position or status of a person in a human group determined by the type of economic activity, income, type of residence, and position in the organization. Socio-economic dynamics, in other words, everything related to the fulfillment of needs in society (Zunaidi, 2013). In history, socioeconomic dynamics can be interpreted as the process of change that occurs in social and economic life over time. These changes include patterns of social relations, class structure, livelihoods, and the way people meet their living needs.

The Kwitang Book Market is a collection of street vendors who sell used books as their merchandise, these traders generally open kiosk or semi-permanent stalls along Jalan Kwitang. Kwitang is the name of a sub – district located in Senen District, Central Jakarta. Kwitang in the historical context is one of the important areas in the development of the city of Jakarta, especially in the economic and transportation sectors of Jakarta. Its strategic

location makes Kwitang to rapidly grow into a bustling center for used books, attracting visitors from various segments of society (Shahab, 2009).

The emergence of the book trade in Kwitang can be traced back to the establishment of the Gunung Agung Bookstore in 1953 by a Chinese descendant named Tjio Wie Tay (later known as Haji Masagung). Bookstore that was originally named *Thaysan Kongsy* was located in the Senen area before being moved to Kwitang and renamed Gunung Agung Bookstore. From there, many other bookstores opened around Kwitang. Until the 1980s, Kwitang was known as the Book Market. The uniqueness of the Kwitang Book Market is that it sells used books and *old* books that are no longer in print (Permadi, 2007). Various types of books are displayed, including textbooks, novels, comics, and others. The books offered are also priced relatively cheaply, so many students or book lovers come to buy the books they want. Over time, Kwitang has not only functioned as an economic transaction space but also as a place for exchanging knowledge and social interaction. (Alkatiri, 2012)

The existence of Kwitang Market soared through one of the scenes in the lyrical film "*Ada Apa Dalam Cinta*" in 2002. The popularity of this film among young people made the Kwitang Book Market, which was previously only crowded when the new school year was starting to be crowded with young people to see firsthand the existence of the Kwitang Market. Gradually, this became a popular cultural phenomenon that led to an increase in the number of visitors, forming a social network. This increase in visitors certainly had an impact on the economy of the traders at Kwitang Book Market, particularly in terms of increasing their income. However, on the other hand, the increase in visitors caused new problems around Kwitang Street. The presence of traders' stalls and visitors filling the sidewalks of Kwitang Street, coupled with inadequate parking facilities, meant that Kwitang Book Market was considered to be disrupting traffic along the street.

The book sellers in 2008 had to accept the harsh reality, because the Jakarta Provincial Government regulated street vendors who were considered to be disrupting community activities. In order to create public order, neatness and cleanliness of the city, Local Regulation No. 8 of 2007 concerning Public Order was issued. It was recorded that 35% of the victims of the control carried out during 2007-2008 were street vendors. The crackdown was carried out by destroying or dismantling kiosks or stalls that were considered to be disturbing public order. (Suhardin, 2009)

The years 2002 – 2008 were an important period in the development of the Kwitang Book Market. The number of visitors to the Kwitang Book Market at that time increased along with the development of transportation facilities in Jakarta which made it easier for people to get to the area. The popularity of the Kwitang Book Market is not only due to infrastructure factors, but also influenced by the appearance of the film "*Ada Apa Dalam Cinta*" (2002) which has a direct impact on transaction activities in this market, both in terms of traders who are increasingly crowding the Kwitang area and the wide diversity of visitors. The crowd at the Kwitang Book Market at the end of the period began to receive the government's attention to the urban spatial arrangement which also affected the sustainability of street vendors' activities, as well as marking the socio-economic dynamics of the kwitang book market at that time.

The problem in this study is the socioeconomic conditions of street book vendors in Kwitang Book Market and the impact of Local Regulation No. 8 of 2007 Order. Based on these issues, the objectives of this study are to gain an in-depth understanding of the developments that have taken place at Kwitang Book Market, to understand the socioeconomic dynamics of secondhand book vendors in Kwitang, and to examine the crackdown that has occurred in this area. The author hopes that this study will be useful in writing local social history, particularly historical studies on the dynamics of the city of Jakarta, as well as providing additional information to the people of Jakarta.

METHOD

This research uses a form of historical qualitative research with a History research method. The Historical Method can be defined as a systematic collection of principles and rules intended to assist effectively in the collection of historical sources, in critically assessing or testing those sources, and presenting a "synthesis" (generally in written form) of the results achieved (Garraghan, 1957). In other words, historical methods are a system of correct ways to achieve historical truth (Wasino & Hartatik, 2018). The historical method includes several main stages, namely heuristic, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography.

Heuristic or data source collection is carried out by direct observation of the location of the Kwitang Book Market in the past. Interviews were also conducted in a semi-structured manner to book traders who still settled around

Jalan Kwitang Raya and book traders who had moved to Blok M Square to find out what dynamics happened there during the period from 2002 to 2008. The literature review is mainly shown in the literature on the used book market, socio-economic conditions in Jakarta, and street vendors in the Kwitang area of Central Jakarta. Data collection is also supported by documentation in the form of photos, voice recorders, notes related to the Kwitang Book Market during the observation process.

Source criticism is carried out to test the validity of the data sources that have been collected so that the data source can be held accountable. Information obtained either through observation, interviews or literature review is criticized by comparing the three data sources to see similarities between the three. Sources that have been criticized are then interpreted to reveal facts, determine the meaning, and relationships between the facts found so that a common thread can be drawn. These three techniques are used in an integrated manner and complement each other. The last stage is historiography, which is reconstructing data sources that have been criticized and interpreted and then compiled into a series of historical events.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

The Condition of the Kwitang Book Market

The Kwitang Book Market is located in Jalan Kwitang, Kwitang Village, Senen District, Central Jakarta City. According to Trijono, 2018 The Senen area has been the trading heart of the capital since the 20th century. Several large and famous shops stand along Jalan Kramat Bunder, Jalan Kramat Raya, Jalan Kwitang, and Jalan Senen Raya. The Kwitang Book Market is actually not a traditional market with a collection of street vendors who sell used books and set up semi-permanent stalls and emroles along Jalan Kwitang. The existence of the Kwitang Book Market cannot be separated from the emergence of the Gunung Agung bookstore in Kwitang in 1953. The success of the Gunung Agung bookstore and the high need for reading encouraged the emergence of similar stores in several areas of Jakarta. Book merchants began to appear along the sidewalk of Jalan Kwitang in the late 1960s. It is different from the Gunung Agung store or other conventional bookstores that sell new books and stationery and have a store with adequate employees. The traders at the Kwitang Book Market actually sell with simple stalls and makeshift equipment, they sell used books as traded goods. At first there were only a few used book traders around Jalan Kwitang but gradually the existence of these used book traders increased every day until it reached approximately 300 traders who peddled their trade books along the road. The crowd of used book traders in this area makes Kwitang finally known as the Book Market. (Priyanto, 2017)

The Kwitang market makes books the main product of the traders in this market. For traders at the Kwitang Book Market, used books that are often considered garbage and worthless actually provide considerable benefits and profits to them. Moreover, if the book is classified as a "rare" book, then its value can increase significantly and even to tens to hundreds of times the price of the acquisition. Traders get their books through various ways, generally they get books from publishers whose books have been withdrawn from conventional bookstores, these books are sold by kilos, so they cannot be bought individually. Merchants also get an abundance of books from government projects, used books from collectors, and from visitors who sell their used books. New printed or pirated books are also sold by some traders in their stalls but used books remain the main merchandise. Various types of books are traded at the Kwitang Book Market ranging from novels, comics, school and college textbooks, religious books, to old magazines and newspapers. These used books still have an inexhaustible selling value and still have informative scientific value that can be used as a scientific reference or entertainment for collectors (Ngadiyo, 2019)

Street vendors in the Kwitang Book Market price their trade books at prices far below the market of budar shops. Books that have not sold for a long time are generally sold at a price of Rp. 5,000 to Rp. 10,000, while books that are still in great demand have prices that vary according to the condition and rarity of the book. Bargaining is also common between traders and buyers in this market, they also often exchange information about the contents of the books being sold. The number of visitors who regularly visit the Kwitang Market such as mahasasiwa and researchers makes the relationship between traders and buyers develop into subscriptions who regularly come to certain stalls. In addition, book enthusiasts also often look for old books or those that are no longer in print at the Kwitang Book Market.

Kwitang Book Market experienced its heyday in the early 2000s, at that time the mode of transportation in Jakarta began to develop making many public transportation stop on Jalan Kwitang making it easier for buyers to get to this area. A popular teen film titled "*Ada Apa Dalam Cinta*" which was released in 2002 featured the Kwitang Book Market as one of the settings. The presence of this film then brought the influence of popular culture to the younger generation to step foot in the Kwitang Book Market. The film *Ada Apa Dalam Cinta* has a great influence on the crowded buyers at the Kwitang Book Market, various generations visit this location to look for used literary books, as depicted in the film. *There is Apa With Love* has a great influence in improving the image of Kwitang as a used book market as well as adding to the attractiveness of this area as a space for the development of socio-economic interaction in Jakarta.

Socio-Economic Conditions of Street Vendors in Kwitang Book Market

Street vendors are a form of informal sector trade activity, namely a small-scale business unit that has no legal status, is family-based, carried out by and for the lower-middle class, and does not require any special skills (Triyono, 2018). Street vendors are individuals or groups who conduct business activities using public places or facilities (Keban, 2004). According to Permadi, street vendors are traders who use small capital and simple equipment and utilize public facilities such as sidewalks or other open spaces as a means of trading. The term "kaki lima" (five feet) originates from Dutch regulations requiring every highway to have a pedestrian facility called a sidewalk, which is five feet wide or approximately 1.5 meters.

The existence of street vendors has an important role to welcome the urban economy because they provide economic access that is relatively easy to reach for various groups of people, especially the lower middle class, both as traders and buyers. In Bromley's opinion, street vendors can generally be found in all sectors of the city, especially the most profitable areas in the city centre, thus attracting a large number of visitors. Therefore, most street vendors tend to choose trading locations in areas with high community activity such as markets, stations, terminals, bus stops and tourist attractions. Moreover, the location of the Kwitang Book Market is near stations, bus stops, and shopping centers. The Kwitang Book Market, which is located in the middle of the city, illustrates the economic strategy of book traders in utilizing the mobility of urban communities to increase transaction opportunities. The existence of street vendors, in addition to being a provider of goods and services at affordable prices, is also part of urban social dynamics that show the reciprocal relationship between the economic needs of the community and urban spatial planning policies. (Manning & Effendi, 1996)

The activities of street vendors at the Kwitang Book Market specifically focus on the book trade, especially used books which are the main commodity in supporting the economic life of traders. A book according to KBBI can be interpreted as a sheet of paper with volumes in which it contains writing or blanks. Used books are books that have been owned by other parties that have been reused in imperfect conditions. A book merchant is an individual who sells reading materials in the form of books to the public to obtain finance. Second-hand book traders in this context are present as part of trade activities that reuse books that have been used, they provide a source of printed information that can be purchased and owned by the public at affordable prices through these activities. (Djuanta, 2009).

The economic crisis and the limited employment in the formal sector have encouraged some people to depend on the informal sector for their livelihoods and create new job opportunities, including book trading. This condition can be clearly seen from the existence of book traders in the Kwitang Book Market, where most of the traders in this area are people who migrate from various areas outside Jakarta such as West Sumatra, North Sumatra, and a number of areas on the island of Java who come to the capital city in the hope of getting a better life. Traders at the Kwitang Book Market partly run their trading business in a downward and downward manner, making this trading activity a strategy for their family's economic sustainability.

The social dynamics of book sellers at the Kwitang Book Market in practice are characterized by the formation of relatively strong relationships between fellow traders, this is based on the principles of kinship, mutual cooperation, and mutual trust. These values are the key in building a social network so that later it can develop into social capital. This social capital plays a big role in supporting the economic stability of traders who support business continuity (Putnam, 2000). This condition specifically plays a role in the exchange of information and access to certain books that are not always available in one stall. Through cooperation between traders, traders are able to meet buyers'

demands effectively. The social capital of traders in the Kwitang Book Market shows diverse and complex characteristics in supporting the sustainability of the market.

The socio-economic dynamics of street vendors at the Kwitang Book Market show that the linkages of the informal sector are able to survive and develop through a combination of Economic Strategies, Social Networks, and Social Capital built by traders in the market. Book trading activities are not only the main source of livelihood for traders, but also reflect an economic pattern that is based on cooperation and sustainability, so that competition between traders is established in a healthy manner even though competition for buyers remains.

Regulation of Street Book Vendors at Kwitang Book Market

The existence of street vendors at the Kwitang Book Market has a positive impact, both in terms of social and economic. Economic activities that take place in the Kwitang area pose another problem that is certainly undeniable, because street vendors in the area do not have business legality and occupy public spaces such as sidewalks. Sidewalks, in addition to being able to provide positive value as well as added value, but on the other hand, they can also provide negative value and cause disruption to the main function of the sidewalk, namely as a bookkeeping facility (Game, 2022). Traders at the Kwitang Book Market in this context make it easier for people from various walks of life to obtain books at affordable prices and open up new job opportunities in the informal sector which contributes to improving the economy of the city of Jakarta. This trade practice still poses a dilemma because the existence of the Kwitang Book Market is considered to disrupt the road and is one of the causes of congestion due to the use of almost half of the road (Priyanto, 2017)

The control and eviction carried out by the local government of DKI Jakarta in order to restore the function of the sidewalk as a green open space marked by the issuance of DKI Jakarta Provincial Regulation Number 8 of 2007 concerning Public Order which basically regulates the existence of street vendors in the arrangement of public spaces by the local government. The government recognizes the activities of street vendors, because it can improve the welfare of the people around them. The government through the authority of the Governor has determined locations that are allowed for business activities. Through DKI Jakarta Provincial Regulation Number 8 of 2007 concerning Public Order, it establishes place/location of street vendors and also controls the order of street vendors, thus this regulation explains the regulation policy in addition to controlling the use of public facilities for the sake of order and urban planning, as well as being a legal basis for local governments in organizing and regulating street vendors.

DKI Jakarta Provincial Regulation Number 8 of 2007 concerning Public Order, has a significant impact on the book trade in Kwitang Book Market, The street vendors in this area have to accept the harsh reality when their place of fortune scavenger hunt has to be evicted. The control of street vendor stalls at the Kwitang Book Market began on August 20, 2008, where some traders dismantled the stalls where they sold themselves (Aribowo, 2008). On August 21, 2008, precisely the next day, dozens of Tramtib officers continued the eviction of stalls that had not been dismantled. This demolition was carried out in a simple way using makeshift equipment and was done easily considering that the stalls were only made of wood as support. As a result of this eviction, about 270 traders had to lose their income. (Win, 2008)

The government has provided an alternative location to overcome the problems caused by the regulation, namely by providing an alternative location at Pasar Senen Blok 1 Lt. 4. Some traders are reluctant to be relocated to the location because they think the location is not strategic. Traders who were not willing to be relocated to Pasar Senen then spread to various other locations such as Pasar Kenari, Tanah Abang, Thamrin City, and mostly occupied the lower floors of Blok M Square. Some other traders choose to settle in the Kwitang area by renting shops, as a result of which traders who choose to relocate or move to other locations experience a drastic decrease in income compared to when they were still selling at the Kwitang Book Market. The loss of Kwitang Book Market activities does not erase the existence of the Kwitang name in the collective memory of the community as a Used Book Market in Jakarta.

CONCLUSION

The Kwitang Book Market is one of the centers for the used book trade that has a great influence on the social, economic, and cultural development of the people of Jakarta. Its presence not only facilitates access to cheap

reading for various groups of people, but also creates a space for social interaction. The Kwitang Book Market experienced an important period marked by an increase in the number of traders and visitors in 2002 – 2008. The strategic location, the development of transportation facilities, and the influence of popular culture through the film *Ada Apa Dalam Cinta* are the main factors in the increase in economic activities and social networks that develop in the region.

Socially and economically, street book vendors at the Kwitang Book Market represent the urban informal sector that survives through small capital, the use of public space, and the strengthening of social capital. Book trading activities that utilize sidewalks and road bodies are considered to interfere with the original function of public facilities and traffic, thus encouraging the government to carry out control based on Regional Regulation Number 8 of 2007 concerning Public Order has a significant impact on the socio-economic life of traders. The impact of this regulation is marked by the loss of business space, decreased income, and the division of the merchant community into various locations that are considered unstrategic.

The dynamics of street book vendors at the Kwitang Book Market thus show that street vendors have an important role in urban socio-economic life, as well as being vulnerable to policy changes. The Kwitang Book Market physically no longer exists and is not the only Book Market in Jakarta, but the Kwitang Book Market has been inherent in the collective memory of the masses as a used book center that provides various types of books in it.

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