

# Fish Traders' Attachment Patterns in Traditional Markets: A Case Study from Nanggalo District, Padang City, Indonesia

Gebi Cahyani Lubis<sup>1</sup>, Irwan Irwan<sup>2</sup>, Latifah Izzatul Jannah<sup>1</sup>, Anggun Amelia<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Sociology Education, Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Master's Program in Humanities Studies, Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat.  
e-mail: [irwan7001@gmail.com](mailto:irwan7001@gmail.com)

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Attachment Patterns, Collaborative Relationships, Fish Traders, Traditional Markets, Social Networks</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> <a href="http://doi.org/10.22437/jssh.v9i1.23155">http://doi.org/10.22437/jssh.v9i1.23155</a></p> <p><b>Received:</b> Januari 23, 2025</p> <p><b>Reviewed:</b> May 22, 2025</p> <p><b>Accepted:</b> Juni 02, 2025</p>	<p><i>This study investigates the attachment patterns of fish traders in traditional markets, focusing on Nanggalo District, Padang City, Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Purposive sampling was used to select research informants, who are fish traders with varying levels of attachment. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the presence of fish traders in traditional markets is strongly influenced by collaborative relationships between traders during the fish procurement process. This collaboration is characterized by interactions between large agents, small agents, and traders, forming a network of trust. Over time, these interactions evolved from initial mutual acquaintance to a system of credit and installment-based transactions, allowing traders to take fish on credit. The attachment among traders is marked by this trust and a shift from initial exchange relationships to more flexible, long-term trading arrangements.</i></p>

## 1. Introduction

Markets serve as vital spaces where buyers and sellers meet, facilitating not only economic transactions but also the creation of social dynamics that bind individuals through their interactions (Perren & Kozinets, 2018; Di & Yibo, 2024; Rana et al., 2024). These interactions are integral to forming and maintaining social relationships, which are fundamental to the operation of any economic system (Rosalina, 2017; Zusmelia et al., 2022; Irwan et al., 2022). As key economic institutions, markets play a crucial role in shaping the economic landscape of a society (Jraisat et al., 2021; Xiaohui et al., 2022; Challoumis, 2024). The buying and selling process involves not only the exchange of goods and services for money, but also the negotiation of terms—particularly prices, which is central to market transactions (Putri & Hidayat, 2019; Bathelt & Henn, 2021; Morlin, 2023; Christin & Lu, 2023). In traditional markets, price negotiation is a defining feature, where the prices of goods are not fixed, and buyers have the opportunity to bargain, creating a dynamic market environment (Algarvio, 2021; Lawrance et al., 2021; Ahearne et al., 2022).

Subhani et al. (2021) outline several characteristics of traditional markets, including: (1) Negotiation of prices; (2) Availability of basic goods; (3) Lower prices compared to modern retail; and (4) An open, bustling atmosphere. These markets are often crowded and full of activity, where buyers and sellers engage in frequent interactions, with buyers moving between vendors seeking the best deals, further stimulating social interactions and relationships (Rachma, 2018; Georgewill, 2021; Jaipong & Siripipatthanakul, 2023; Chew et al., 2024).

Additionally, traditional markets have the unique ability to transcend social hierarchies, enabling unrestricted interactions between buyers and sellers from diverse backgrounds (Dwivedi et al., 2022; Li & Chen, 2022; Saturnino et al., 2023; Morepje et al., 2024). Transactions in these settings are not merely economic exchanges but often serve as the foundation for building social bonds that extend beyond the act of buying and selling (Warren & Gibson, 2021; Peneder, 2022; Aspers & Darr, 2022; Ørmen & Gregersen, 2022). In Nanggalo District of Padang City, these social bonds are especially evident among fish traders, whose relationships with suppliers and buyers go beyond mere trade transactions to encompass social networks that influence both their economic activities and social life.

The Nanggalo Traditional Market, established in 1986 and covering an area of 2,172.50 hectares, currently hosts around 397 vendors, including 59 shopkeepers, 140 stone-table vendors, 32 fish stalls, 16 chicken stalls, and 150 street vendors. Beyond being an economic hub, the market is also a site where social networks and attachments among traders, particularly fish vendors, are formed (Kim, 2023; Jament & Osella, 2024). These networks are instrumental in shaping the market's economic dynamics (Fåhraeus, 2024).

Granovetter's (1985) concept of social attachment provides a framework for understanding the economic behavior of individuals within social relationships. According to Granovetter, attachment is a key component of economic action, deeply embedded in the social networks through which economic transactions occur. Granovetter distinguishes between two forms of attachment: relational attachment, which is influenced by social norms and personal relationships, and structural attachment, which pertains to broader social networks and institutions that influence individual behavior (Damsar, 2013; Rasda, 2021; Raut, 2022). In traditional markets, the attachment between traders and their suppliers or buyers is not limited to transactional exchanges but is grounded in mutual trust and the ongoing social relationships that develop between actors (Laha, 2022; Razak et al., 2024). In Nanggalo Market, fish traders demonstrate this through their interactions with auction sites (TPI) and their fellow traders, cultivating social bonds that facilitate trade and enhance economic cooperation.

While previous studies have explored various aspects of traditional markets, there is a notable gap in research concerning the specific attachment patterns among fish traders. For instance, Rosalina (2017) examined the role of social ties in market transactions but did not focus on the unique attachment mechanisms within fish trade. Zusmelia et al. (2022) studied social networks in rural markets, yet their analysis did not account for the complex relationship dynamics between fish traders and their suppliers. Irwan et al. (2022) explored social behaviors in traditional markets, but they did not investigate the role of trust in shaping fish traders' economic interactions. Rahim & Asrahmaulyana (2021) focused on the broader economic impacts of market dynamics without delving into the specific social attachments between traders. Subhani et al. (2021) analyzed traditional market structures but did not consider the attachment patterns influencing market exchanges.

The research gap identified here underscores the need to investigate the specific attachment patterns among fish traders at Nanggalo Traditional Market. This study aims to address this gap by examining how fish traders form, maintain, and utilize social relationships through their interactions with suppliers, buyers, and fellow traders. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on social attachment mechanisms within the fish trade context, an area that has been largely overlooked in previous research. By exploring these dynamics, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of social networks in traditional market settings, specifically in the context of fish trade, and highlights how social attachments influence economic behavior in such environments.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Role of Social Attachment in Economic Transactions in Traditional Markets**

Social attachment plays a pivotal role in shaping economic behavior, particularly in traditional market environments where relationships between traders and customers are strongly influenced by personal networks. Granovetter's (1985) seminal work on social networks demonstrates the significance of social ties in economic decisions, distinguishing between relational attachments, which reflects close-knit, personal relationships, and structural attachment, referring to broader, more institutionalized social networks. Research by Rosalina (2017) and Zusmelia et al. (2022) further underlines that in traditional market settings, social attachment is not merely incidental but integral to the economic dynamics. In these markets, interactions are based on trust and familiarity, where price negotiations are often influenced by the social proximity between buyers and sellers rather than fixed market prices (Warren & Gibson, 2021). As pointed out by Jraisat et al. (2021), the absence of formal regulations in these markets often amplifies the significance of personal relationships, with individuals relying heavily on social ties to ensure trustworthiness and transaction security.

Beyond individual transactions, social attachment within traditional markets forms complex networks that contribute to the economic stability and continuity of market operations. Fish traders, for instance, depend on these social networks to connect with suppliers, negotiate prices, and facilitate trade on flexible terms. Irwan et al. (2022) suggest that, for fish vendors in Nanggalo, these social networks are crucial for maintaining long-term business relationships, as they provide the foundation for informal credit systems and deferred payments. This relational bond creates a network of mutual dependency, where trust and reputation are central to sustaining business practices. Studies by Rahim & Asrahmaulyana (2021) also highlight that the success of traditional markets largely hinges on the strength and reliability of these networks, with traders leveraging social capital to overcome the uncertainties inherent in informal trading systems. As argued by Subhani et al. (2021), these networks enable traders to navigate market risks and uncertainties, enhancing economic resilience and cooperation among market participants.

### **2.2 Social Networks and Trust Formation in Traditional Market Economies**

The role of social networks in traditional markets has gained significant attention in the field of economic sociology, with scholars emphasizing how social ties shape economic behavior. As Granovetter (1985) contends, economic actions are rarely isolated; they are deeply embedded in networks of social relations, with individuals' decisions influenced by the structure of their networks. In traditional markets, these networks are primarily informal and localized, where trust and reputation play a central role in facilitating transactions. Research by Bathelt & Henn (2021) demonstrates that social networks are not only instrumental in

shaping the transactions themselves but also provide a mechanism for traders to reduce risks and uncertainties. In Nanggalo, fish traders rely on these networks to establish connections with suppliers and buyers, allowing them to negotiate prices and exchange goods without formal contracts. This process is essential for market cohesion, as highlighted by Warren & Gibson (2021), who stress that informal networks provide the necessary trust and flexibility for traditional markets to function effectively in the absence of formal legal frameworks.

Trust, an integral component of these networks, serves as the foundation for collaboration and mutual benefit in traditional market economies. In Nanggalo, fish traders often engage in credit-based transactions, relying on mutual trust to ensure the exchange of goods without immediate payment. This form of "social trust" is crucial for sustaining long-term relationships in a market where economic decisions are made based on social ties rather than purely transactional considerations. As Fåhraeus (2024) suggests, the ability of traders to trust one another fosters cooperation and reduces transactional frictions, particularly when dealing with volatile goods like fish. Razak et al. (2024) argue that such trust networks enable traders to form stable relationships and manage market fluctuations more effectively. These networks also provide a platform for shared resources and collective actions, which are beneficial for traders in terms of access to better deals and a more organized business environment. Rachma (2018) further supports this view by emphasizing that the establishment of trust and shared norms within these networks leads to improved cooperation and enhances market performance.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the social attachment patterns among fish traders at the Nanggalo Traditional Market, Padang City. The research focuses on understanding the nature of social relationships, trust-building mechanisms, and the role of social networks in shaping economic behavior within traditional market settings. A descriptive approach is adopted, as it is best suited for providing an in-depth explanation of the lived experiences and social dynamics of the fish traders. The research aims to describe, rather than predict, the complex interactions between market participants and to provide a nuanced understanding of how these relationships influence economic practices.

The qualitative design allows for an exploration of the phenomenon within its natural context, capturing the perspectives of the participants without imposing predetermined variables. This approach aligns with the study's objectives of understanding the social processes involved in fish trading and how attachment patterns emerge within these social networks. By utilizing multiple data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The use of purposive sampling ensures that the informants chosen to possess deep knowledge and relevant experiences regarding the social attachment patterns within the market.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants in this study consist of fish traders operating in the Nanggalo Traditional Market. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on their experience and involvement in the fish trading process, ensuring that those who were included in the study had a significant role in the formation of social networks and attachments within

the market. The sample includes a diverse group of fish traders, including those who have been working in the market for several years, as well as newer traders who may provide insights into the evolving social dynamics.

In total, 20 fish traders were selected as informants, representing different categories of fish vendors, including stall owners and street vendors. This sample size was deemed sufficient for achieving data saturation, where no new themes or insights emerged during the data collection process (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). In addition to the fish traders, the study also involved a small number of market suppliers and buyers who interact regularly with the traders, as their perspectives are essential to understanding the broader social network and attachment patterns in the market. These participants were selected to provide a holistic view of the economic and social interactions that take place in Nanggalo Market.

### **3.3 Instruments**

In this study, several qualitative research instruments were employed to gather comprehensive data on the social attachment patterns of fish traders at Nanggalo Traditional Market. The primary data collection methods included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 selected fish traders, employing a semi-structured interview guide that focused on exploring themes such as trust, social networks, negotiation practices, and the dynamics of attachment between traders, suppliers, and buyers. These interviews allowed the researcher to gain insights into participants' personal experiences and perceptions in their own words. Participant observation was also used, where the researcher spent time in the market, observing the daily interactions, trade processes, and relationship-building activities among the traders. This method provided a contextual understanding of how social networks were formed in the market. Lastly, document analysis was conducted on secondary sources such as market records, historical documents, and reports from local authorities, which offered valuable background information on the market's establishment and the broader socio-economic context. These instruments together provided a multi-faceted approach to gathering data on the social dynamics within the market.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Procedures**

The data collected were analyzed following the framework outlined by Miles & Huberman (1994), which involves four key stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Initially, the data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The interview transcripts were then reviewed and coded to identify recurring themes and key concepts related to social attachment and economic behavior. During data reduction, irrelevant or redundant information was discarded, and meaningful segments of data were organized into categories. The next step, data display, involved visually organizing the data into matrices and diagrams, which helped to highlight patterns and relationships in the data. Finally, drawing conclusions involved synthesizing the results from the analysis to make sense of the attachment patterns and their influence on the traders' economic behavior. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was employed by cross-referencing the data from interviews, observations, and documents, while member checking was used to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations with a few participants. This systematic approach provided a robust and transparent analysis of the social attachment mechanisms in the Nanggalo Traditional Market.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Traditional Markets: A Sociological Review

Markets serve as essential economic institutions where sellers and buyers converge to engage in both economic and social interactions. Beyond merely facilitating the exchange of goods and services, markets foster a unique cultural environment that reflects the varied actions and social relationships within them. As key players in controlling economic dynamics, markets are central to the trading activities of communities.

An important feature of market exchanges is the bargaining process, which goes beyond being a mere economic tactic and reflects the pattern of social attachment between participants. These relationships, established through repeated interactions, extend beyond the exchange of goods and money, creating a broader social network that deepens over time. Historically, the term "mercato," meaning trade or marketplace, has influenced the way markets are understood. Markets encompass three primary roles: as physical spaces, as venues for social and economic interaction, and as systems that regulate commercial relations legally. Traditional markets illustrate all three dimensions, with traders and buyers engaging in familiar, trust-based exchanges that have developed over time.

A hallmark of traditional markets is the direct transaction system between sellers and buyers. However, as social attachments evolve, relationships within these markets extend beyond mere transactions, giving rise to a trust system that allows for flexible payment methods, including installment and deferred payment options. The diversity of products sold in traditional markets—ranging from food items like fish, vegetables, and meat to non-food goods such as clothing and electronics—demonstrates their vital role in sustaining local economic culture while preserving cultural heritage.

Moreover, traditional markets function as social spaces that enhance the values of cooperation, togetherness, and interaction among individuals from various social backgrounds. Within this environment, a sense of familial connection and solidarity is palpable, making the market a vibrant and dynamic place. From a sociological standpoint, markets are not only venues for trade but also arenas for social phenomena like competition, solidarity, and the formation of social networks. One key feature in market interactions is the trust that develops between traders and buyers, which goes beyond the quality of the goods offered. This trust is essential for fostering deeper connections and stronger social networks, as evidenced by the strategies used by fish traders to attract customers. For example, one fish trader initially sold fish in bundles of five for IDR 10,000, but to attract more buyers, he altered the strategy by offering ten fish for IDR 15,000. This change resulted in increased trust and deeper attachment, ultimately strengthening the social ties between the trader and the customers.

In conclusion, traditional markets serve not only as centres of economic exchange but also as spaces for the cultivation of social values that reinforce relationships within communities. The social attachment patterns formed in these markets emphasize that trade is not solely about the exchange of goods and services but also about building enduring and expansive social networks.

## 4.2. Attachment Patterns of Fish Traders at Nanggalo Traditional Market

The attachment dynamics within the Nanggalo Traditional Market demonstrate that relationships between fish traders and suppliers go beyond typical transactional exchanges, evolving into robust social networks grounded in trust and long-term cooperation. This attachment enables flexibility in trading, where long-standing traders are often allowed to pick up fish on credit and make payment after selling the goods, while new traders must settle payments upfront.

This reflects an economic system shaped not only by market forces but also by social connections. The network of relationships in this market illustrates how social attachment extends beyond individual connections to form a broader family-like structure. The bonds between larger suppliers, smaller agents, and fish traders create a flexible economic environment that adapts to market fluctuations.

Moreover, environmental factors, such as weather conditions, significantly influence the stability of fish prices. In favorable weather, fish availability is high, leading to lower prices, while adverse weather conditions result in a reduced supply and increased prices. Nevertheless, the social attachment among traders and suppliers helps mitigate the effects of these fluctuations, ensuring a stable flow of fish into the market.

An interesting aspect of the fish trade in Nanggalo is the pricing strategy employed by traders to maximize profits. For instance, a trader might buy a large quantity of fish for IDR 1,000,000 and sell it in two pricing schemes: IDR 10,000 for a bundle of five fish or IDR 15,000 for a bundle of ten fish. Depending on market conditions and the pricing strategy, the profit margin per purchase can range from IDR 150,000 to IDR 350,000.

The overall findings confirm that the attachment patterns among fish traders in the Nanggalo Traditional Market go beyond mere transactional relationships, evolving into a socio-economic ecosystem based on trust, collaboration, and extensive networks. This network not only ensures the sustainability of traders' businesses but also stabilizes the distribution of fish in the market, even amidst price volatility and other external challenges.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the complex and multifaceted role of traditional markets, particularly the Nanggalo Traditional Market, in fostering social and economic relationships through the formation of social attachments among traders. The market is not only a place for economic transactions but also an important social space where trust and cooperation are cultivated over time, as evidenced by the attachment patterns observed among fish traders and their suppliers. This aligns with previous studies that have emphasized the crucial role of social networks and relationships in shaping market dynamics (Perren & Kozinets, 2018; Jraisat et al., 2021; Irwan et al., 2022).

One key aspect of the Nanggalo market is the ability of long-term traders to engage in flexible transactional practices, such as deferred payments or installment schemes, which are made possible by the trust built through ongoing relationships with suppliers (Rahim & Asrahmaulyana, 2021; Fåhraeus, 2024). The development of such flexible systems reflects not only economic necessity but also the social attachment that underpins market transactions. These social bonds go beyond mere interactions between buyers and sellers, evolving into more profound and enduring relationships that extend to families and communities. This is consistent with the work of Granovetter (1985), who argued that social ties, particularly those

grounded in trust, influence economic behaviors and decisions within market systems (Wang et al., 2022; Abbasiharofteh & Maghssudipour, 2024).

Moreover, the dynamic pricing strategies employed by traders, such as adjusting the price per bundle of fish, underscore the fluid nature of traditional market economies. These strategies, which are informed by both market conditions and social interactions, highlight the importance of understanding how economic behavior is intertwined with social networks. Fish traders at Nanggalo Market, for instance, adapted their pricing strategies to foster trust and loyalty among their customers, leading to repeat transactions and stronger social networks. These findings mirror those of Di & Yibo (2024), who found that economic interactions in traditional markets are often governed by a mixture of rational economic decisions and social motivations, such as the desire to maintain good relationships with customers (Bathelt & Henn, 2021).

The relationship between weather conditions and the stability of fish prices observed in this study is another critical factor influencing market dynamics. As weather patterns directly affect the availability of fish, traders must adjust their strategies to navigate the fluctuations in supply and demand. However, social attachment between traders and suppliers serves as a buffer against the negative impacts of these fluctuations. This finding complements the work of Putri & Hidayat (2019), who noted that traditional markets often incorporate adaptive mechanisms that are driven by both social and environmental factors, ensuring that goods continue to flow smoothly despite external challenges.

Furthermore, the importance of traditional markets in fostering a sense of community and solidarity is underscored by the social interactions that occur within these spaces. In Nanggalo Market, the sense of family and togetherness observed among traders and buyers reflects the role of markets in reinforcing social cohesion (Rachma, 2018; Jaipong & Siripatthanakul, 2023). The emotional attachments that develop in these settings are not limited to business transactions but extend to the creation of lasting bonds between individuals, contributing to the vibrancy and sustainability of the market itself.

## 6. Conclusion

This study highlights the pivotal role of social attachment in shaping the economic dynamics of fish traders in Nanggalo Traditional Market, illustrating how trust and long-term relationships influence trading practices. It confirms that traditional markets are not merely transactional spaces but are embedded in social networks that promote cooperation, stability, and economic resilience. The findings illustrate how trust-based relationships contribute to market stability despite external fluctuations. However, the study's focus on fish traders within a single market limits the generalizability of the findings, and other factors such as political and legal influences were not fully explored. Future research could expand the scope to include different sectors and regions, as well as examine the impact of government policies, market regulations, and global economic shifts on the social networks and resilience of traditional markets, offering a more comprehensive understanding of these complex interactions.

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