

# Analysis And Resolution Of Traders Conflict With The Government In Geudong, North Aceh

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## ABSTRACT

One of the government's programs for creating an environmentally friendly market is to build a decent market for traders. However, relocating traders always creates conflicts between traders and the government, like the conflict between market traders and the government and PD Bina Usaha as the manager of the Geudong Impres market, Samudera Sub-district, North Aceh Regency. This fact is interesting to study as there was a high intensity of conflict between traders and the government regarding the relocation. This study aims (1) Finding the root causes of the conflict between traders and PD Bina Usaha, (2) Finding the form of resolution that was carried out between the traders and PD Bina Usaha in Geudong North Aceh. This study used qualitative methods. The data was obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation collection as supporting data. The results of this study indicate that, first, the domination of power in development has created a vertical conflict between the North Aceh Regency Government and PD. Bina Usaha with traditional Geudong market traders where the domination of power raises acts of resistance from traders. This study describes the forms of conflict and the factors that cause conflict. Second, the conflicts that occurred at the Geudong Impres Market, Samudera Sub-district, North Aceh Regency were in the form of closed conflicts and open conflicts where traders felt disappointed because the demolition process was not considered fair. The factors behind the conflict included the domination of power that occurred in making policies that did not benefit the Geudong Impres market traders or policies that were not participatory. Third, the district government carried out the repression with the help of security forces and local thugs. Acts of violence accompanied the acts of repression carried out by the security forces. The beatings were carried out by the North Aceh Civil Service Police Unit, while the North Aceh regional police carried out the beatings and arrests during a demonstration by traders and the forced demolition of the Geudong market stall. Meanwhile, fragmentation and intimidation were aimed at traffickers, both individually and as a group, through thugs. Personally, the traders were threatened with telephone calls, anonymous letters, bribes, and pitted traders against each other.

**Keywords:** *Analysis; Conflict Resolution; Trader; Market Development; Government; North Aceh*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Anarchic social conflicts always occur between communities (horizontal) and communities with bureaucratic elites (vertical) as if they become a potential that constantly haunts and threatens social order. Because conflict in society is something that cannot be avoided, what needs to be known is the intensity and level of violence, and in what form is the conflict, whether it involves fundamental problems or secondary issues, is sharply opposed or simply different views [1][2]. The vertical conflict between the government and traders occurred in North Aceh Geudong Market. This was due to the planned rejuvenation of the Geudong Inpres Market market carried out by PD Bina Usaha Owned by the North Aceh Regency Government, accompanied by the forced demolition of two large old buildings in the market. The actions taken by the North Aceh District Government in rejuvenating the Geudong market have given rise to opposition to the Geudong Pasar Inpres market traders. The policy that was planned four years ago, around 2015 after the expiration of usufructuary rights in 2010, had implications for vertical conflicts (RRI, 07 January 2020).

The Geudong Samudera Impres Market is one of the traditional markets in North Aceh Regency, which was asked to be vacated by PD Bina Usaha as a Regional Owned Enterprise of the Government of North Aceh. Based on our interview with the Director of PD Bina Usaha T. Asmoni, that regarding issuing a policy to revitalize or rebuild the Geudong impres market because the Building Use Rights (HGB) used so far by traders have expired, based on this PD Bina Usaha revoked HGB certificate permit which has been owned by traders since 1997.

The demands of around 46 Geudong Inpres market traders were pretty reasonable. H. Ilyas, a trader representative, disputed the act of PD Bina Usaha regarding revoking the HGB permit because, at the time of the purchase, it was not written when the HGB expired. Besides, the traders wanted to avoid moving because they were afraid that the new stalls after rejuvenation will be sold to other people. In addition, tariff settings must also follow the economic conditions of the traders. However, PD Bina Usaha continued to rejuvenate by suddenly dismantling the market located on Jalan Medan-Banda Aceh to polish the dull face of the city center of the first Islamic civilization in the archipelago (AJNN, 09 January 2020).

Previously it was different from an agreement between PD Bina Usaha and traders. The problem is that the North Aceh District Government has unilaterally demolished

70 shophouses without negotiation, even though some of the Geudong market traders asked to be relocated to temporary sales locations. In addition to not providing a new place, this conflict was also triggered by the traders' argument that the stalls had been purchased legally from PD Bina Usaha.

On January 25, 2020, the traders filed a lawsuit following the laws in force in the Republic of Indonesia at the Lhoksukon District Court. However, the court's decision has yet to be made, but the PDBU party has carried out the eviction action, followed by the rejection by the traders. The traders finally formed a student- and community-based movement calling itself the Geudong Market Community and Student Care Movement to convey their demands as a mass movement by requesting legal assistance from lawyer Anwar MD. Letter Number 539/021/PDBU/2020 stated that temporarily moving the traders is unreasonable in revitalizing the Geudong Inpres market.

The first action to dismantle the kiosk was unsuccessful because many traders obstructed the activity. The demolition was stopped because hundreds of traders, mostly women, blocked the bulldozers from entering. The demolition then continued on February 6, 2020. This time the district government also failed to level all of the kiosk buildings. In this demolition action, the officers were again confronted by the women, consisting of activists and traders.

Traders continued to oppose the district government's policies, even though the traders realized that their demands would be difficult to fulfill, even when the demolition of the Geudong market began in early February 2020, there was no court decision. This kind of policy has not only happened once in Aceh and Indonesia in general.

In the end, for the third time, the traders were forced to move to the TPS (Temporary Shelter) that the Regency Government had previously provided. The temporary shelters provided were not to follow the number of traders. It turned out that several TPS had to be obtained by traders by buying or renting back to other traders, giving rise to a strong feeling of disappointment from traders with the District Government's policies. This fact was exacerbated by the condition of the TPS, which did not meet expectations. Kiosks are not suitable for use and not sufficient to accommodate all the traders.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the authors used a qualitative research method, where the data that the authors obtained at the

beginning were only temporary, and required deepening by directly participating in understanding the conditions of the people who would be examined at the research location. Then the data that has been obtained before will be re-selected after the latest data has been obtained [3][4].

This location was chosen due to several considerations, including: 1) this location was one of the areas that has a fairly large traditional market and has been around for a long time ( $\pm$  50 years) with the majority of traders having middle to lower economic capital, 2) the research location was in the center of *Pasai* Islamic civilization in Aceh and was very influential and served as a model for other regions in the province of Aceh, 3) It was a middle to lower economic center so it is very possible for vertical conflicts to take place, and 4) it was more accessible and closer to access to other information related to this research.

### 3. DISCUSSION

#### Forms of Resistance by Geudong Inpress Market Traders and Government Domination.

To explain how the forms of trader resistance that took place in the construction of the Inpres market will begin with an explanation of a conflictual relationship between the North Aceh Regency Government and the Geudong Inpres market traders. Several theories of domination of power were used in this research. Among them is the theory regarding the division of society into two groups in an asymmetrical social relationship, which makes one community group dominate other community groups, superordinates, and subordinates.

Wright's theory [5] suggests several identifiable characteristics of this asymmetrical relationship: 1) the welfare of a group materially depends on material appropriation from other groups, 2) the relationship involves exclusion and exclusion of access to productive resources, 3) the mechanism that results in exclusion and closure involves the taking of added value (fruits of labor).

Furthermore, Mosca's theory [6][7], which explains the first group that controls political functions over other groups. This action was accompanied by coercion, controlling traders until they comply, interfering with freedom, and coercing it in particular ways. These methods can be carried out through 1) government or state policies, 2) the power of thuggery, 3) the power of information and capital, and controlling and closing access to information and capital [5].

In addition to controlling politics, this ruling group also controlled the economy through an unequal economic relationship or capitalistic social relations, as expressed

by Marx [7][8]. In the case of the Geudong Inpres market, the domination of political power was thicker than economic power. Political power is the nuance that is clearly illustrated in the development of the market, while the economic nuance is the nuance of the interests that are behind this political power.

Politically, the North Aceh Regency Government, as the ruling class, carried out acts of domination through nonparticipatory policies, repression, and co-optation. Through the policy of PD. Bina Usaha, through a Decree, the North Aceh Regency Government provided legal legitimacy for implementing the Geudong Inpres market revitalization program. In addition, the North Aceh Regency Government also made unilateral decisions, such as the decision to continue the demolition program for the Geudong Inpres market, even though there was an agreement to temporarily stop the demolition of the market until there was a court outcome and an agreement on the price of the kiosk, in addition to an insistence of North Aceh Regency Government at a price set by the managing investor. Every action taken by the North Aceh Regency

Government was considered a legal action, starting from determining the price of the kiosk, placing the traders, and carrying out forced demolition. The policies made are not in favor of the general or small community but more in favor of investors or the interests of large capital owners, so traders are in a subordinated condition.

In addition to dominating in the form of nonparticipatory policy making, the North Aceh District Government has also carried out acts of repression. The North Aceh Regency Government carried out this act of repression or pressure with the help of government officials, such as the police, Satpol PP, and the use of forces outside the government apparatus (such as the use of former GAM members). They put pressure on traders through intimidation, terror, and acts of violence. Thugs carried out acts of intimidation and terror against individual traders while security forces and Satpol PP involved violence in demolishing old merchant stalls and demonstrations by traders some time ago.

Acts of co-optation were performed through mass media and trade organizations. Through the local mass media, co-optation or control was carried out by the North Aceh District Government. Minimal coverage from the largest newspaper in Lhokseumawe City and North Aceh, namely Serambi Indonesia, resulted in very little information being obtained. Even though there was news about the conflict that occurred due to the market development, the portion was small, and most of the information was dominated by news about the design or shape of the building and its facilities, stall prices (investor's version), and marketing. Meanwhile, at the trader level, control over traders was done through the

PD. Bina Usaha. PD Bina Usaha split traders into two; the traders supporting all the policies of the North Aceh Regency Government under PD. Bina Usaha (although not openly) and traders who disagree with the policies of the North Aceh Regency Government (Trader Forum).

### **Closed Society's Resistance Against Government**

Literally, resistance means to fight or oppose. This refers to all actions that reject or oppose whether it is formal or non-formal. If someone does not agree with what has been going on, it can be said to be resistance. Resistance to the government means opposition or resistance to government policies [9].

Popular resistance according to Scott can be divided into two categories - resistance caused by direct causes and indirect causes. People's resistance is due to direct causes such as oppression, threats, pressure, coercion by landlords, government, capital owners or other parties. Resistance that is indirectly carried out through clandestine resistance, clandestine resistance achieves greater results than open resistance [9].

The demolition of buildings has caused the community to lose their livelihoods, thus making the community resist. One of the community's resistances is to protest by asking PD. Bina Usaha not to demolish the buildings.

Scott's theory (2000) divides traders' resistance into two parts, open resistance, and hidden resistance. The resistance carried out by the Geudong Impres market traders can also be divided into two parts; the resistance carried out openly by traders in challenging the dominance of power carried out by the North Aceh Regency Government and investor and the resistance carried out secretly by traders, not openly opposing - in light of the dominance of the North Aceh Regency Government and investors, traders generally take more personal actions.

Even though the open resistance carried out by traders did not produce social change as expected in an open resistance, the traders had carried out a well-organized group of resistance of up to 500 traders plus dozens of student activists and NGOs to ask for the reduction of kiosk prices. Meanwhile, the clandestine resistance carried out was more personal, such as cursing, damaging the TPS, and not occupying the TPS. However, this was done by traders not to be accommodative but more likely because the efforts of open resistance did not produce any results. They were more resigned to their conditions and took it out by swearing, damaging, and not occupying TPS. This type of resistance can be categorized as clandestine because it is more personal, does not have a revolutionary nuance, and does not commit open violence.

Meanwhile, when viewed from the point of view of [10], the approach used to see the actions taken by traders is a political economy approach, where the resistance by the traders is based on rational considerations of changes that are calculated to be detrimental and threatening to traders. The decision to fight lies with individuals who perceive it as an effective and efficient choice as a form of resistance with a socioeconomic dimension.

Even though the support given to traders seemed minimal, this support provided strength for traders to put up a fight. As supported by student activists and NGOs, they succeeded in voicing the aspirations of traders in the form of open resistance against the government. Resistance in the form of demonstrations, hunger strikes, and confinement has forced meetings between traders, the North Aceh Regency Government, and investors. However, the results obtained from these meetings still need to be clarified. Meanwhile, the moral support obtained from those who care about their resistance is not tangible, but it can increase the spirit of resistance of traders to keep fighting.

### **Open Resistance**

Open resistance was carried out by traders openly opposing and criticizing the North Aceh Regency Government. The resistance was carried out in various forms and was carried out collectively. Even though it did not threaten the existence of the North Aceh Regency Government, this resistance forced the North Aceh Regency Government to carry out a series of peace efforts with traders. This open resistance took the form of rallies or demonstrations, hunger strikes, and sending open letters of protest to the authorities.

### **Geudong Impres Market Rejuvenation Conflict Map**

Parties involved in the conflict in the development of the North Aceh Geudong Impres market can be divided into 1) the main parties involved in the conflict and 2) complementary parties, divided into conflict mediation groups and groups supporting the conflicting parties. The main parties involved in the conflict are the North Aceh Regency Government and investors and traders. The secondary parties are divided into two: those who carry out advocacy efforts (support) and those who carry out mediation or conflict resolution.

At first, conflict occurred between investors and traders due to high kiosk prices. However, after the forced demolition by the North Aceh Regency Government (15 and 18 April 2020), the North Aceh Regency Government became part of the conflict, where the North Aceh Regency Government and investors faced traders. Meanwhile, the conflict issues raised were relatively the same, coupled with demands for the Regent's resignation and compensation from traders. Thus, the North Aceh Regency Government and the investors are on the same

side as the party that exercises control over the traders. The North Aceh regency government is the political policy maker (making noncooperative regulations, carrying out repression, and coopting), while the investors are the organizers (investing and building markets).

Trader support groups carried out advocacy efforts. This effort is a form of defense against groups whose interests are considered to be subordinated to other groups traders group, which is subordinated to the North Aceh District Government and investors. This action is expected to create a balance of interests in the conflict. They carried out acts of support or alliance with merchant groups. They consisted of various groups and individuals, including activists from students and NGOs, as well as individuals from local intellectual circles (local lawyers and community leaders). Meanwhile, the fourth group that was also involved in this conflict was the North Aceh DPRD and IKMR. They function as mediation or intermediary institutions in resolving the conflict.

The advocacy group and the traders put pressure on the North Aceh Regency Government and DPRD to resolve this conflict. The efforts to suppress the North Aceh Regency Government took place before the forced demolition of traders' stalls at the Geudong Impres market, while the efforts to suppress the DPRD took place after the North Aceh Regency Government and investors carried out the forced demolition of their kiosks. Later, IKMR entered into this conflict as a mediator replacing the position of DPRD. However, traders considered IKMR an institution formed by the North Aceh Regency Government. In the end, traders still relied on DPRD and advocacy by local lawyers.

In putting pressure on the North Aceh Regency Government, the traders succeeded in forcing the North Aceh Regency Government to bring them together with the investors, even though in the meeting which used a representative system, the traders and the investors could not reach an agreement. The same thing happened after the demolition, the pressure exerted by the traders on the North Aceh DPRD succeeded in forcing the North Aceh DPRD to bring together the traders with the North Aceh Regency Government and investors.

The conflict between the traders and the North Aceh Regency Government was more due to the inability of the North Aceh Regency Government to resolve the issue of kiosk prices which the traders disputed. North Aceh Regency Government agreed with the price set by the investor and rejected the price offered by the trader. Meanwhile, the conflict with the DPRD due to the failure of the DPRD forced the North Aceh Regency Government and investors to lower the kiosk prices, even though the DPRD succeeded in forcing a meeting to take place (25 January 2017). At the same time, the failure of

IKMR as the inability of IKMR caused a mediator as the largest institution in Keude Geudong, which houses all Minang ethnic in Aceh, to side with traders and forced meetings with the North Aceh Regency Government and investors. Meanwhile, conflicts between students and NGOs occurred because students and NGOs tended to fight for their interests. By utilizing the services of subordinated traders, it is hoped that their group or personal interests can be achieved (as was done by Rinaldi, after his hunger strike received the attention of investors, he never met traders again).

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution is peaceful efforts made by both parties or assisted by other groups to resolve disputes experienced, in this case, traders with the North Aceh Regency Government and investors. Efforts made on the initiative of one of the disputing parties can be referred to as negotiation or conciliation efforts. Meanwhile, settlement efforts utilizing the third group are called arbitration or judgment and mediation [11]. Furthermore, these two resolution models (conciliation and mediation) have attempted to resolve disputes between traders, the North Aceh Regency Government, and investors.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the description above, this research concludes: First, the domination of power in development has created a vertical conflict between the North Aceh Regency Government and PD. Bina Usaha with traditional Geudong market traders. Domination of power raises acts of resistance from traders. This study describes the forms of conflict and the factors that cause conflict. Second, the conflicts that occurred at the Geudong Impres Market, Samudera Sub-district, North Aceh Regency were in the form of closed conflicts and open conflicts where traders felt disappointed because there was no justice in the demolition process. The factor causing the conflict was the domination of power that occurred in making policies that did not benefit the Geudong Impres market traders or policies that were not participatory.

Third, the government carried out acts of repression with the help of security forces and local thugs. Acts of violence accompanied the acts of repression carried out by the security forces. The North Aceh Civil Service Police Unit carried out the beatings. In addition, the North Aceh regional police carried out the beatings and arrests during a demonstration by traders and the forced demolition of the Geudong market stall. Meanwhile, fragmentation and intimidation were aimed at traffickers, both individually and as a group, through thugs. Personally, the traders were threatened with telephone calls, anonymous letters, bribes, and pitted traders against each other.

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