

Markets and Traders in Bukittinggi Town in Early 20th Century Photography (1900-1939)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini termasuk dalam kajian historiografi fotografi, karena bertujuan merepresentasikan foto-foto pasar dan pedagang di Bukittinggi pada masa kolonial. Jenis penelitian ini adalah studi kepustakaan, dengan menggunakan metode sejarah yang terdiri dari empat tahap. Tahap pertama penelitian ini adalah heuristik atau pengumpulan sumber. Pengumpulan sumber berupa foto-foto pasar dan pedagang di Kota Bukittinggi, buku, artikel jurnal, surat kabar dan lain-lain. Tahap kedua adalah kritik sumber untuk memvalidasi data-data dari sumber yang terkumpul. Tahap ketiga adalah interpretasi yang menafsirkan foto-foto dengan menggunakan teori representasi sebagai alat untuk menghadirkan kembali foto-foto pasar dan pedagang sebagai objek dengan memberikan makna terhadapnya. Tahap keempat adalah historiografi atau penulisan sejarah. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan foto Pasar Atas dan Pasar Bawah dengan kondisi fisiknya berupa sarana dan prasarana, pedagang yang terdiri dari perempuan dengan barang dagangannya berupa hasil pertanian dan olahan, serta pedagang laki-laki dengan pelayanan jasanya

Kata kunci: fotografi, representasi, pasar, pedagang, bukittinggi.

Abstract

This study aims to represent photographs of markets and traders in Bukittinggi during the colonial period. This study is included in the study of photographic historiography. This type of research is a literature study using historical methods consisting of four stages. The first stage of this study is heuristics or source collection. The collection of sources is in the form of photographs of markets and traders in Bukittinggi City, books, journal articles, newspapers and others. The second stage is source criticism to validate data from the collected sources. The third stage is interpretation which interprets photographs using the theory of representation as a tool to re-present photographs of markets and traders as objects by giving meaning to them. The fourth stage is historiography or writing history. The results of this study show photographs of the Pasar Atas and the Pasar Bawah with their physical conditions in the form of facilities and infrastructure. Photos of traders women with the types of goods they trade are agricultural product and male traders with their services.

Keywords: photography, representation, market, traders, bukittinggi.

INTRODUCTION

By the early 20th century, photography was no longer the preserve of the colonialists. Visual culture in the Dutch East Indies was filled with portraits by photographers (Amran, 2007).

The object of photography is not only about power, but also about

freedom, such as nature, photographing the type of population, the socio-economic population, the habits or culture of the population and so on. This is because the photographers in the Dutch East Indies, in addition to working with the colonial government, they also have their own motives that are not constrained

by the colonial government, especially European photographers. They are free to seek profit and develop their photographic practice skills to various regions, one of which is in Bukittinggi.

Bukittinggi during the colonial era was known as the “Heart of Sumatra”, because of its natural beauty and temperature, it was used as a place for recovery, entertainment and recreation (Blaauw, 1913). This potential is an advantage for the colonial government in developing Bukittinggi, especially in terms of economy. The early 20th century, Bukittinggi held the title of *gemeente* (municipality). The presence of the Bukittinggi market (food) has succeeded in attracting more than 40.000 visitors in the early 20th century (Asnan, 2003).

Visitors who come to the Bukittinggi market, not only shop, those who come from the photographer community certainly take pictures of the social and economic activities in the Bukittinggi market. These portraits are produced in the form of photos, which can now be viewed and accessed in digital archives, including in the KITLV digital collection (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde*), NMVW (National Museum van Wereldculturen), national archief, and bukittinggikota.sikn.go.id.

The digital archives show photographs of markets and traders in Bukittinggi in the early 20th century, namely in 1900-1939. The formulation in

this study questions what kind of markets and traders are the objects of the photos, so the goal is to represent and display the photographs using the theory of representation as an analytical tool to explain their historical meaning.

The historiographical study of colonial period photographs is a study that is still difficult to find. However, there are some studies that can still be found. Among them (Taylor, 2011) who examines photographs of Aceh from the KITLV collection, with a military focus. Nabilla Putri Sulaiman and Maya Purnama Sari, examine the history of the development of ethnic women's clothing on the island of Java in photographic works as archives (Sulaiman & Sari, 2022). Although both studies represent the Dutch East Indies, namely Aceh and Java, in colonial photographs. However, the representation of photographs of Bukittinggi market activities during the colonial period has not been discussed (Buys, 1886).

Both previous research studies and writings that have been evaluated above, ontologically add to the dynamics of the object of color study in this study. Previous works provide various contributions of knowledge that epistemologically inspire understanding that has the dynamics of historical facts in photographs, as well as in the axiological aspect useful for contemporary dialogue with the past, so that the past is

increasingly known as well as evidence of its existence in history.

METHOD

The method used in this research is the historical method which consists of heuristics, criticism, interpretation and historiography (Nina, 2020). Heuristics or source collection in this study through literature study. Visits were made to libraries and archives in the West Sumatra region, such as the Padang City Archives and Library Service; Bung Hatta Proclaimer Library; including libraries in the Department of History, the Library of the Faculty of Humanities, the Central Library of Andalas University. Then the digital archives of delpher, KITLV, NMVW, national archief, bukittinggikota.sikn.go.id.

The data collected from these sources are in the form of photos, books, colonial reports, diaries, newspapers, and others. There are 70 photos of the market and traders collected, the photos are selected through source criticism to validate the collected data, so that only 12 photos will be included in this study. Criticism provides authenticity through comparison of research topic information. The result of source criticism is the emergence of historical facts to be interpreted or interpreted. This interpretation uses the theory of representation, namely giving meaning and presenting imagination based on the

historical perspective of the photos. Of course, it is related to the sources that are described and analyzed so as to obtain historical imagination about the market and traders in Bukittinggi in colonial photography which is then poured into historiography. The historiography of this study is the result of a combination of the author's understanding guided by the framework of historical analysis and the theory used in answering the problems and questions that have been revealed in the introduction, so that the historiography of this study can be a writing of historical work in the field of photography (Daniek, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical Condition of Bukittinggi Market in Colonial Era Photos

The market photos in Bukittinggi that will be described in this writing are the Pasar Atas and the Pasar Bawah, because these markets are the main central markets for the government to obtain economic income. The Pasar Atas and the Pasar Bawah are in strategic locations close to the center of government and public areas. This is as depicted in colonial period photos showing all aspects of market support, especially physical conditions in the form of facilities and infrastructure (Dobbin, 1987).

The facilities are in the form of transportation to the market, while the infrastructure is in the form of roads and

buildings as the main support for the implementation of the market. There are many photos that represent the market conditions in Bukittinggi. At least 4 photos of market infrastructure are displayed, in the form of roads totaling 2 photos, and markets also totaling 2 photos. As for market facilities in the form of transportation are displayed with a total of 4 photos.



Photo 1. Resident's road to Pasar Atas Bukittinggi in 1900.

Source: KITLV Digital Collection (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:806133>, accessed on June 12, 2024)

Photo 1 shows a road to Pasar Atas Bukittinggi, the photo appears to have been taken from the direction of Birugo, there are several bendi on this road, the road looks wide and well maintained, rows of shady trees decorate this road so the air looks refreshing (Yulianto, 2017).

According to KITLV sources, the road in photo 2 above is called Resident Street (*Residentweg*). This is because the assistant resident's house is located on this road, if the photo is enlarged it will be clearly visible that there is an assistant resident's house at the end of the left side of the road after the Societeit Belvedere building in Photo 1.

The "Societeit Belvedere" building is a meeting hall and entertainment venue specifically for Europeans consisting of officials, private entrepreneurs and local nobles (Mardanas, 1987). The Dutch colonial government was indeed very clever in choosing the strategic location of its buildings close to the market and beautiful natural scenery.

Currently, Resident Street (*Residentweg*) is called Jalan Istana, the exact location is Bukit Cangang Kayu Ramang, Guguk Panjang District, Bukittinggi City.



Photo 2. Minangkabau Street near Pasar Atas Bukittinggi in 1939

Source: KITLV Digital Collection (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:706891>, accessed on January 13, 2024)

Photo 2 shows the road around Bukittinggi Market, this road is surrounded by permanent two-story ruko (shophouse) buildings, above which are houses as residences, while below are shops as trading places. Bukittinggi Market during the colonial period was one of the busiest markets in Sumatra. Its market days are Wednesday and Saturday (Joustra, 1923).

Photo 2 can be interpreted in two different indications regarding the market atmosphere, first that the atmosphere in

the photo showing several people walking is the atmosphere on a market day. However, it is also seen in the left corner of the photo there is a mat that has been rolled up so that the second indication is that it is not a market day because there are no people seen lifting goods and displaying merchandise.

In the early 20th century, public transportation in Bukittinggi to the market there were 3 types: 1) Pedati (*kabau padati* in Minang); 2) bendi and 3) Bus. Before the existence of horse-drawn bendi, and buses with engine power. Cow-drawn bendi and buffalo-drawn pedati had already existed. The difference is that bendi is for transporting people, and pedati are for transporting goods.



Photo 3. Pedati in Bukittinggi in 1939
Source: KITLV Digital Collection
(<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:696115>, accessed on January 13, 2024)

The photo of the pedati shown above shows that the pedati coachman sometimes walks with the cart and sometimes sits between the buffalo and the cart body, usually a pedati coachman has a rope and a small whip to control his buffalo. Photo 3 also shows a cart passing through one of the main roads of the city, this is a freedom, there is no prohibition

for carts to cross this city road even though the road that is passed looks beautiful and the city is neatly arranged and the buildings are modern.

The journey and rental of pedati are measured by the destination city unit. There are three commonly known units. The first is from Padang City or Pariaman to Padang Panjang. The second is from Padang Panjang to Batu Sangkar or from Padang Panjang to Bukittinggi. The third is from Bukittinggi to Payakumbuh. Each unit is served by a group of carts (Asnan, 2007).



Photo 4. A 1910 bullock-pulled carriage
Source: KITLV Digital Collection
(<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:765800>, accessed on January 13, 2024)

Photo 4 is a means of transportation in the form of a horse-drawn carriage pulled by a cow. In the photo, a horse-drawn carriage owner is seen wearing a peci (*kupiyah* is the word for peci in Minang language), he is standing near his cow. The passengers of the horse-drawn carriage are 3 boys who are also wearing peci.

The physical form of the bendi in photo 4 shows two cart wheels, one on the right side, and one on the left side. The

passenger seating area is higher and wider to the side, looking like a house because it is intended to transport people. The roof is also high so that more air can enter.



Photo 5. Bendi at Bukittinggi Market in 1935

Source: KITLV Digital Collection (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:698439>, accessed on January 13, 2024)

Photo 5 is a photo of horse-drawn bendi transportation. In the photo, many horse-drawn bendi are parked by coachmen, they seem to be waiting for rent. In 1935, bendi was intended for all levels of society in Bukittinggi, one of which was to take the natives who lived around Bukittinggi home from the market, bendi was also used by European tourists who wanted to get around Bukittinggi City. The physical form or model of bendi in photo 5 is a (luxurious) transformation from a horse-drawn carriage like the one in Yogyakarta to a simpler model.

Gusti Asnan said that initially around the 18th century, bendi was only intended for governors and residents. The physical model of bendi was in the form of a carriage in Yogyakarta, this bendi model was the first to enter Indonesia in the 18th century. However, at the end of the 19th

century and the beginning of the 20th century, changes began to occur that bendi was intended for common people or all levels of society. Even in the 1890s to the beginning of the 20th century in the second decade, namely the 1920s, bendi was still used as long-distance transportation. Like the trip from Bukittinggi to Lubuk Sikaping which took eight hours by bendi. Starting in 1914, buses began to enter Indonesia so that bendi was gradually used for short distances or short-distance travel, while buses were used as a means of long-distance transportation.



Photo 6. Bus in the parking lot of Pasar Bawah Bukittinggi in 1939

Source: KITLV Digital Collection (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:699642>, accessed on October 6, 2023)

The buses in Bukittinggi market are intended for all levels of society with far-reaching road access, namely outside Bukittinggi. Usually there are around seven buses per week. One of them departs from Bukittinggi to Lubuk Linggau with a travel time of three days. Traffic on this route is quite smooth, the goods transported are fresh vegetables from the highlands and from Lubuk Linggau usually reach Jambi. This bus connects Bukittinggi

to Palembang (Zentgraaff and Goudoever, 1936).

In photo 6, a 3-wheeled cart is also seen to transport goods from the market to the terminal to be loaded onto the bus, or vice versa, goods from the bus are delivered to the market with the cart. Each bus has a basket to put goods on it, it appears in the photo that there are several people arranging goods on the bus, some are also sitting in the bus. The bus terminal is crowded with men who are almost all neatly dressed complete with belts and peci, some are also wearing hats.

The three types of transportation facilities to Bukittinggi market that have been explained also provide great benefits to the Bukittinggi market building as infrastructure.



Photo 7. Pasar Atas Bukittinggi in 1915
Source: NMVW-Collectie
(<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/240626>, accessed on January 14)

At the beginning of the 20th century, physical market buildings such as stalls had tin roofs, wooden pillars and frames, and cement floors, as did stalls and shops. Since the beginning of the 20th century, in a number of food stalls, stalls

have also functioned as residences for their owners. When the feed became more perfect, the stalls in the feed were organized based on the products being sold so that there were stalls that specifically sold cloth, iron tools, glassware, agricultural products, dried fish and even livestock (Yulianto, 2017).

Photo 8 shows a red arrow indicating the shophouse canopy that can protect traders when selling in the market. In addition, the architecture of the shophouse building looks like a classic European building style, especially on the upper side near the roof and walls, but still shows the architectural side of the typical Minangkabau building which is seen from its windows made of wood.

The physical building of the market in Bukittinggi City in the colonial period photo is a development of a more modern market form by the Dutch East Indies Government. The Dutch East Indies Government in developing the market received approval from the village government in Bukittinggi (Erniwati, 2007).

The development of the market during the Dutch East Indies began with the Dutch buying and borrowing land from the head of Nagari Kurai. The land was lent with an unspecified usage right, so this was very profitable for the Dutch. The area around Pakan Kurai was developed by the Dutch as a trading center for the Agam area and its surroundings. The Dutch

arranged the existing market in such a way as to attract traders to trade and even settle in Bukittinggi (Graves, 2007).

The construction of Bukittinggi Market was carried out on a large scale during the reign of Controleur Westenenk. The renovated Bukittinggi Market was not only focused on the Pasar Atas, but also the Pasar Bawah.

In Pasar Bawah there are stairs and a pedestrian bridge connecting Pasar Bawah with Pasar Lereng and Pasar Atas. This bridge is the first in the Dutch East Indies, built by WJ Cator Controleur Oud Agam in 1932. These stairs and bridges are called by the Minangkabau people as *janjang gantuang* because the shape of the stairs hangs above the bridge (Sonia, 2021).

Traders at Bukittinggi Market in Colonial Era Photos

The photos of traders in Bukittinggi market that will be displayed are 4 photos, traders consist of men and women. The photos of traders in Bukittinggi Market that were found, mostly show female traders.



Photo 8. Fruit traders around people's houses at Bukittinggi market in 1925
Source: nationaalarchief

(<http://hdl.handle.net/10648/ade9806c-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>, accessed on December 2, 2023)

The photo above shows female traders selling bananas, they sell their wares on the grass, some wear head coverings, some don't, but their clothes strongly show their Minangkabau identity. It can also be seen behind them there is a people's house, there are several people sitting in the house.

These female traders are generally small traders with their own capital and also very small profits. Until the third decade (1930s) and fourth (1940s) of the 20th century, the existence of these female traders still occurred in large numbers. Minangkabau women as second-class traders, also live in areas around the market location (Yanti, 2017).



Photo 9. Barber at Bukittinggi market in 1939

Source: KITLV Digital Collection
(<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:708903>, accessed on September 28, 2023)

Photo 9 shows a barber who has settled in the Bukittinggi market. It can be seen from his trading place that he is not the only one who has a barber shop. There are several places for barbers in the market. This can be seen from the cloths

hanging under the umbrellas. There are also chairs and tables and barber equipment.

Photo 9 also shows a male barber who looks cheerful showing his front teeth, he is dressed like a modern Minang person, namely wearing a peci, a short t-shirt and basic pants with a belt accessory, while the customer is a boy who is waited for by a girl in clothes that are not good to look at, namely wearing a *tikuluak* but the length of her shirt is above her knees. In front of this girl there is also another girl, she is not wearing a hijab but the length of her shirt covers her calves.



Photo 10. Children selling at Bukittinggi Market

(<https://bukittinggikota.sikn.go.id/index.php/anak-muda-sedang-berjualan-tahun-1902-anaccessed> on April 4, 2024)

Photo 10 shows three girls smiling at the camera, and another one looks embarrassed. They sell agricultural products, apparently chilies. They can be summed up in two categories: First, helping their parents to trade in the market or at least they are looking after their parents' selling goods, because their parents are away for a while. Second, they are really traders who sell their own

agricultural products to take to market. However, from their clothing it can be seen that they are in the second category, especially as some of them carry long cloths and are usually used by adult women to carry goods to the market.

From the photos of traders that have been displayed, it can be analyzed that the differences between male and female traders are recognized from the types of trade offered. Female traders usually trade agricultural products and for daily consumption, as can be seen in photos 8 and 10. While male traders offer hair cutting services as seen in photo 9.

CONCLUSION

In the early 20th century, the physical appearance of Bukittinggi market, in terms of facilities and infrastructure has undergone a transformation towards modern. The photo shows infrastructure in the form of roads and trading buildings that have been renovated in such a way. Infrastructure such as roads that are built and beautified aim to facilitate traffic, especially with the presence of motorized transportation such as buses so that it is more efficient, making it easier for traders to get to the market.

Male traders and traderswomen in trading in the Bukittinggi market as has been shown can be concluded in two categories of differences. First, in terms of the goods sold, female traders sell agricultural products, while male traders

are more like building materials and services such as being barbers, coachmen and drivers. Second, in terms of trading places, most female traders display their wares uncertainly, it could be in market stalls, or outside market stalls such as near residents' houses with makeshift preparations using umbrellas. However, such trading places are reluctant to be done by male traders, they have trading places that are even prepared by themselves.

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