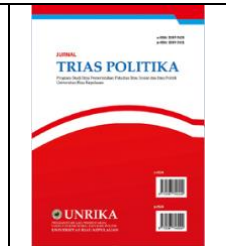


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Journal Homepage : <https://www.journal.unrika.ac.id/index.php/jurnaltriaspolitika>**GELU EPEN CULTURE: RATIONALITY OF THE LOCAL WISDOM-BASED PEOPLE'S MARKET REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

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**Abstract :** This study was designed with a focus on the adoption of Indigenous Public Administration (IPA) values in the development of Indonesian public administration theory and practice, especially in the economic policy sector. This study aims to evaluate and critique the practice of Western Public Administration (WPA) in implementing the traditional market revitalization program and describe the local wisdom value of Gelu Epen practice as a revitalization model. The method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques through interviews, observations and documentation. Data analysis techniques are carried out by data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. This study found four important things. First, the traditional market revitalization program by the government is often criticized for focusing on organizing and developing market buildings, rather than improving the economy, organizing market management and preserving local cultural heritage. Second, the factors causing the failure of the revitalization program include: the intervention of WPA practices, strong government dominance and the neglect of participation from local social and economic institutions. Third, the success of the revitalization of the Waiwuring traditional market cannot be separated from the government's efforts to revive the Gelu Epen (barter) tradition which is a local cultural heritage of Lamaholot. Fourth, the values, norms and principles of Gelu Epen practice such as equality or justice (Ha'ma), mutual trust (No Keni'ine), kinship (Haba Breun) and tolerance (Onga Arep), are maintained to maintain the achievement of the economic and social functions of the Waiwuring market.

**Keywords :** barter; indigenous public administration; revitalization; people's market; local wisdom.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Indigenous Public Administration (IPA) has become a popular topic among researchers who want the importance of developing public administration theories and practices that are more contextual to public needs (Riggs, 1979; Saputra et al, 2018). IPA became an important theme along with the emergence of criticism of Western Public Administration (WPA), which dominated the mainstream of public administration development. Although claimed to be successful in developed countries, WPA was considered irrelevant when applied in developing countries (Suripto et al., 2021). Science has characteristics that are able to respond to local culture so that it is considered more contextual to resolve the complexity of public problems in countries with diverse local wisdom, such as in Asia, Africa and South America (Cheung, 2013; Drechsler, 2013; Saputra, 2018).

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Studies on science have been conducted previously, such as (Henderson, 1995) which explains that IPA is an indigenous approach to administration so it is worthy of being developed in public administration studies (Saputra et al, 2018). Other research provides reinforcement by emphasizing the need for a traditional approach to administration to study IPA (Cao, 1990; Hoadley, 2006; Kim, 2012; Suripto et al., 2021). Practically, the application of IPA in public administration is not inevitable and its traces can be found in third countries, whose national history was formed since the kingdom era. In Asia, China and South Korea are the loci of IPA implementation that are most often documented by researchers. In China, public administration reform is built on three important pillars, namely, centralization, merit system and independence, which refer to ancient Chinese administration and Confucian values (Cao, 1990; Suripto et al., 2021). As a result, China experienced a great leap in various fields such as economy, science and technology and military. Similarly, the influence of Confucianism also influenced public administration reform in South Korea which had an impact on the progress and independence of the economy after the economic crisis in the late 1990s (Kwon et al., 2006; Saputra et al, 2018).

Although it is considered to have a positive influence on the adoption of cultural values and local wisdom in public administration practices, the penetration of the IPA approach is still dominant in the fields of bureaucratic reform, law enforcement and protection of indigenous peoples' rights. In fact, the development of IPA theory and practice is important to be adopted in other public administration practices, one of which is in the field of economic policy. Research on IPA in the field of economics has been conducted in several countries. Research in Sweden says that the IPA approach is actualized in the Swedish Arctic policy to protect national economic growth and the rights of indigenous peoples of the Sami, Nents and Komi tribes, from NATO-Russia tensions and to avoid the threat of environmental damage (Khlopina Anastasia & Mykola Gnatiuk, 2013). In Indonesia, a recent study was conducted (Enala et al., 2024) which explains that the neglect of indigenous peoples' participation has an impact on economic disparities and social conflicts after the expansion of the palm oil industry in Merauke. However, the results of the search found that there has been no research on the integration of the IPA approach in the implementation of the people's market revitalization program.

The traditional market revitalization program began after the issuance of Law Number 7 of 2014 concerning Trade. The revitalization program aims to change the physical form and management of traditional markets so that they can survive and compete with modern markets in the era of the global economy (Juliarta & Darsana, 2016). Revitalization of traditional markets is carried out by carrying out four basic principles, namely physical, economic, management and social revitalization (Rohman & Larasati, 2023). Physical revitalization includes repairs and improvements to the quality of buildings, economic revitalization related to accommodation of formal and informal economic activities (local economic development), management revitalization to build market management and determine standard operating procedures for market management, social revitalization related to creating an attractive environment, having a positive impact and improving the dynamics and social life of the community (Nayoan et al., 2021).

Although the revitalization of traditional markets has been widely studied, existing studies still tend to focus on physical and economic aspects, while social and cultural dimensions have not received much attention. Research (Permana, 2024) highlights that market modernization is often only oriented towards infrastructure and governance without considering community-based economic systems. The study from (Muñiz & Aquino, 2024) found that market modernization in various countries can erode culturally based economic practices that have become part of the local community's heritage. Other studies state that the success of revitalizing traditional markets depends not only on the physical aspects, but also

on how socio-cultural values are still accommodated in the local trading system (Putra & Rudito, 2015). One of the people's economic practices that is increasingly marginalized due to modernization is the barter system, which, although still persists in some areas, is increasingly being replaced by a money-based economy (Polanyi, 1957; Uyan, 2017).

Research on barter in public policy has been conducted in various countries, but is still very limited, especially in relation to the revitalization of traditional markets. Studies (Ngundu & Matemane, 2023) in South Africa shows that barter is still a trading strategy for communities with limited access to modern finance. While (Khammari et al., 2024) found that barter in rural areas developed as a form of economic adaptation in the face of global price fluctuations. However, in national economic policies, barter is often considered an outdated mechanism and receives little academic attention (Noguera, 2011). Barter still has potential as a trading mechanism that supports local economic sustainability, but has not been integrated into public policy in many countries (Polanyi, 1957; Khammari et al., 2024). In Indonesia, (Indroyono, 2013) emphasizes that the revitalization of traditional markets has adopted more monetary-based economic approaches and ignored alternative economic systems such as barter. This gap shows that there has been no study that explicitly links the barter system to the strategy of revitalizing traditional markets in Indonesia, even though the barter system still functions as part of the local wisdom-based economic heritage.

The Waiwuring traditional market in Witiham District, East Flores Regency is one of the traditional markets that still uses barter as a means of transaction. Barter in the local language is called Gelu Epen. The Gelu Epen tradition involves two local communities, namely the mountain community (Ata Kiwan) and the coastal fishing community (Ata Watan). Gelu Epen is part of local wisdom that has high socio-cultural values such as equality or justice (Ha'ma), mutual trust (No Keni'ine), kinship (Haba Breun) and tolerance (Onga Arep). The revitalization program also took place in the Waiwuring market by the local village government in 2022. Uniquely, the revitalization was not carried out by building or arranging market buildings but focused on reviving the Gelu Epen practice which had disappeared since 2016.

Research on the revitalization of traditional markets generally still focuses on physical aspects (Ardhiansyah et al., 2022), economy (Nayoan et al., 2021), and management (Utari et al., 2024), while studies from a socio-cultural perspective are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate and criticize the implementation of Western Public Administration (WPA) in the traditional market revitalization program that emphasizes physical modernization without considering the socio-cultural values of the local community and to describe the values, norms, and principles in the Gelu Epen practice as part of local wisdom that can be integrated into the traditional market revitalization policy based on Customary Public Administration (IPA). This study seeks to answer three main questions: first, how does the implementation of WPA practices impact the success of traditional market revitalization? Second, how does the Gelu Epen practice contribute to the sustainability of the Waiwuring traditional market from a social, economic, and cultural perspective? Third, how can IPA values be adapted in the traditional market revitalization policy to be more contextual to the needs of the local community? By answering these questions, this study provides theoretical contributions to the development of IPA in public administration as well as practical implications for the government in designing more inclusive and sustainable policies for traditional market revitalization in various regions.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is a research process that aims to understand social phenomena and problems faced by humans through in-depth methodology. (Creswell, 2018). A qualitative approach is used to explore in detail the implementation of the traditional market revitalization program in Indonesia, especially in East Flores Regency, and to examine the practice of the Gelu Epen

system that takes place in the Waiwuring traditional market. In addition, this study also uses a case study design to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of Gelu Epen in local market mechanisms.

The population in this study includes all actors who play a role in the Waiwuring traditional market activities and the implementation of traditional market revitalization policies in East Flores Regency. The sample selection technique was carried out using the purposive sampling method, namely informants were selected intentionally based on their relationship to the research object (Patton MQ., 2002). The informants involved in this study included officials of the Industry and Trade Service of East Flores Regency, the Village Head and his staff in Waiwuring Village, local traditional figures, the surrounding community, traders at Waiwuring market, and market visitors. The number of informants interviewed ranged from 15 to 20 people, with the consideration that data collection was stopped if the information obtained had reached saturation point or no new relevant information was found.

The main instrument in this study is a semi-structured interview guideline that is compiled based on a literature review and research objectives. To ensure the validity of this instrument, consultation with experts and triangulation of sources were carried out (Creswell, 2018). In addition to interviews, this study also used observation sheets to record various Gelu Epen transaction activities that occurred in the Waiwuring traditional market. In addition, documentation in the form of policies related to market management, regional regulations, village regulations, and various relevant research reports and academic journals were also collected as supporting data. Data collection was carried out in several stages. The initial step taken was to conduct a literature study to gain a deep understanding of the theories related to this study. Furthermore, interview guidelines and observation sheets were prepared based on the findings of the literature study. Primary data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with selected informants, which aimed to explore information related to Gelu Epen practices and the implementation of market revitalization policies. In addition, direct participatory observation was carried out at the Waiwuring market to observe ongoing economic activities. Secondary data collection was carried out by reviewing various documents and policy archives related to traditional market regulations.

In this study, data were analyzed using interactive analysis techniques developed by Miles and Huberman (Palan Peten et al., 2023). The analysis process begins with data reduction, which is classifying, filtering, and simplifying data to keep it relevant to the research objectives. The next step is to present the data in narrative or tabular form to find meaningful relationship patterns. Finally, the process of drawing conclusions and verification is carried out to understand the meaning of the data that has been obtained. To support this qualitative analysis, NVivo software is used, which helps in coding data and identifying patterns that emerge from interviews and observations (Brandao, 2015).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Existence of People's Markets and the Dynamics of Revitalization Programs**

Historically, people's markets in Indonesia are thought to have existed since the time of the Kutai Kartanegara kingdom in the 4th century AD (Junaidi, 2018; Lamawuran & Nyong, 2021). The first record of the existence of traditional markets in Indonesia was found in the 10th century through the Mpu Sindok inscription which refers to traditional markets as Pkan (Junaidi, 2018; Lamawuran & Nyong, 2021). People's markets are part of the people's economy which plays an important role in advancing Indonesia's economic growth (Rohman & Larasati, 2023). Traditional markets have a natural competitive advantage because they are in strategic locations, have a large transaction space, access to cheap prices and prioritize a bargaining system (Baso & Arafat, 2024). The transaction system used is by bargaining and exchanging or bartering (Febrianty, 2013).

However, the existence of traditional markets in Indonesia has experienced a significant decline. Survey (Nielsen, 2013) stated that in 2007 the number of traditional markets was around 13,550 units, dropping to 13,450 units in 2009 and remaining at 9,950 units in 2011 (Juliarta & Darsana, 2016). The report of the Indonesian Market Traders Association (APPSI) stated that at least 400 traditional markets were closed during the period 2007-2013 (Nida, 2014). There are two reasons behind the fading existence of traditional markets, first because of the existing condition of traditional markets and second because of the proliferation of modern markets. Research (Nida, 2014) stated that there are a number of latent problems in traditional markets such as poor cleanliness and waste disposal, lack of parking spaces, poor air circulation, and the proliferation of street vendors (PKL). The growth of modern markets, which reached 31.4% from 2005-2023, also contributed to the degradation of the existence of traditional markets in Indonesia (Nida, 2014).

Responding to the downward trend of traditional markets, the Indonesian government then issued Law Number 7 of 2014 concerning Trade. Through this regulation, the government took two important decisions. First, changing the term traditional market to people's market to give the impression of a modern people's market. Second, establishing a people's market revitalization program (Ayuningsasi, 2011). The traditional market revitalization program in Indonesia is run by the central government and local governments. The revitalization agenda by the central government began in 2005-2019 during the first term of President Joko Widodo's administration through Trade Ministerial Regulation Number 37 of 2017 (amendment of Trade Ministerial Regulation Number 61 of 2015). Through this regulation, the central government provides space for district/city governments to submit proposals for development/revitalization to the Minister of Trade with a copy to the Minister of Public Works and Public Housing. The proposal is further processed by the Ministry of Trade by considering the fulfillment of the requirements that have been set. The implementation of the revitalization program uses a mechanism of division of powers in its technical implementation, where the central government is authorized for physical revitalization, while the points of management, physical and social revitalization are delegated to the local government. Furthermore, the physical arrangement activities by the central government are carried out with national standardization, starting from types A, B, C, and D which are determined based on criteria including market operating hours, trader capacity and land area (Minister of Trade Regulation Number 37 of 2017). The central government is targeting 5,000 market units to be revitalized from 2015-2019. By the end of 2019, the total number of people's markets that have been revitalized is 5,287 units (Shashanty & Nurhaeni, 2023). The traditional market revitalization program is claimed to be a success because the realization of the program exceeds the specified target. The implementation of the revitalization program in several areas is also considered to have a positive impact on changing the image of traditional markets that look more modern and far from the impression of being dirty and shabby (Rohman & Larasati, 2023).

Although claimed to be successful, the implementation of the revitalization program has not escaped public criticism. The first criticism came from the Center for People's Economic Studies (PSEK) UGM which assessed that the concept and practice of the people's market revitalization program seemed top down because it was dominated by the role of the central government and prioritized physical changes to the people's market (Indroyono, 2013). In fact, the implementation of the people's market revitalization program in several strategic areas tends to be liberal because the modern physical appearance of the market is directed at providing household products imported from China, Vietnam and Thailand (Indroyono, 2013).

The Indonesian Market Traders Association (APPSI) provided several critical notes regarding the evaluation of the national people's market revitalization program. The core of its criticism includes the slow development of the cooperative ecosystem for business actors which has resulted in the swelling of traders' debts to loan sharks, unilateral governance from

the government which has resulted in minimal participation of traders in determining the amount of rental fees for kiosks, stalls, and market stalls and the unresolved problem of the complexity of the distribution of goods from producers to market traders (Juliarta & Darsana, 2016).

APPSI's findings are reinforced by research in several areas. Research (Triatmojo & Rengga, 2019) in the Rejomulyo market in Semarang City, which revealed the fact that vegetable and fresh fish sellers refused to occupy new stalls and stalls, on the grounds that they were less strategic because they were far from the reach of buyers. Research (Wibawa et al., 2024) in the Gianyar General Market, it was stated that the physical revitalization program had not had a significant impact on increasing traders' turnover. Research in East Flores Regency by (Lamawuran & Nyong, 2021) explained that the revitalization program for the Waiwerang traditional market did not bring about changes in its use because the market building did not match the character of local commerce and market governance had not been regulated with a professional management system so that security problems such as fights still often occurred.

### **WPA Practice Interventions and Revitalization Program Failure**

This section attempts to describe the reasons behind the failure of the implementation of the traditional market revitalization program in Indonesia. The results of the investigation found that the strong practice of WPA and the minimal participation of economic and social institutions were the triggers behind the failure of the implementation of the traditional market revitalization program.

Intervention of WPA practices can be found in the construction of the revitalization program paradigm. PSEK UGM is of the view that the reform of Indonesian economic policy should be designed with a people's economic paradigm so that the government focuses on renewing market management that guarantees economic justice (Indroyono, 2013). The revitalization agenda should be directed to reorient the vision and mission, strengthen the work ethic of market business actors, change the perspective of market management, encourage trader independence and revive the cooperative spirit to improve trader welfare (Indroyono, 2013). The current revitalization paradigm is more influenced by global trade liberalization policies so that the focus of revitalization is limited to the development and physical improvement of markets to meet consumer tastes such as in modern markets (Indroyono, 2013).

From this criticism, it can be said that the orientation of the people's market revitalization program in Indonesia is full of WPA practices like in the United States which prioritizes efficiency, market mechanisms and productivity in the mainstream of public administration (Saputra et al, 2018). The intervention of the WPA approach not only affects the revitalization paradigm that is contrary to the mandate of the constitution. Furthermore, the practice of WPA which prioritizes individualistic orientation and free competition is considered to threaten the local cultural practices of the people's market, such as the spirit of brotherhood and kinship, tolerance, loyalty and mutual sharpening, compassion and care.

Other WPA practices can be found in the strong dominance of the government in the implementation of the revitalization program. Observing the concept and practice of the revitalization program, it was found that the government has full authority in program governance starting from setting regulations, determining physical revitalization standards, setting proposal procedures and dividing implementation authority (central and regional governments). From a public administration perspective, government dominance is another characteristic of WPA which only accommodates administrative governance at the elite level based on the principle of a single process uniformly with characteristics that prioritize market approaches and policy changes towards privatization (Saputra et al, 2018; Yusuf et al., 2024). In addition, the superiority of the government in some of these aspects is part of the nature of



the WPA as stated by Hamilton and Fayol, who emphasized the importance of centralization in government bureaucracy to protect Human Liberty (Saputra et al., 2018; Lamawuran et al., 2023). Likewise, Weber's idea prioritizes the hierarchy of authority and formal supremacy in regulations, procedures and rules to realize the ideal type of bureaucracy, as well as Gulick's thinking which states the need for a division of labor to support the achievement of a professional bureaucracy (Suripto et al., 2021).

Traditional markets are usually located in rural or urban areas which are more frequently visited by the general public because they provide all the community's needs, have cheap prices, are close to residential areas, sell local farmers' and fishermen's produce and are a space for social and cultural interaction for the local community (Blikololong, 2010). These characteristics indicate that the people's market is in a heterogeneous and dynamic scope. Therefore, solving the people's market problem cannot be done by relying on the dominant role of the government. Public involvement is needed through local economic and social institutions for the efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation. The importance of these two institutions, if needed for two things, first to provide contributive input in program design, second to maintain the momentum of sustainable market management after revitalization.

In the planning stage, public involvement is actually needed to provide suggestions so that the market construction design can be adjusted to the geographical conditions and local economic patterns. The lack of public aspirations makes it difficult for building models of types (A, B, C, D) to be applied universally in each region due to differences in climate and weather in Indonesia (Triatmojo & Rengga, 2019). In addition, the small size of the stalls and stalls are often protested because they are not able to accommodate all the goods for sale and their location is far from the reach of buyers, causing traders to still choose to sell using the spillover market system or sell on the side of the road (Lamawuran & Nyong, 2021).

At the implementation stage, the involvement of economic and social institutions is very important to support the achievement of economic, management and social principles. The involvement of economic institutions such as Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) is needed to increase the income and economic resilience of small traders through the role of cooperatives. The involvement of MFIs is also relied on to educate market managers and business actors so that the increase in economic activities continues to run by paying attention to the order and cleanliness of the market environment. The role of social institutions such as associations or associations is needed to support order and security in the market (Lamawuran & Nyong, 2021). Furthermore, social institutions are important for preserving local wisdom traditions that are characteristic of traditional markets (Ujianti & Dewi, 2021).

### **History, Development and Challenges of Gelu Epen Practices at Waiwuring Market**

Waiwuring is one of the coastal areas located in the east of Adonara Island. At that time, Waiwuring was uninhabited and became a coconut plantation area of the Goran Tokan tribe, a noble group in the Witihama area. In the mid-1960s, the Waiwuring coast was often visited by Bajo sailors who fished around the waters of East Flores Regency. Bajo sailors came and exchanged various seafood with sweet potatoes, bananas, corn and coconuts from farmers. This exchange activity is known as Gelu Epen. In the Lamaholot language, Gelu means exchange and Epen means goods. Gelu Epen is carried out to meet the daily food needs of both groups. In the early 1970s, Bajo sailors were allowed to settle in the Waiwuring coastal area. This incident is said to be the trigger for the start of the intense barter or Gelu Epen practice on the Waiwuring coast.

The intensity of Gelu Epen continued to grow following the arrival of fishermen from Ile Ape (Lembata) and Lamakera (Solor), Alor and Bugis traders who sold rice, sugar and other food needs. The role of Gelu Epen at that time was considered very vital for the Witihama and Ile Ape communities who were often hit by the lean season. Responding to the increasingly

dynamic Gelu Epen phenomenon, traditional leaders from Witihamia and Ile Ape agreed to establish several rules that included transaction mechanisms, exchange rate systems, security systems and Gelu Epen schedules. These rules were ratified in the Tubi Itin Bau Lolon rite or drinking palm wine together. This moment in Lamaholot terminology is called Bele Lewo Ra Tubi Itin Bau Lolon Ra Wule De'i or drinking palm wine together with traditional leaders to establish a market. Since then, the Waiwuring coast has officially become a traditional market that is used together by the Adonara and Lembata communities every Tuesday and Friday.

The transaction mechanism is arranged so that Gelu Epen can run more orderly and regularly. This step begins by arranging coastal people to sit in a row with various seafood they have, while mountain people are directed to occupy a separate location and approach coastal people for transactions, after hearing the sound of a shell trumpet (Kobuloni) blown by the market foreman. Gelu Epen transactions take place from morning to noon under the supervision of foremen who are also tasked with collecting fees. The foremen ensure that every visitor has the same rights (Ha'ma) in the transaction and is free to choose a barter partner according to their needs. Transactions are carried out based on agreement without coercion by upholding an attitude of mutual trust (No Keni'ine). When the Gelu Epen transaction ends, the foremen usually organize visitors, work together to clean the market environment.

In the Waiwuring market, the exchange rate of goods is regulated by the Bonga system or a system of breaking goods from large sizes into smaller/fewer sizes. For example, one large basket of dried corn is broken into the smallest size using a medium in the form of munga (small nyiru), which is exchanged for four medium-sized wet fish or one munga of dried fish. The Bonga system is used so that all goods for sale can be reached by barter partners, while maintaining the principle of justice and preventing monopolistic practices in transactions.

The security system is strictly regulated in the Waiwuring market by imposing a fine of one piece of ivory for anyone who causes a disturbance. The security system aims to provide a sense of security and comfort, create a spirit of kinship (Haba Breun), tolerance and mutual respect (Onga Arep) between market players with different religious, cultural and customary backgrounds.

In the 1990s, the existence of the Gelu Epen Tradition began to fade since the construction of a market building by the East Flores Regency government. The presence of this building had an impact on changes in transaction tools, where barter was no longer the main choice because people started using cash. In the mid-2000s, the Waiwuring market became increasingly quiet, along with the emergence of the Mirek market in the center of Witihamia District and the Lagaloe market in Kelubagolit District. It peaked in 2016, the Waiwuring people's market was closed because there were no more sellers and buyers visiting.

### **Reviewing the Waiwuring People's Market Revitalization Model**

Revitalization of the Waiwuring people's market is one of the priority programs of the Waiwuring Village government in 2022. Revitalization is carried out by not imitating the mainstream revitalization trend which is usually centered on the construction and development of market buildings, but focuses on restoring the Gelu Epen culture in the Waiwuring market. Gelu Epen was revived with the aim of improving the economic welfare of the community and preserving the local culture of ancestral heritage.

The revitalization agenda was carried out as a form of government commitment to improving community welfare through local economic empowerment activities. This step was taken following the government's findings that the closure of the Waiwuring market in 2016 had an impact on declining economic growth in the community. The poverty rate of coastal communities in Waiwuring Village is estimated to reach 10-15%, which also contributes to the 26-28% poverty rate in East Flores Regency from 2017-2022 (BPS East Flores Regency).



Limited access to food is said to have an impact on the increase in the prevalence of stunting in Waiwuring Village, which reached 31.2% in 2020 (East Flores Regency Health Office).

Economic empowerment activities are carried out by forming local economic institutions such as fishermen's cooperatives and fishermen's family savings groups. Interviews with the village government and the community explained that economic growth has increased since the market reopened. Fishermen's cooperatives are very efficient in increasing fishermen's income because they provide joint marketing services and are one of the providers of economic capital for the community. Fishermen's family savings groups are an effective short-term solution to community economic access.

Revitalization is carried out by maintaining several systems as in the past with slight modifications to follow the demands of the needs of today's society. For example, the use of currency as a means of transaction is permitted, specifically to buy seafood from fishermen from Ile Ape. This policy is intended to help Ile Ape fishermen get extra money for transportation costs. The Village Government maintains the sales location as before, namely around the beach without providing buildings or stalls, stalls and permanent kiosks for market players. The goal is to maintain the authentic value of the Gelu Epen tradition as in the past. The Gelu Epen tradition is now carried out every Saturday at 06.00 - 11.00 WITA.

The exchange rate of goods still uses the Bonga system as before to maintain the principles of justice and equality. The results of interviews with several fishermen from Ile Ape explained that the Bonga system in the Waiwuring market is more profitable because they can get agricultural products such as vegetables, fruits, corn and sweet potatoes at a cheaper price than buying them with cash in other markets. For example, the monetary value of a large bucket of fresh fish is IDR 150,000, while the agricultural products obtained with the same size are worth IDR 200,000-250,000. Later, these agricultural products are not only consumed by themselves but also resold, so that the profit value is multiplied.

The Waiwuring Village Government explained that, currently, the Gelu Epen tradition has the potential to become a cultural tourism object that has the potential to accelerate economic growth while opening up new jobs. In order to support this plan, improvements and arrangements are being made to the market environment to be more attractive, providing spots for ikat weaving craftsmen and titi corn craftsmen. In the future, the management plans to require every visitor to rent ikat weaving owned by the craftsmen while transacting at the Waiwuring market. The goal is to increase the income of the craftsmen while preserving East Flores ikat weaving. Currently, market management is under the control of the Waiwuring Village Government by involving BUMDes and Karang Taruna. The tasks of the two groups are to regulate the order and security of the market, maintain the cleanliness of the market environment and manage parking.

### ***Epen's Blur*As a Model for Revitalizing Traditional Markets Based on Local Wisdom**

*Epen's Blur* is one of Lamaholot's cultural heritages that has proven to be a key element in the development and growth of the local economy in the Waiwuring traditional market. The Gelu Epen concept has several socio-cultural values that can be adopted to design a traditional market revitalization program model based on local wisdom. First, the Ha'ma value which means equal and fair. In Lamaholot philosophy, Ha'ma contains the meaning of equal human life or equal rights to access natural resources. In the economic context, Ha'ma is interpreted as equal rights to entrepreneurship. In Gelu Epen, the Ha'ma concept means that everyone has the same rights to access food needs and is free to choose a barter partner according to their needs.

Second, the value of No Keni'ine which means trust or belief. This value has meaning in two different contexts, namely personal and community. In the personal context, it means trust or belief between two individuals who already know each other. In the community context, it

means trust or belief from a community (tribe) that is not necessarily believed or believed by other communities. This value shows that Gelu Epen plays a role in eliminating attitudes of mutual suspicion and individual egos as well as community egos. On the other hand, No Keni'ine can create an attitude of mutual trust between individuals, even though they come from two different communities. No Keni'ine is part of the innocence and uniqueness of the local community culture that is still inherent in the people's market.

Third, the value of Onga Arep literally means to respect or appreciate. The concept of Onga Arep is a form of the highest appreciation and respect between fellow human beings. Onga Arep is also a social norm used to measure a person's behavior in everyday interactions. This means that a person can be appreciated and respected if he treats others the same. Gelu Epen requires the value of Onga Arep so that every visitor should not look down on others, because the principle of the barter market ecosystem prioritizes human values over economic values.

Fourth, the value of Haba Breun which means family. The Lamaholot community believes that the peak of friendship is becoming a family. Haba Breun is the most humanistic approach to managing social interactions that ultimately make anyone a friend, not an enemy. In the context of Gelu Epen, Haba Breun is a form of sincerity, honesty and compassion of a person in giving and receiving. That is why, people are often willing to accept exchange goods, even though the exchange value of the goods is not intact. This means that the Haba Breun principle is able to tolerate economic values with humanitarian values. Haba Breun also emerged to reduce the nature of free competition that can trigger conflict between market players.

The integration of socio-cultural values from Gelu Epen practices is a key factor in the success of the Waiwuring traditional market revitalization program. The revitalization concept that is carried out is very relevant to the economic needs and cultural values that exist in the Waiwuring market. This approach is even more effective and efficient in improving the economic and social functions of the market, without having to spend large costs and go through complicated mechanisms and procedures.

The portrait of success provides important lessons in the design of traditional market revitalization programs in Indonesia. In essence, the existence of a market is not always measured by the strength of financial capital, but also socio-cultural capital. The process of bargaining and exchanging goods is a socio-cultural modality that keeps traditional markets going, even though the condition of the buildings is not as good as modern markets (Garnett, 2013). Thus, internalization of local wisdom values in the design of the traditional market revitalization program is an absolute requirement that must be prioritized by the government. Because the principle of physical revitalization does not always guarantee the success of the traditional market revitalization program.

The phenomenon of the success of the Waiwuring traditional market revitalization program explicitly illustrates that the application of the WPA concept and practice in public administration studies in Indonesia is not always successful in solving local community problems. The empty space left by WPA needs to be supplemented with the IPA approach. Although not a one-best-way approach, IPA is very important because it seeks to explore and develop public administration based on local wisdom values. The IPA perspective comes with the assumption that a solution-oriented public administration is one that involves or considers the importance of local traditions and culture (Basheka, 2015).

## Discussion

Revitalization of people's markets is an economic policy agenda that often experiences challenges in its implementation, especially in developing countries. This study found that revitalization programs that only focus on physical development often do not have a significant

impact on community welfare, as criticized in various previous studies (Rohman & Larasati, 2023; Shashanty & Nurhaeni, 2023). On the other hand, revitalization based on local wisdom, such as the Gelu Epen practice in Waiwuring Market, has proven to be more effective in creating a balance between economy, social, and culture. This practice shows that the barter system is not only a mechanism for exchanging goods but also has an important role in maintaining social cohesion and building a trust-based economic network (Polanyi, 1957; Thompson, 2019). This finding is in line with international studies that highlight the importance of Indigenous Public Administration (IPA) in the context of local wisdom-based economic policies (Kim, 2012; Basheka, 2015).

This study finds that the Western Public Administration (WPA) approach which prioritizes efficiency and market mechanisms is often not in line with the characteristics of local community-based economies in Indonesia, as found in studies of people's economies in various Asian and Latin American countries (Cheung, 2013b; Drechsler, 2013a). In the case of the revitalization of the Waiwuring people's market, the village government adopted a more inclusive approach by reviving the barter system as a form of non-physical revitalization. This step has proven successful in increasing community economic activity and strengthening social values, such as justice (Ha'ma), trust (No Keni'ine), kinship (Haba Breun), and tolerance (Onga Arep). This concept has also been studied in various studies that highlight how culturally based economic practices can contribute to local economic resilience (Garnett, 2013; Polanyi, 1957).

Compared with previous research, the results of this study strengthen the finding that market modernization should not abandon local cultural elements (Ujianti & Dewi, 2021). However, this study also shows that cultural-based market revitalization is not only about maintaining tradition, but also how to adapt traditional economic practices into a more inclusive modern context. In this context, the barter system can be an alternative for people who have limited access to banking and formal financial systems (Uyan, 2017; Khammari et al., 2024). In addition, this approach also opens up opportunities for the development of traditional markets as cultural tourism destinations, which can increase the appeal of the local economy without eliminating the identity of the local community.

The theoretical implications of this research enrich the discourse on Indigenous Public Administration with the emphasis that the success of public policy does not always depend on WPA standards of efficiency and economic rationality, but also on the extent to which the policy is able to accommodate local social and cultural values (Cao, 1990; Kwon et al., 2006; Saputra et al., 2018). This finding supports the perspective that public administration based on local wisdom can be a solution for more participatory and sustainable policies, as stated in various studies on community-based governance in Asia and Africa (Drechsler, 2013; Basheka, 2015).

In practice, this study provides recommendations for policy makers to develop a more inclusive model of traditional market revitalization based on the needs of local communities. First, traditional market revitalization should not only focus on physical development, but also consider the social and cultural aspects inherent in the community's economic structure. Second, strengthening the community-based economy can be done through a barter empowerment system or alternative forms of more inclusive trade, as found in studies of traditional trade in Africa (Ngundu & Matemane, 2023). Third, integration between the local wisdom-based economy and the tourism sector can be an effective strategy in increasing the attractiveness of traditional markets as centers of trade and culture, which not only benefits local traders but also strengthens community identity (Garnett, 2013; Thompson, 2019).

Therefore, this study confirms that the revitalization of traditional markets based on local wisdom is not only an economic strategy, but also an important instrument in preserving culture and more sustainable social development. This approach can be a model for other regions that

want to develop economic policies based on local wisdom without having to lose their traditional identity.

## CONCLUSION

Public administration in Indonesia is still dominated by the Western Public Administration (WPA) approach which often ignores local issues in policy formulation. As a result, many government programs are not fully relevant to the needs of the community. One of them is the revitalization of traditional markets which emphasizes physical development rather than economic development, market management, and preservation of socio-cultural values. This study proves that Indigenous Public Administration (IPA) can be a more contextual alternative in the revitalization of traditional markets by considering the socio-cultural aspects of the local community.

The success of the revitalization of the Waiwuring traditional market cannot be separated from the role of the village government in reviving the Gelu Epen practice. Unlike conventional revitalization which only emphasizes physical development, this approach combines economic and cultural dimensions so that the market remains an inseparable part of people's lives. Socio-cultural values in Gelu Epen, such as Ha'ma (justice), Dori Keni'in (mutual trust), Haba Breun (kinship), and Onga Arep (tolerance), play an important role in maintaining the sustainability of economic activities and strengthening social relations in the community. Thus, market revitalization based on local wisdom not only creates economic benefits, but also strengthens the cultural identity of the local community.

The main contribution of this study lies in the IPA approach in economic policy, especially in the revitalization of traditional markets. This study expands the discourse of public administration by emphasizing that policies based on local wisdom are more effective in responding to community needs compared to the efficiency-oriented WPA revitalization model. In terms of practical implications, this study emphasizes the importance of community involvement in policy formulation so that market revitalization does not only focus on physical aspects, but also maintains local values and traditions. Local governments also need to consider alternative economic systems such as barter, especially in areas with limited access to formal finance.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the study of Customary Public Administration by proving that IPA can be applied not only in governance, but also in economic policy. By adopting the principles of IPA, the government can create policies that are more participatory and in accordance with regional needs, which ultimately increases the effectiveness of public policy as a whole. This study also highlights the need for decentralization in public policy, so that local governments have greater flexibility in implementing policies that are in accordance with the social and economic conditions of local communities.

Despite its significant contribution, this study has several limitations. This study was conducted in an area that is not a top priority in central government policy, so its application on a national scale is still limited. In addition, differences in culture and economic systems in various regions mean that the results of this study cannot be generalized as a whole. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the application of IPA in a broader context, including in urban areas that have different economic and social challenges. Further research can also examine the long-term impact of culture-based revitalization programs on economic sustainability and community resilience.

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