

Keeping Tradition in the Midst of Modernity: The Social Life of Indigenous Communities in Urban Areas

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 14 October 2021

Revised 13 January 2022

Accepted 28 January 2022

Key words:

Indigenous community,
Urban,
Tradition,
Cultural identity,
Adaptation,
Globalization,
Technology.

ABSTRACT

Indigenous communities in urban areas face various challenges in maintaining their traditions and cultural identities as urbanization rapidly progresses. While modernization offers many opportunities, many aspects of culture, such as language, traditional rituals and social structures, are in danger of being lost or marginalized. Indigenous communities are trying to adjust to these changes through various strategies, such as adapting traditional rituals in a more flexible way, using technology to introduce their culture, and building social solidarity within their groups. They continue to face various problems, including social marginalization, difficulties in accessing resources, and threats to their culture due to globalization. Urban indigenous communities show remarkable resilience in maintaining and adapting their traditions, and this provides valuable lessons on how culture can survive in the midst of modernity. Strengthening policies that support cultural diversity and providing more inclusive facilities will greatly support the survival of indigenous cultures in big cities.

INTRODUCTION

The social and cultural lives of indigenous communities in urban areas are often marginalized or altered by the dynamics of rapid modernization and urbanization. Although they maintain strong cultural identities, these communities are often forced to adapt to the demands of fast-paced urban life. Their social lives face changes in values, cultural practices and social structures. Cultural mixing and interactions between diverse groups make their social life more complex, but still provide space for them to maintain long-established traditions and customs. Ethnographic studies can provide insights into how these indigenous communities interact with the urban environment while maintaining their identity.

The process of adaptation has major challenges faced by indigenous communities. Their lives often clash with dominant social norms in urban areas, which can cause tensions in identity formation and tradition preservation. Indigenous communities in urban areas must adapt to social changes, government policies, and interactions with other ethnic and cultural groups. Understanding their social dynamics requires attention to how they preserve customary values and traditions in a complex urban environment.

Indigenous communities in urban areas often face difficulties in maintaining their traditions and cultures amidst the pressures of modernization. Their increasingly marginalized existence amidst urbanization makes it difficult for them to gain access to basic services, education and healthcare. Government policies often do not consider the specific needs of indigenous communities, especially those related to the preservation of their culture. Reliance on informal employment and more vulnerable economic sectors exacerbates this situation, hindering their development within the broader urban society. The public's ignorance of the uniqueness and cultural values of indigenous communities also exacerbates social tensions.

The social and cultural identity of indigenous communities is often threatened by rapid assimilation processes. This process sometimes leads to the erosion of indigenous values that are no longer considered relevant in urban life. Younger members of indigenous communities often feel alienated from their cultural heritage, while their elders struggle to preserve increasingly forgotten traditions. The disparity between older and younger generations also creates a gap in terms of acceptance and preservation of inherited social values.

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Maintaining cultural diversity amidst urbanization becomes a complex issue for indigenous communities living in cities.

Observing the social lives of indigenous communities in urban areas is crucial to understanding how social, cultural and economic dynamics affect them in a constantly evolving urban environment. This study can provide insights into how they adapt to social changes without losing their cultural identity. We can better appreciate their contribution to cultural diversity in cities and see how social policies and practices can better support their existence by understanding the challenges indigenous communities face. This cultural diversity is also important for creating an inclusive society, where the rights of every group are respected and nurtured.

The purpose of this study is to understand how urban indigenous communities are adapting to social and economic changes without compromising their cultural identity. The study will explore the ways in which they maintain their traditions in an increasingly complex urban life and provide insights into the challenges they face, as well as how this affects the social interactions and development of the younger generation in these communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is a literature study approach, which aims to collect and analyze various written sources related to the social life of indigenous communities in urban areas. This approach allows researchers to identify trends, concepts and findings that already exist in previous studies and enriches the understanding of social and cultural interactions related to urbanization. The literature review included previous studies that examined indigenous community dynamics, cultural identity and the challenges faced in adapting to urban life. One of the main advantages of this approach is the ability to examine multiple perspectives from different studies without the need for direct field data collection (Babbie, 2016). Researchers can explore relevant theories and empirical findings to understand the phenomenon from a wider range of perspectives by using existing literature.

This literature study will focus on works that examine the social, cultural and economic aspects of indigenous communities in urban areas, and how they interact with the wider social environment. The researcher will identify literature that describes the social life of indigenous communities, their strategies in maintaining traditions, and the challenges faced in maintaining their identity amidst modernization.

One important reference is the work by Clifford (2009), which discusses ethnography and the study of cultural identity in the modern world, and its contribution to the development of an understanding of cultural interaction in cities. Previous research has also indicated the importance of understanding how indigenous peoples build and maintain their social solidarity despite being in a fast-paced and diversified urban environment (Hale, 2004).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indigenous communities living in urban areas often face great challenges in maintaining their traditions and cultural identities amidst the rapid flow of modernization. The process of rapid urbanization often changes the social and cultural order that indigenous communities have long practiced. They try to strike a balance between maintaining their cultural heritage and conforming to the prevailing social norms of urban society. As a result, their identities are often marginalized, neglected or even threatened with loss, although they still strive to maintain the cultural values that have been passed down from generation to generation.

One important aspect of this adaptation is strategies to preserve indigenous languages and rituals. In many indigenous communities, language is a key element in the preservation of their traditions and identity. It is not only a means of communication, but also a medium for transmitting stories, history and socio-cultural values. In urban areas, where the influence of national and international languages is strong, indigenous languages are often endangered. Indigenous communities then attempt to teach the language to their younger generation through various activities such as language courses and organizing cultural events that involve the use of indigenous languages (Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

Customary traditions and rituals are also an integral part of the social life of indigenous communities. In big cities, rituals that are usually performed in villages or indigenous territories are often disrupted due to space and time constraints. Fast-paced and crowded urban life makes customary practices that require considerable time and space difficult to carry out in accordance with the original tradition. Some indigenous communities in urban areas have managed to adapt their rituals in a more flexible way. For example, they hold traditional ceremonies on a small scale or utilize public spaces to hold cultural events, such as traditional markets or art performances (Smith, 2012). These efforts are not always positively received by more dominant urban communities, who often see such cultural practices as archaic or irrelevant.

Indigenous communities in urban areas also face challenges in maintaining their social structures. Social life of many indigenous communities relies heavily on close family ties and the principle of gotong-royong. These values in urban areas are often eroded by individualism and fast-paced lifestyles. The fragmented nature of city life makes it difficult for indigenous communities to maintain their internal solidarity. Factors such as high mobility, physical distance between community members, and individuals' busy urban lives reduce opportunities for regular interaction. They often find ways to build social networks that support them in the face of adversity, such as forming community groups or indigenous associations that serve as platforms for maintaining solidarity and cultural identity (Anderson, 2015). It is also a place where they can celebrate their traditions together, despite being in a fast-paced and fragmented urban environment.

Changes in the economic sector have also affected the social lives of indigenous communities in urban areas. Many indigenous community members who previously made a living from agriculture or handicrafts are now forced to work in the informal sector or become migrant workers to survive in the city. This has forced them to adapt to a more capitalistic and competitive urban economy. Meanwhile, they still try to maintain their traditional occupations, even though it is difficult to balance them with the demands of a modern economy that emphasizes productivity and profit (Hale, 2004). Changes in consumption patterns and market tastes have also marginalized their traditional products. Some indigenous communities are working to adapt their traditional skills to meet the needs of urban markets while maintaining their cultural heritage.

Many indigenous communities have developed unique forms of adaptation in the face of modernization. One of them is to utilize technology to promote their culture. For example, many indigenous communities are utilizing social media and digital platforms to share stories, cultural documentation and information about their customary activities. This allows them to reach a wider audience and introduce their culture to younger generations who are more exposed to the digital world (Brettell, 2013). It also gives them more control over the way their culture is presented and preserved, despite being in the midst of the ever-evolving currents of modernity. This use of technology is one of the ways they maintain their cultural presence in an increasingly globalized world. This is very important to ensure that their culture is not lost or eroded by foreign cultures, and can continue to be preserved for generations to come.

While technology provides opportunities, its negative impacts are also inevitable. Globalization driven by technological advances often brings dominant cultures that threaten the sustainability of local cultures. Indigenous cultures that are maintained through social media actually become distorted, as they are adapted to global trends or modified to be more easily accepted by a wide audience (Appadurai, 1996). This process can lead to a loss of cultural authenticity and produce hybrid cultural forms that are far removed from the original values. Cultures that were once unique and deeply rooted in local contexts may now seem more like commercialized, mass-consumed products. When elements of local culture are forced to adapt to broader global norms, they often lose the distinctiveness and authenticity that characterized them.

Indigenous communities also often face marginalization in various aspects of urban life, be it in education, health services, or participation in political decision-making. They often do not have adequate access to the facilities and resources needed to thrive in cities. For example, young people from indigenous communities often face difficulties in adjusting to a formal education system that does not always accommodate indigenous values. This can prevent them from obtaining equal education and potentially reduce their chances of accessing better jobs (Barker, 2005).

Indigenous communities in cities are often overlooked in urban planning and government policies. Decisions taken by city governments often do not take into account the specific needs of indigenous communities, such as access to community spaces or facilities that support indigenous practices. They often feel marginalized and excluded from urban planning processes that should be inclusive. They need to fight for their rights through more effective representation in local government structures or by forming alliances with larger groups to gain social justice and better access to resources (Escobar, 2008). This cooperation can give them strength and open up space.

Most urban indigenous communities also experience difficulties in maintaining togetherness within their families. In indigenous communities, family structures tend to be more collective, with family members depending on each other. Life in the city often leads to more independent individuals and so the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation become increasingly difficult to maintain. This can create tension between family members, especially between the younger generation who are more influenced by city values and the older generation who cling to tradition (Gellner, 1995).

Adaptation to social change in urban areas can also affect the way indigenous communities educate their children. Indigenous communities often have specific ways of educating children that are strongly linked to cultural experiences and customary values. In urban areas, where the education system is more structured and academically focused, children from indigenous communities can feel alienated or irrelevant to the education they receive. This can affect their sense of identity, especially if they are not given space to learn about their own culture and traditions at school (Nash, 2002).

Many urban indigenous communities continue to struggle to maintain their cultural existence. Their efforts to adapt to the modern world while maintaining long-established traditions show that they have remarkable cultural resilience. They survive, and thrive in the face of change, both in maintaining their cultural heritage and in the face of ongoing social change.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion of the adaptation of indigenous communities in urban areas is that they face various challenges in maintaining their traditions and cultural identities amidst modernization. Indigenous communities have to struggle to maintain their culture, especially in terms of language, traditional rituals, and social structures, which are sometimes in danger of being lost due to the urbanization process that changes their living patterns. Many indigenous communities have managed to develop unique adaptation strategies, such as utilizing technology to preserve their culture and maintain social relations within their communities. Factors such as social marginalization, lack of access to resources, and the influence of globalization remain major challenges for them.

It is important for indigenous communities to continue to fight for their rights in the public sphere, whether in the education, health or political sectors. They need to build stronger solidarity and social networks in urban environments in order to survive and continue to maintain their traditions. More inclusive government policies and recognition of cultural diversity will also greatly support their efforts to maintain their social and cultural identity. The efforts of indigenous communities to adapt to the

urban world while maintaining their traditions show how important cultural values are for their survival in the midst of increasingly dominating modernity.

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*Amri, M. W. & R. K. Khayru. (2022). Keeping Tradition in the Midst of Modernity: The Social Life of Indigenous Communities in Urban Areas, *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(1), 135 – 138.