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COFFEE SHOPS AS SPACE FOR THE CULTURAL PRODUCTION IN URBAN SOCIETY

Abstract

This study aims to examine the coffee culture and cultural production in two shops in Pekanbaru city, Indonesia, namely Arifin Ahmad and Ronggowarsito streets. In this study, a phenomenological analysis perspective was employed, and the results exhibited that the cultural ecosystem built between the two regions differs in response to the coffee culture in Pekanbaru city. The cultural phenomenon similarly leads to a different character of the urban community. Moreover, the coffee shops at Arifin Ahmad street still respond to traditional forms and are transformed into modern views, while shops at Ronggowarsito create characteristics of an urban community.

Keywords: café culture, cultural phenomenon, coffee shop, urban society.

Introduction

Drinking coffee has become a habit due to the caffeine content, making people consume it daily. Besides, coffee is the most frequently consumed and traded commodity as caffeine is the most popular substance in the world (Weinberg & Bealer, 2004; Topik, 2009; Courtwright, 2001). The habit of drinking coffee is carried out at home and outside, making its development rapid in the urban community. Furthermore, coffee shops have been in existence for approximately 500 years and have become a growing global phenomenon (Tucker, 2017; Kjeldgaard & Ostberg, 2007; Korf, 2002). Coffee culture has also become a cross-cultural meeting since the culture spreads from one area to another (Thomas, 1983; Farokhah & Wardhana, 2017; Sprain & Boromisza-Habashi, 2012). This culture shifts from drinking coffee at home to its consumption in a shop (Adam, 2012; Lai, 2012; Nurhasanah & Dewi, 2019).

The current culture of drinking coffee is no longer primordial; the biological activity of con-

suming drinks, but there are now prestigious social values in drinking (Smith Maguire & Hu, 2013; Friedner, 2013; Huang, Chang, Yeh, & Liao, 2014). This is exposed by the proliferation of coffee packaged exclusively for enjoyment. Consequently, coffee has become a favourite drink of the world's population and was considered by entrepreneurs to be developed into a commodity of exploitation. The presence of coffee shops is an inseparable part of the urban lifestyle, where people hang out to discuss and drink coffee (Roseberry, 1996; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Chang & McGonigle, 2020).

Pekanbaru is the capital of Riau Province in Indonesia and also the centre of economy and business, particularly in central Sumatra. Moreover, the advance of this city's development is expeditious with the rapid growth of economic and business centres. Coffee shops in the city have sprung up in almost every area and are growing in the financial and business centres. In Pekanbaru, the two sites indicated as places for coffee shops include the Ronggowarsito and the Arifin Ahmad Street areas. In the meantime, the

primary point that triggers the expansion of these shops is the culture of drinking coffee. This city is the centre of Riau province and home to the majority of ethnic Malays. A previous identification is that drinking coffee is the cultural identity of the Malay community (Lee, 2017; Khoo, 2009).

Pekanbaru city, as a modern city, has built this city heterogeneous as a modern city. Moreover, the development in multiple sectors, especially the economy, has made this city a magnet for new people from different cultural backgrounds. Since the culture of drinking coffee has become the cultural identity of the Malay community, this habit remains practised even though the city has become large and diverse. This makes the culture more popular and lively and has become the identity of urban people influenced by globalization. Piliang (2011) described globalization as a process of expanding the influence of capitalism and the liberal democratic system, which leads to cultural hegemony and makes every place equal, whether in the form of architecture, fashion, gadgets, and others (Robinson & Harris, 2000)

Currently, the consumptive community's behaviour influences coffee's cultural production. This production forms an identity that produces cultural phenomena. Hence, the phenomenon of coffee shops in Pekanbaru city is generated by the cultural background of the Malay community that has a habit of drinking coffee (Lee, 2017).

In this study, the phenomenon was employed as the basic assumption, which specified that the culture of drinking coffee in Pekanbaru represents the cultural identity of the Malay community or emerges later as a lifestyle of urban society. Accordingly, this study is designed to examine the coffee culture and cultural production in two shops, namely Arifin Ahmad and Ronggowarsito street, Pekanbaru city, Indonesia.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted in the frame of cul-

tural studies using Pierre Bourdieu's production field. In this study, culture is understood as a form that is actively produced through a complex process. S. Hall (1997) defined that culture emphasizes production, representation, consumption, regulation, and identity to determine cultural practices and represents the processes by which it is constructed. Additionally, culture is not a dead artefact; it is understood as everything related to the production of meaning or the practice of social importance. A. Gray (2003) said that culture is conceived as a product of complicated processes. On the other hand, it is widely defined as the formation of purpose or signifying practice that occurs at all levels of society and points in time during cultural processes.

Several studies have captured the symptoms or phenomena of cultural communities, particularly the cultural production field created by coffee shops in Pekanbaru. In conformity with Bourdieu, production is grounded in three inter-related concepts: field, capital, and habitus. Meanwhile, this study focused only on the field of cultural production related to the object used.

The field of cultural production is a dynamic concept where changes in agents' positions inevitably lead to variation in the field structure. A previous study indicated that a field is a place or space that is fluid with changes that are not fixed and constant (Karnanta, 2013). Similarly, P. Bourdieu (2010) stated that in the field, agents occupying various available positions (or creating new ones) are involved in competing skills for control of interests or resources.

Additionally, P. Bourdieu (1983) affirmed that few fields illustrated the heuristic power of relational reasoning more explicitly than art and literature. The construction of a literary field requires and enables a radical break with the substantial mode of reasoning (as Ernst Cassirer refers to it), which emphasizes or creates interaction between the individual for structural relations through influential social positions that are occupied and manipulated.

The fields are autonomous. Hence, there is a

stake in power to fight for a position to attain a dominant role. This position is determined by the distribution of particular capital to actors within the field that are called agents after achieving the goals. A previous study by P. Bourdieu (2010) displayed a successive sequence of movements in a structured (hiérarchical) space by an agent that had changes and distortions in the distribution structure of the various types of the economic prosperity of the respective capital. Besides, Bourdieu mentioned that the fight of the agent in cultural production is focused on gaining a position in the current field.

P. Bourdieu (2006) defined variants are a system of capital conversion or exchange and a reproduction strategy. The process of capital conversion refers to the mobility of an agent in the social space derived from the exchange and formation of its capital that is applicable in the field. Meanwhile, the reproductive strategy refers to the ways agents process, expand, maintain, and accumulate the means (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Moore, 2007; Kamanta, 2013).

Methodology

The primary data of this study were coffee shops in Pekanbaru city on the Arifin Ahmad and Ronggowarsito streets. In this study, a phenomenological approach was performed qualitatively to determine the informants' understanding of the phenomena that appear in their consciousness and are considered entities such as things that exist in the world. Moreover, Orleans stated that phenomenology gives a detailed information consciousness (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological approaches are more effective in describing rather than explaining subjective realities, insights, beliefs, motivation, actions, and folk wisdom (Husserl, 1925/1977). A previous study by Heidegger (Moustakas, 1994:26) exhibited that phenomenon from the term *phaino* means bringing and placing in the light, identifying itself, and the totality of what appears behind.

In this study, steps are taken to assess, recognize, and determine whether the events appear include reality. The use of language serves as a means of typification to explain the existence and content (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). Several studies have disclosed and explained in detail that the events that occurred are part of daily behaviour. The data were obtained using observation techniques that are made directly with the participant in nature. The observation was conducted at the coffee shop by examining the activities taking place, and an interview was conducted with fifteen randomly selected customers.

Furthermore, seven owners of the coffee shop were interviewed to understand the management concept and the characteristics of customers that usually drink coffee. This was conducted to determine the exact field of cultural production that is built and created in the coffee shop. All answers provided were recorded, and informants were given a chance for confirmation.

The data obtained were analyzed through descriptions and experiences at the coffee shop. Furthermore, the field of cultural production was described in the two regions and compared with each other.

Result and Discussion

From Traditional to Modernity

Traditionally, coffee shops are not just places to drink coffee for Malay society but also a space for social interaction. Coffee shops are an entity that exists among other cultural entities (Moulay, Ujang, & Said, 2017; Erman, 2016). For the Malay cultural community, coffee shops have become information, negotiation, and transaction room, where different activities are carried out (Ramele & Yamazaki, 2013; Igiyasi, 2017).

Cities are centres of economic and cultural growth (Hoselitz, 1955; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007) characterised by a lifestyle development. Thus, the coffee shop is a manifestation of a lifestyle that has become a phenomenon in cities where the shops are proliferating (Solika-

tun, Kartono, & Demartoto, 2015; Said, 2017).

In Pekanbaru, the new coffee shops are increasing rapidly. Therefore, this study focused on two places with high concentration and development of coffee shops, namely Ronggowarsito and Arifin Ahmad streets. Based on the observations, the growth of these two coffee shop concentrations is categorized into two different types. Conversely, the growing shops on Arifin Ahmad street are dominated by coffee with the Aceh Coffee Shop style. In this pattern, there is competition for the superiority of the menu that characterizes Aceh, such as Acehese coffee and tea, cane bread, to the presentation of Acehese noodles. Hence, the shops in the field of cultural production are characterized by Acehese coffee.

One of the shops used as an object in this study is Leng Coffee, an Aceh-style shop in the Arifin Ahmad street full of customers. In addition, this shop likewise opened other outlets for traders to join and make sales from wares. This coffee shop is significantly spacious with a large parking area, and the design is an open concept that is not confined by walls. As the owner attests, this concept is ideal because, with open space, customers feel at home by sitting for hours and not feeling cramped or hot. Meanwhile, Ade, the owner of Leng Coffee, mentioned: *“The Malay culture of drinking coffee is popular, where costumers sit for hours, even alternate sitting friends, and exchange tables as well. This habit needs to be eased; therefore, Leng Coffee made it possible for customers to feel at home, sit comfortably for hours, make it an open public space, and avoid being exclusive!”*

Ade’s statement likewise emphasized that the owner of Leng Coffee is implementing capital conversion and reproductive strategies. The apparent strategy of capital conversion showed that the owners consciously convert the assets for social use. Moreover, the field is an office and business area, where the coffee shop is conceptualized to support and facilitate drinking activities and habits for customers from economic sectors

or company employees. In line with the observation, this strategy is to open Leng Coffee customers from various circles, with each table having different processes, including business people, company employees, traders, salespeople, lawyers, marketing banks, merchants, freelancers, and even students.

According to Tomi, a marketing banker and regular customer at Leng Coffee, sitting for hours at the coffee shop almost every day is not just to drink coffee. It opens up opportunities to meet and interact with many new people and get more customers. Furthermore, Tomi stated that it is difficult to meet people directly after this pandemic, then an agreement is reached to meet because the person does not want to be visited. This is due to the fear of contracting the virus. Hence, it is agreed to meet in a neutral place such as a coffee shop.

This situation is also not significantly different from other coffee shops in the Arifin Ahmad area. In terms of design, the shop is similar to the Leng Coffee, which is wide and open with tables lined up and broad. As mentioned by the shop owner, it responds to the coffee culture of the Malay community that sits and drinks coffee for hours as well. These responses are used by agents, the shop owner that forms the capital to develop a reproductive strategy and build a comfortable place for customers to sit for hours, even all day.

Such responses are indeed used by agents, the coffee shop owner, as the person who forms the capital to develop a reproductive strategy. With a reproductive strategy, agents build a comfortable for customers to sit for hours, even all day.

The owner of Kupi Atjeh explained that the pivotal matter is for customers to be comfortable with the atmosphere and service. It makes customers feel at home for hours doing business transactions or completing work. Thereupon, any form of entertainment such as live music or others is not essential and sometimes avoided because it disturbs customers’ comfort.

Furthermore, Angga, one of Kupi Atjeh’s

customers and an employee at a company in the Arifin Ahmad street area, stated that since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been enough time to sit in coffee shops. This is because the company's policy to comply with health protocols after the pandemic declared that employees in the office must not be more than 50%. Consequently, the hours when the customer had to be outside the office are used to sit in the coffee shop. As stated by Anga, instead of wandering around, customers rather sit at the coffee shop waiting for hours to be at the office. This is because sitting in the shop helps meet many friends and gives opportunities to discuss other possible ventures in today's difficult situation.

This description exposed that coffee shops are not just a wasteful society's response to lifestyle needs. Thereupon, as a form of cultural tool, these shops have adapted to the needs of people. Although the concept of the coffee shops responds to the present times, traditional elements such as free space, wide and long tables, and benches are still felt in the form of conventional response that existed, and its values indirectly apply in society. In addition, the concept of the shop's shape likewise portrays the traditional character of the Malay community, and the classifications are merged so that there is no division among the existing classes of society. Since types in urban culture are classified as rooted in occupation and material, then interaction among classes is possible with the concept of a coffee shop space.

Some owners are aware of the fusion of this class of society; therefore, the coffee shop was conceptually detached, notably in the Arifin Ahmad area. Along with the Leng Coffee shop owner, creating a unique space is detrimental to the shop; hence, people reluctantly enter, and a particular stigma is built up. Although the concept of this coffee shop room is free, it is usually utilized for meetings by a specific community or group.

Romi, the owner of Erber Coffee Nodal cof-

fee shop, said that the shop is not facilitating a place for a particular group or community because it affects the business. This stigmatization is avoided for the coffee shop not to be attached to any of the existing stigmas of society. Unlike the case with the shops in the Arifin Ahmad street area, which have a traditional concept with a contemporary shape, customers feel facilitated to sit for hours. Accordingly, Romi is more directed at the real coffee connoisseur, making people come to the shop for an authentic taste of coffee with various brewing techniques and cleverness.

Due to the current development of urban society, drinking coffee has become a place to find comfort and chat for hours, as in traditional culture. Furthermore, drinking coffee is a form of self-expression to set the mood amid the high work mobility of urban communities. Therefore, coffee is transformed into the best friend and is considered the most appropriate to restore a good mood.

Coffee is the closest alternative to relieving boredom for urban communities because it is a caffeinated drink that creates a sedative to fulfil self-satisfaction, especially for oneself. Consequently, the habit of drinking coffee is considered suitable for urban communities that are more individualistic than traditional societies.

The coffee shops in the Arifin Ahmad area tend to avoid responding to immediate lifestyle needs, such as live music or other forms of entertainment, which is an unnecessary symptom. In this area, as shown by the circumstances and phenomena, coffee shops still respond to traditional cultural forms. All the conventional needs and tendencies of coffee shops are not only for consumptive purposes and enjoyment. Thus, these shops are a form of interaction space needed in this modern society which is provided and presented in the form of modernity.

Coffee and Urban Lifestyle

The characteristics of the coffee shops in Arifin Ahmad street and their surroundings are dif-

ferent from the shops in Ronggowarsito (Kampung Gobah) street. In contrast, the coffee shop in the Street Ronggowarsito and its surroundings are close to the government office. At first, Ronggowarsito street was a residential area. Due to the village, there are no shops. This is different from the Arifin Ahmad street, which is allocated for shopping buildings along the way.

Moreover, the coffee shops in Ronggowarsito street were built in compliance with the area's conditions. Almost all the coffee shops in this area are from residential buildings. Some coffee shops utilize the main building of the house, while others use the yard or garage.

Initially, the Dhapu Kopi Building was a house designed to be a shop equipped with a bar table, sofa, and benches for customers. On the other hand, Shasta Coffeeshop and Kedai Kopi Rimbang Baling use the garage part of the main house as a coffee shop. Similarly, Reza, the owner of Shasta Coffeeshop or Heri and Rimbang Baling Coffee Shop, admitted to being native of the village area; therefore, the coffee shop is built to utilize the space. Reza also stated that while others are struggling to get a place, there is enough place that the owner better utilizes. However, Heri admitted that there is a community of art and nature lovers. Thus, the coffee shop becomes the community's home base, which is equipped with creative spaces.

Additionally, not all coffee shop owners agree with the existence of a creative space similar to the Rimba Baling. The provision of creative space for specific communities causes limiting customers' patronage. Therefore, most coffee shops prefer to apply the concept of a shop that suits most people's tastes. In Pekanbaru, the ecosystem of coffee shop customers tends to be quick to stigmatize sometimes. Whereas a coffee shop synonymous with a particular community denies outside customers or those not attached to the community the willingness to join the coffee shop. As Eri, Operations Manager of Re Cafe Platinum, explained, only the presentation of live music is allowed for creative spaces to avoid cus-

tomers' withdrawal.

Red Cafe Platinum and Dhapu Coffee in the Kampung Gobah area have similarities in interior design. These coffee shops have various glass partitions to provide privacy for customers. This is because some customers want partitions to talk with friends easily. Furthermore, the partitions in the coffee shop reveal the character of drinkers in Ronggowarsito street to fulfil their desire. There is a need to have space for self-exclusion.

The lifestyle of coffee drinkers correspondingly affects their awareness and knowledge. Accordingly, the habit of sitting or hanging out in coffee shops becomes a way of making oneself popular in an urban community. This presented that drinking coffee is not only for enjoyment but also to display self-existence. In addition, the consumptive style of urban society is presented in the culture of the coffee drinking of the Pekanbaru community.

In the past, the activity of drinking coffee in shops was related to only men in Malay society. However, the shops in urban society are currently for men and women. It depicted that the coffee shop has become a neutral place for men and women to interact, and then all the shops in Pekanbaru provide the same place for both genders.

Conclusion

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the field of cultural production at the coffee shop in Pekanbaru city in the two regions built a different ecosystem and correspondingly created a diverse character. The field between these regions is done consciously by cultural agents mobilizing capitals with a strategy of conversion and reproduction, while the cultural production is built and applied with full awareness by the coffee shop owners and the drinkers. Furthermore, the shop owners in Arifin Ahmad street are aware of the importance of the coffee culture for the Malay community, creating a comfortable atmosphere to sit for hours. It is different from the cultural production field built

in a coffee shop on Ronggowarsito street. These shops tend to build a field of cultural production to simply fulfil the desire to drink coffee in modern urban communities. Thus, the character built is presentable and exclusive for drinkers, which has become a cultural phenomenon in urban society.

In this study, the limitation is the use of a small number of informants, namely only fifteen customers and seven owners of the coffee shop. Considerably more work will need to be done in employing a more significant number of informants to obtain a broader picture of cultural production is recommended for further studies. Moreover, the use of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) correspondingly provides a more in-depth analysis of coffee shops in urban society.

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