

## Coffeeshop: People in Public Space

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### *Abstract*

*The purpose of this study is to look at the phenomenon of Bandung coffee shops as public spaces for discussion and exchange of ideas in addition to being a place to relax and enjoy coffee. The reason the researcher chose coffee shop as the object of research is because coffee shop as a place to gather and discuss that offers more comfortable facilities than having to discuss in a formal place. Just by sitting in a coffee shop visitors can enjoy an atmosphere that can help provide a new atmosphere. Coffee shops in Bandung are used as a space for workers and students to do their activities. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews. This research found that coffee shops are not only used to enjoy coffee but can be used as a space for discussion, learning and even exchanging ideas. This research is expected to be a reference for further research and as learning for academics. Three out of six informants tend to use coffee shops as a place to discuss, study and hangout and the other three informants use coffee shops more for work and meetings. The topics discussed are diverse, visitors can exchange ideas and views based on the backgrounds they have. Because coffee shops are used as public spaces, it is possible that visitors who come to discuss can form a public opinion about the issues discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Phenomenology, Coffee Shop, Public Space, Discussion and Interaction*

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of coffee shops as public spaces has become increasingly popular in recent years. Coffee shops are places that provide coffee, other beverages, as well as a place to relax and interact with others. While coffeeshops have traditionally been more associated with the concept of a business or a place to eat and drink, they have evolved into much more than that, becoming a meeting and activity place for the community.

One of the reasons why coffee shops have become popular public spaces is because of their cozy and relaxing atmosphere. Coffee shops often offer a cozy ambience, the right lighting, and relaxing music, creating an atmosphere suitable for working, reading, or just relaxing. This makes coffee shops an alternative place to work or study outside of the home, office, or campus.

In addition, coffee shops often offer free Wi-Fi access, which allows people to stay connected and work online. Many workers or students take advantage of this facility and find coffee shops to be a productive workplace. A relatively quiet space where there is still life and activity around can be positively stimulating for some people.

Apart from being a place to work or study, coffee shops are also a place for social gatherings and interactions. Many people come to coffee shops to meet up with friends or colleagues, have discussions, or even make new friends. Some coffee shops even host events

or performances, such as small music concerts, storytelling sessions, or community discussions, making them a hub of social activity in the neighborhood..

However, it is important to remember that coffee shops are establishments with business interests. While they provide a space for the public, visitors should respect the rules and etiquette of the establishment. For example, it is important to purchase drinks or food from the coffee shop as a form of support for the business. In addition, it is also important to remember that while the atmosphere in a coffee shop may tend to be relaxed, it is important to maintain a policy of politeness, comfort, and respect for the privacy of others.

Overall, the phenomenon of coffee shops as public spaces reflects changes in the way people work, study, and socialize. They provide an attractive alternative to traditional public spaces such as libraries or parks, by offering a relaxed atmosphere, accessibility, and connectivity that many people value.

Previous research with the title **Kedai Kopi dan Komunitas Seni sebagai Wujud Ruang Publik Modern** by Eka Perwitasari Fauzi in 2019 discusses coffee shops as a form of modern public space in the information age. This research tries to examine the existence of modern public space in the form of social communities created as coffee shops grow in urban Jakarta, one of which is Kedai Suguhi Kopi in the West Jakarta area. Other research was also conducted by Lukitaningsih and Devi Juliani in 2017 with the title **Warung Kopi sebagai Ruang Publik dari Masa ke Masa di Kota Medan** discusses the background of the emergence of modern coffee shops in Medan city, the development of modern coffee shops in Medan city, and the contribution of modern coffee shops as public spaces to the people of Medan city.

Previous research titled **Coffee Shop Sebagai Ruang Publik Mahasiswa dalam Menghabiskan Waktu Luang** by Reni Wijayanti in 2022. This research tries to examine coffee shops in the city of Surakarta that make students have a lot of space to do various activities, such as doing college assignments, entertaining themselves, conducting discussion activities, or just hanging out with friends. The theory used in this research is the theory of public space from Jurgen Habermas with the research method carried out as a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach and research techniques carried out in depth interviews. These three examples of previous research have in common, namely using the Public Space Theory proposed by Jurgen Habermas with data collection, namely the in-depth interview method.

The novelty of this research from previous studies is that it focuses more on an in-depth understanding of individual experiences that can provide deeper insights into how individuals experience and give meaning to coffee shop experiences. This can reveal unique aspects that have not been previously documented including sensory perception, social interaction, and relationships with spaces and objects in coffee shops. Therefore, with the background described above, this research has research questions that are limited to:

1. How do social interactions occur in coffee shops as public spaces, and how do these interactions affect identity formation?
2. What makes coffee shops as public spaces attractive to visitors?
3. How do sensory experiences, such as coffee aroma, visual display, or sound, influence visitors' perception and attachment to coffee shops as public spaces?

## METHOD

This research uses a phenomenological approach method with a qualitative basis. According to Lexy J. Moleong in Denzin and Lincoln (1987) explains that qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting, with the intention of interpreting phenomena that occur and is carried out in the environment by involving various existing methods. The reason researchers use a phenomenological approach is to interpret phenomena. The data collection techniques in this research are interviews, observations, and document utilization. That way this research tries to recognize values, a person's experience, a thing to observe and interact with the research subject (Moleong, 2006). The criteria for informants in this study are coffee shop visitors who often visit coffee shops more than 2x a week, several times visiting coffee shops in Bandung and informants aged 20-30 years. The reason researchers chose informants with these criteria is because these informants experience and are able to provide information related to the problems studied by researchers. The purpose of this research is to find out the meaning of coffee shops as public spaces in this modern era.

Through the phenomenological approach, it is expected to explain the meaning and content more deeply in a realistic manner. The instrument used in this research is the provision of theory and broad insight so that it can analyze, observe the object under study (Sugiyono, 2011).

### Informan Criteria

1. Visitors who frequent coffee shops more than twice a week.
2. I've visited several coffee shops in Bandung.
3. 20-30 years old.

The reason why researchers chose informants with these criteria is that these informants experience and can provide information related to the problems studied by researchers.

### Interview Questions List

| No. | Questions                                                                                                                        |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | How many times do you visit a coffee shop in one week?                                                                           |
| 2.  | What are some of the activities that can be done in a coffee shop turned public space?                                           |
| 3.  | How is the atmosphere at the coffee shop you go to?                                                                              |
| 4.  | What are your considerations when choosing which coffee shop to visit?                                                           |
| 5.  | What are your considerations when choosing which coffee shop to visit?                                                           |
| 6.  | What do you usually discuss when you hang out with friends at a coffee shop?                                                     |
| 7.  | Why choose coffee shops as public spaces?                                                                                        |
| 8.  | Are there any benefits that can be gained from visiting coffee shops that are used as public spaces? If so, please mention them. |

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophical and methodological approach that focuses on understanding and interpreting the direct human experience of the world around them. Quoted from Agustina Zubair, Little John and Foss (2017: 204) reveal that the phenomenological tradition centers on a person's experience. Theories in this tradition assume that humans actively interpret their experiences and understand their world by experiencing it themselves.

In this study using Husserl Phenomenology refers to the phenomenological approach developed by German philosopher Edmund Husserl. Husserl's phenomenology emphasizes research and understanding of subjective experiences directly in the coffeeshop public space. This research can focus on an individual's understanding of the interactions, perceptions, and meanings associated with being in a coffee shop.

### *Coffee shop*

Young people and the habit of hanging out are two things that are inherent. This trend is growing rapidly with the presence of cafes, local coffee shops and large retailers, as well as convenience stores in major cities in Indonesia. The rise of cafes and especially coffee shops in big cities in Indonesia has resulted in coffee shops becoming a place of social interaction and lifestyle for young people today. Coffee shops do not only function as a place to enjoy coffee, but have become a place of gathering, socializing, entertainment, productivity, and business activities that are regularly carried out both individually and in groups. With the development of urban society, coffee shops have become a favorite place for urban youth as well as a place to gather that has become attached and has become a lifestyle of young people. This results in some coffee shop visitors having a tendency to do activities and spend time in coffee shops (Grace, 2015).

### Jurgen Habermas' Public Sphere Theory

The "Public Sphere" theory developed by Jurgen Habermas in the 1960s describes a social space where people can gather to discuss, share information, and form public opinion. This concept can be applied to the phenomenon of coffee shops in Bandung as an alternative public space. The concept of public space refers to a medium or arena where people are able to express their opinions freely without any pressure from anyone.

The phenomenon of public space that occurs now can be seen in public places such as markets, campuses, restaurants, and cafes or coffee shops. There people discuss any topic that happens around them. The relaxed atmosphere and free speech are factors why the public space can run.

The public space idealized by Habermas is a space where every problem can be communicated without constraints, not where everything can be done just like that. The communication that is formed is democratic communication, reciprocal and each party can accept it well without domination.

In the context of coffee shops in Bandung, coffee shops can be a "public sphere" for several reasons:

1. Discussion space.

Coffee shops can provide a space for discussion and dialog between people. They provide a comfortable environment with tables and chairs suitable for conversation. People can gather at Coffee Shops to discuss various topics such as politics, culture, or social issues.

2. Accessibility

Coffee Shops are often located in city centers or areas that are easily accessible to many people. This makes it an accessible place that can attract a wide range of people. Everyone has the opportunity to come to a Coffee Shop and participate in an activity there.

3. Formation of public opinion

Coffee shops can be a place for individuals to exchange information, views, and opinions. The discussions and debates that take place in Coffee Shops can shape public opinion on certain issues. It can also be a place to expand knowledge and insights through the exchange of ideas between individuals of different backgrounds and experiences.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Six informants were interviewed in this study. The professions of the 6 informants are lawyer, student, designer and a freelance worker who visits coffee shops in Bandung at least two to five times a week. Activities that are usually carried out when the informants are in a coffee shop include meetings, hanging out with friends, chatting, working, reading, doing research, studying, playing online games together, and even just enjoying coffee from the coffee shop.

A comfortable and not too crowded atmosphere is the atmosphere of the coffee shop that the majority of informants visit because with an atmosphere like that informants can be more productive when working or doing assignments from a coffee shop and comfortable when hanging out with friends. Informants also have considerations regarding the coffee shop to be visited. They argue that they will visit a comfortable place with, affordable food and beverage menu, not too crowded with visitors, quality atmosphere and facilities, and even one informant will visit a coffee shop that is visited by many artists or influencers.

The facilities and services that informants get in coffee shops that are used as public spaces are fast wifi access, friendly baristas and services, adequate access to electricity for charging, available seating and worship facilities, proportional tables and chairs, free water, and adequate non-smoking and smoking areas.

The topics of conversation commonly discussed by informants when they are in coffee shops that are used as public spaces usually discuss the future, work problems experienced by informants, family problems, past memories, girlfriends, discussing other spheres of friendship, gossiping, talking about topics that are being discussed by everyone, and even people who pass by informants can also be discussed.

The reason they choose coffee shops as public spaces is because they can spend more time even late at night, chatting while enjoying the coffee shop's flagship coffee, a more relaxed atmosphere, and a new atmosphere in every coffee shop they visit.

The benefits expressed by informants when visiting coffee shops that are used as public spaces include informants being able to get new insights from friends or coworkers, being able to learn about other people's characters when chatting and giving opinions, being

more open but relaxed for every activity carried out in a coffee shop (productive or non-productive activities), seeing other people's habits that are different from informants and there are also informants who answer that there are no benefits because they can spend money.

Based on the results of the interviews above, the function of coffee shops in Bandung as public spaces can be used effectively. Coffee shops are often used as discussion spaces by visitors. The topics discussed are diverse, visitors can exchange ideas and views based on their backgrounds. The comfort of a coffee shop is an important consideration for visitors. Because coffee shops are used as public spaces, it is possible that visitors who come to discuss can form a public opinion about the issues discussed.

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