

MEDIATIZATION: ENCOURAGING THE EXISTENCE OF SUBCULTURES THROUGH THE MEDIA

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Abstract

This article discusses Citayam Fashion Weeks from a mediatisation perspective. The purpose of this article is to examine the socio-cultural dynamics behind the Citayam Fashion Weeks phenomenon. This article argues that the ease of using the media has encouraged the birth of subcultures into the public sphere. The findings of the study show that the media make it easier for subcultures to gain existence. The logic of the media then creates a shift in meaning and banalization of the identity of Citayam Fashion Weeks as a subculture. The existence of subcultures is then related to their ability to adapt to large figurations in the surrounding environment.

Keywords: *Subculture, Mediatisation, Citayam Fashion Weeks*

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas Citayam Fashion Weeks dari perspektif mediatisasi. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk mengkaji dinamika sosial budaya dibalik fenomena Citayam Fashion Weeks. Artikel ini berargumen, kemudahan menggunakan media telah mendorong lahirnya subkultur ke ruang publik. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa media memudahkan subkultur mendapatkan eksistensi. Logika media lantas menciptakan pergeseran makna dan banalisasi dari identitas Citayam Fashion Weeks sebagai subkultur. Eksistensi subkultur kemudian berelasi dengan kemampuannya untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan figurasi besar di lingkungan sekitarnya.

Kata Kunci: *Subkultur, Mediatisasi, Citayam Fashion Weeks*

INTRODUCTION

The Citayam Fashion Weeks phenomenon has been viral for several months. When this article was compiled (July 2022), the conversation about Citayam Fashion Weeks began to dim. However, the emergence of a subculture similar to Citayam Fashion Weeks will probably repeat itself in the current mediatization situation. That is a situation where people's lives are closely related to the use of media and communication practices¹.

On the one hand, the emergence of subcultures is like fresh air in the narrative of Indonesian cultural diversity². This means that the community still inspires and implements the philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as a national narrative to bind cultural diversity in one unity of national life. On the other hand, the emergence of subcultures also has the potential to create conflict and social disintegration³. This article will examine and predict when the phenomenon of the emergence of new subcultures or practices -in the context of communication and media- can emerge, go viral, and persist in the future.

Citayam Fashion Weeks started as a group of teenagers from the outskirts of Jakarta who spent the weekend in the Sudirman Central Business District (SCBD) business district, South Jakarta. The youths came from Citayam, Bojonggede, or Depok by using the KRL Commuter Line to enjoy the time, singing with guitar together, observing the elite environment around Dukuh Atas station, and taking selfies under the splendor of SCBD office buildings. Even though they are not professional models or wearing expensive outfits, the splendor of the SCBD environment as a backdrop makes the photos of the suburban teenagers look aesthetic.

¹ Knut Lundby, *Mediatization of Communication (Handbook of Communication Science)*. (Germany: De Gruyter, 2014).

² Maftukhin, Akhol Firdaus, and A. Rizqon Khamami, *Melacak Jejak Spiritualitas Bhinneka Tunggal Ika dan Visi Penyatuan Nusantara*, (Tulungagung: IAIN Tulungagung Press, 2017).

³ Johanna Sumiala, *Media and Ritual. Death, Community and Everyday Life*, (London: Routledge, 2013).

Some content creators initially coincidentally interviewed teenagers who appeared to be in pairs. The teenage couple in simple and plain clothes seemed shy to answer questions naturally. The way they answered and dressed as teenagers attracted the public. Often, TikTok content or photos of those teenagers from the outskirts of Jakarta are viral on Instagram.

Content creators and several well-known artists participated in making interview parodies that imitated the gestures and clothing styles of those teenagers. People from various circles, public figures, and even regional leaders came to SCBD. They, with their style, took part in capturing photos and dressed like models at the SCBD zebra cross. The excitement of SCBD turned into a spirit of outfit performance competition, which was presented as a model and created a new term; Citayam Fashion Weeks.

Teenagers who were viral in some of the content, in the beginning, are increasingly appearing in the mass media and social media. The abbreviation SCBD changed to Sudirman, Citayam, Bojonggede, and Depok because it showed a large number of people from these areas who came. The weekly event turns into a crowd every day in a fashion show where everyone takes turns crossing like a model in a zebra cross.

The crowd that exceeds the limit leaves scattered garbage. The use of zebra crosses outside the crossing function also causes traffic congestion. Not to mention, some teenagers who don't go home, but sleep in the public area to wait for Citayam Fashion Weeks the next day or because they missed the commuter line curfew. Several groups began to protest against social violations which led to demands for the disbandment of Citayam Fashion Weeks.

Mediatization and The Rising of Subcultures

Citayam Fashion Weeks is a natural, common, and natural social phenomenon. The original purpose of the teens was just to hang out enjoying the weekend. Teenagers who come from the suburbs of the capital city, want to enjoy a different atmosphere in the new area of Jakarta which is intended for the public. It is also natural for teenagers

who are in the phase of showing their existence and self-actualization to build social networks⁴. The phenomenon of Citayam Fashion Weeks was initially as natural as workers in urban areas who wanted to enjoy a weekend at the beach, or mountain people who wanted to try restaurants in malls on holidays⁵.

Several subcultures have emerged that are synonymous with specific fashion styles such as Harajuku in Japan and La Sape in The Democratic Republic of the Congo⁶. However, the Citayam Fashion Week phenomenon is different from the two sub-cultures. First, Harajuku is a subculture that has been oriented towards fashion from the start⁷. While the teenagers of Citayam Fashion Weeks had the initial purpose of just hanging out. Even if the Citayam, Bojonggede, or Depok teenagers in SCBD have different clothing styles, in the sense that they are not like the clothing styles of Jakarta teenagers which are generally more expensive, it is simply because of economic limitations.

Similarly, Society of Atmosphere-setters and Elegant People (La Sape) originated from the desire of the Congolese workers to appear dressed in the fashion of the French youth. Congolese youths who were colonized by France were willing to work hard just to get second-hand French clothes. Worse, Congolese youth care more about and fight for appearance than education or economic level. A poor Congolese youth would not eat as long as he/she wore clothes similar to the French style. This is different from teenagers in SCBD who wear makeshift clothes, cheap, even people's gifts.

However, both Harajuku, La Sape, and Citayam Fashion Weeks have one thing in common. All three subcultures are well known for

⁴ Hyunjin Seo, J Brian Houston, Leigh Anne Taylor Knight, etc, "Teens' social media use and collective action." *New Media & Society*, 16(6), 2013, 883–902.

⁵ Rachel Dodds and Mark Robert Holmes, "Preferences at City and Rural Beaches." *Coastal Education and Research Foundation, Inc*, 2020, 393-402.

⁶ Nnamdi O. Madichie, "Consuming Passion for Fashion, Identity Construction & Entrepreneurial Emergence At The Bottom Of The Pyramid," *Small Enterprise Research* 27, no. 2 (2020): 195-222.

⁷ Chyntia Anggraini, "Identitas, Harajuku Style, Provokasi Sensibilitas Gender," *Jurnal Kajian Wilayah* 9 (2018): 156-174.

their use of media. People know harajuku because of exposure to movies or Japanese songs. While La Sape was popularized by one of the Congolese singers, Papa Wemba. As well as Citayam Fashion Weeks is famous for videos or photos on various social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube.

As a social system, the existence and development of Citayam Fashion Week involve several aspects. First, there is a mode of transportation that supports community mobility to come to the SCBD area. From a sociological perspective, transportation is an inseparable aspect of the process of constructing social reality⁸. Teenagers and people from various areas outside Jakarta can use commuting by only paying IDR 4000 to arrive at Dukuh Atas Station. Likewise, the SCBD area is increasingly strategic and affordable with a choice of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), busways, or urban transportation (angkot) that has stops within walking distance.

As an office area in the center of Jakarta, SCBD has a clean, new, and comfortable setting for hanging out. There are no entrance tickets or large food tenants that dominate, so SCBD feels like an inclusive public space⁹. The public is also still free to choose snacks and even buy cheap coffee from traveling sellers (*starling*). This condition makes people from the periphery or the lower economic circles feel that they can reach SCBD as a public space¹⁰.

Second, on the other hand, the development of media and communication tools makes it easier for everyone to access social

⁸ Sierra Bray, *Power in Transit: Examining the Social Construction of Power in Relation to the Perceptions, Interactions, and spatial Behavior of Passengers on Public Buses*. (Portland: University of Portland, 2014).

⁹ Victor Santiago Pineda, "What is Inclusive and Accessible Public Space?" *The Journal of Public Space* 7(2), 2022, 5-8.

¹⁰ Caterina Villani, Kin Wai Michael Siu, Zi Yang, "Learning from Older Adults' Use of Urban Parks in Hong Kong's Low-income Areas." *The Journal of Public Space* 7(2), 2022, 9-29.

media¹¹. The price of communication tools is increasingly diverse with a more practical and simple way of operating. The development of media and various communication tools has enabled youth or people from the economic and general education circles to be able to own and operate the media.

Urban people who generally use social media then adhere to the way media operate (media logic)¹². Thus, the mediatization process in urban society fully adapts to the performance (logic) of the media. Media logic means that each media has its system, technology, features, and operational methods. For example, Twitter, which provides little space for characters, makes users make posts in short sentences. Unlike Facebook, which provides facilities for sharing text and photos in a large space so that users can tell stories or promote products in detail.

Mediatization in this context means a situation where people use the media in various activities¹³, as well as the availability, sophistication, and ease of media capable of shaping communication practices and social dynamics¹⁴. As a practical example, media users upload photos with hashtags to direct the digital algorithm system to find their status. Similarly, users check trending hashtags for the latest information updates. Another example, some users chase the number of views, amount of content, or duration of videos to get ads from social media platforms. Not infrequently, media users follow trends, manipulate information, and even create content outside social norms to get public attention¹⁵.

¹¹ Sigrid Kannengießer. *Repair Cafés as communicative figurations: Consumercritical media practices for cultural transformation. Communicative figurations.* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018).

¹² Stig Hjarvard. "Mediatization and Cultural And Social Change: An Institutional Perspective". In K. Lundby (Ed.), *Mediatization of Communication*, 2014, 199-226.

¹³ Sonia Livingstone, "On The Mediation of Everything: ICA Presidential Address 2008." *Journal of communication*, 59(1), 2009, 1-18.

¹⁴ Darren G. Lilleker, *Political Communication and Cognition.* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014)

¹⁵ Emilio Ferrara, Stefano Cresci, Luca Luceri, "Misinformation, manipulation, and abuse on social media in the era of COVID-19." *J Comput Soc Sc* 3, 2020, 271–277.

In the context of Citayam Fashion Weeks, the way public figures parody interviews or walk the zebra cross are examples of following trends. Some YouTubers also invite SCBD youth icons in podcasts and channels to increase the number of viewers. As a result, within a certain period, SCBD youth icons adorn various YouTube channels and even mass media on national TV.

However, media trends that create uniformity of information are also aligned with the potential for diversity created in cyberspace¹⁶. The scholar explained that in social media, users are easier to form or break away from social networks. As a result, users can move from one information to another. In other words, the membership of media users in digital media networks is volatile and has more weak ties¹⁷. As a result, trends in digital media are also increasingly volatile as users are free to seek out different or unique information outside the mainstream.

This is the third factor that makes Citayam Fashion Weeks viral, namely the uniqueness and authenticity that grabs the attention of the public in cyberspace¹⁸. One of the authenticity and uniqueness of Citayam Fashion Weeks youth is its contradiction with the two previous public trends. For information, sometime before Citayam Fashion Weeks became the trending topic, the public had cynicism about the influencer trading fraud case and the activities of some influencers to Paris which were considered fake and manipulative.

In the first case, several months before Citayam Fashion Weeks, influencers and several public figures intensively exposed content about activities in Paris during the Paris Fashion Week period. It was as if the

¹⁶ Donghee Yvette Wohn and Brian J. Bowe, "Crystallization: How social media facilitates social construction of reality." *Proceedings of the companion publication of the 17th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing*, 2014, 261–264.

¹⁷ Sebastián Valenzuela, Teresa Correa, Homero Gil de Zúñiga, "Ties, Likes and Tweets: Using Strong and Weak Ties to Explain Differences in Protest Participation across Facebook and Twitter Use." *Political Communication*, 2018, 117-134.

¹⁸ Shu-Chuan Chu, Tao Deng & Juan Mundel, "The Impact of Personalization On Viral Behavior Intentions On Tiktok: The Role Of Perceived Creativity, Authenticity, And Need For Uniqueness," *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 2022.

activities in Paris were part of Paris Fashion Week. Some parties sneered, the activities of these parties in Paris were not separated from mere promotions - far beyond the international popular fashion event Paris Fashion Week. The National Creative Economy Movement (Gekrafs), a supporting institution for creative economy Actors under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, explained that promotional activities to Paris were more accurately called the Paris Fashion Show, not Paris Fashion Week. People then create the term Citayam Fashion Weeks as a satire that wants to contrast mainstream influencers who appear so excited and luxurious in Paris, versus the innocence, honesty, simplicity, and reality of what teenagers are on the outskirts of Citayam, Bojong Gede, and Depok in Sudirman.

In the second case, several influencers trading who likes *flexing* has just been arrested for fraud. Flexing is a term that explains an activity of showing and identifying the self with expensive goods or a luxurious lifestyle through social media¹⁹. Some groups of people are embarrassed by the attitude of some trading influencers who like to waste or demean large amounts of money arrogantly. The public is more sympathetic to the victims who complained about the fraudulent crimes of some of these influencers. The flexing phenomenon is in stark contrast to the appearance of suburban teenagers who use flip-flops, cheap goods, and even borrowed clothes when hanging out in SCBD. The existence of suburban youth in SCBD seems to show community groups that exist in social reality in the capital city of Jakarta.

The public seems to be fed up with manipulative things from famous influencers that appear on social media. Thus, the public turns their attention to authentic things that become reality in people's lives. In interviews, suburban teenagers admitted that the price of clothes was below the average for malls or distribution centers, which are usually the general shopping places for young people from the middle to the upper-class economy in Jakarta. Some teenagers even admitted that they

¹⁹ Park, J., & Chun, J, "The Characteristics of Fashion Flex on Social Media." *Fashion & Textile Research Journal* 23, 2021, 31-43.

bought clothes from thrift shops or received gifts from relatives. Another example is the teenagers innocently admitted the amount of pocket money they brought to hang out in SCBD. The amount of their pocket money is far below the salary of the employees working around SCBD.

The teenagers are honest, dare to exist, and are confident to appear in the elite area of SCBD with all their limitations. These teenagers show that the reality on the outskirts of Jakarta is not all as grand and luxurious as SCBD buildings.

Shifting cultural values and banalization

Unfortunately, the Citayam Fashion Weeks trend spreads louder and faster than the readiness of the figure to adapt to the socio-cultural values in the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, socio-cultural life will continue to move dynamically due to community developments and various social needs. Likewise, the community will also continue to adapt to social changes in their respective environments. Including, current society is in a mediated environment where all social activities are related to the presence of the media.

Some mediatization research shows that people have used the media in simple things such as waiting, daydreaming²⁰, on the way back and forth, decorating the house, doing housework²¹, and even in personal matters such as increasing religious knowledge²². These studies found that the media not only exists, but the media also changes the value and even the meaning of various community activities. For example, in terms of religion, sacred values can decrease or become banal because people often display sacred symbols through the media. Likewise, the public also becomes more flexible and divides their attention in carrying out various activities at once when connected to the media.

²⁰ Löfgren, O., & Ehn, B, *The Secret World of Doing Nothing* (California: University of California Press, 2010).

²¹ Sarah Pink. *Situating everyday life: Practices and Places* (London: Sage, 2012).

²² Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of The Media As Agents Of Religious Change*, (Bristol: Intellect Press, 2008).

In the context of the emergence of subcultures, adjustment to and dependence on media also occurs in the Belgian urban areas. The daily life of a group of graffiti writers and skaters in Belgium has changed due to the development of the media²³. In a sense, firstly, the group's practice and work have changed to be oriented towards the popularity of the media, not as an artistic expression as the original objective was. Second, the work of subcultural groups changes according to popular culture that is spread by the mainstream media. Third, the graffiti and skater groups have changed their emphasis on commercialization to get sponsors, not for artistic reasons.

In the context of Citayam Fashion Weeks, the initial goal of teenagers who just want to hang out in their seats and feel the vibes of SCBD's majestic offices has begun to be shifted due to the trend of using media. The suburban teenagers seem to have been eliminated by the public who came to SCBD to show off their clothing styles over zebra cross for the sake of trending on social media. The typical clothing style of fringe teenagers is submerged in the more excited content creator's clothes. The new public activity that just came after the viral SCBD disturbed the teenagers who were there before. The public bustle also eliminates the atmosphere of the SCBD office which was originally comfortable and conducive to a bustle without knowing the time. SCBD has changed from Sudirman Central Business District to Sudirman, Citayam, Bojonggede, and Depok. Unfortunately, after going viral, teenagers from Citayam, Bojong Gede, and Depok were eliminated by content creators.

Socio-cultural dynamics make people create several values in different and new social practices. However, new dynamics or practices will be difficult to survive if they are not following the values in the social figuration in the larger environment around them. As a figuration,

²³ Kameliya Encheva, Olivier Driessens, & Hans Verstraeten. "The Mediatization Of Deviant Subcultures: An Analysis Of The Media-Related Practices Of Graffiti Writers And Skaters." *MedieKultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 29(54), 2013, 8-25.

subcultures like Citayam Fashion Weeks are part of a social network²⁴ from a larger societal figure. The implication is that the rules or values of the subculture should comply with the values, norms, or discourses of society. Compliance with social rules and values becomes a mechanism for the subculture to be accepted and harmonious with the big figuration above it²⁵.

The explanation above explains why there are protests from residents who are disturbed by the garbage left by the crowds of Citayam Fashion Weeks. This is because according to the regulations, there are already social order regulations that require the disposal of waste in the places that have been provided. Likewise, several groups remind teenagers who sleep on the SCBD pedestrian path. This is of course because normatively, public spaces have rules not to be used in personal activities such as sleeping. Likewise, road users who are embarrassed because the lane becomes blocked due to the zebra cross as a crossing place are made for fashion shows. Social activities that are generally inappropriate means that they have damaged the harmony of social figurations. Thus, the practice or subculture will have the potential to be opposed or rejected by the large figuration of the surrounding community.

This is different from activities that have been systematized, conditioned, and even protected by law. This means that the government and various related parties have adjusted their respective functions and roles to then agree on a common mechanism. For example, a car-free day activity that uses certain roads for pedestrians has been approved by various parties. Usually, there is traffic engineering so that the mobility of motorized vehicle users has an alternative. The days and hours for the use of the road are also limited so as not to interfere with the activities of the general public. In other words, activities involving the public, in general, have been conditioned

²⁴ Łukasz Wojtkowski, "A Figurative Approach to Mediatization Studies." *Models of Communication: Theoretical and Philosophical Approaches*, 56, 2019.

²⁵ Norbert Elias, *The Society of Individuals*. (New York: Continuum, 2001).

not to interfere with each other and to accommodate the interests of various parties, without harming each other. With the consequences and mutual agreement, the community can accept the practice or subculture in the long term.

CONCLUSION

Community dynamics involve various social systems that are interconnected and move together. Each social aspect in society has its function and role. A society with the development of media and communication processes creates new socio-cultural practices. Including, the development of media and communication tools makes it easier for subcultures to emerge in the social environment. One of the drivers of public attention is the authenticity and uniqueness of a subculture. New practices or the existence of subcultures will last as long as they can move in harmony with the socio-cultural values that have become the order in the surrounding environment. On the other hand, new practices and subcultures that disrupt functions, roles, or social order will cause problems, conflicts, and opposition. As a result, new practices and subcultures will not survive or will disappear again, submerged in popular mainstream culture.

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