

Coffee, Space, and Power: The Unique Relationship between Coffee-Drinking Culture and Political Processes in the Context of Elections

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Abstract

Coffee, as a global commodity, is an agricultural product and a site of political and economic contestation involving land use, resource control, and power relations. This study examines the complex relationship between coffee-drinking culture and electoral processes. Using a literature-based approach, data were gathered from journal articles, books, news reports, and other relevant publications. The study finds that coffee culture is a component of lifestyle and shapes deliberative spaces that influence political awareness and electoral behavior. Coffee shops function as informal arenas where political issues are openly discussed, fostering social networks that play a significant role in shaping public opinion. The most significant finding of this study is that coffee shops function as hybrid socio-political spaces where everyday social interaction, digital communication, and informal campaigning intersect, enabling political actors to engage voters through subtle and personalized approaches. The literature further indicates that the intensity of social interaction within these spaces can strengthen citizens' engagement in democratic processes, increase interest in policy issues, and, in some cases, directly influence political choices. Thus, this study highlights that coffee culture should not be viewed solely as an economic or lifestyle phenomenon but also as a critical medium in contemporary political dynamics.

Keywords: Coffee, Spatial Politics, Political Economy

JEL: A11, A13

A. INTRODUCTION

Coffee is a global commodity with a strong historical, economic, and political footprint (Chander, 2017). With the development of industrialization and globalization, coffee has become more than just a consumer need; it also serves as an arena for the complexities of space, power, and the distribution of political values, with structural layers expanding from farmers' lands in producing countries to international distribution networks. In this context, the politics of space, which refer to how space is produced, managed, and controlled in the production and distribution of commodities like coffee, becomes a crucial instrument for understanding inequality, corporate domination, and local resistance.

In essence, coffee has indeed influenced and inspired political change in the United States

(Vecchi, Silva, & Angel, 2021). When coffee developed its social dimension, it became both a commodity consumed by society and a medium for fostering unity and stimulating critical discussion.

Coffee has long been seen as a symbol of everyday economic life and modest social conditions, which is why it is frequently used to represent poverty in various nations (Maspu, 2025). Coffee is a popular beverage among lower-class and working-class groups because it is more accessible and affordable than luxury drinks. On the other hand, coffee's egalitarian nature comes from its easy accessibility. Because coffee is accessible to people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, coffee shops often become socially inclusive gathering places where people from

different social and economic backgrounds can interact.

Coffee culture has two distinct social meanings, reflected in the apparent tension between its role as a symbol of poverty and its expression of egalitarian values (Sudarman, 2023). On the one hand, neighborhood coffee shops and traditional coffee stalls symbolize modest consumption habits and daily economic survival. However, social hierarchies are less evident in everyday interactions when people from different social strata can meet on relatively equal terms in the same locations. Coffee thus reflects a common social activity that transcends across class boundaries and functions as a marker of economic conditions within society.

Despite growing commercialization, these egalitarian traits persist as coffee culture spreads into both contemporary metropolitan cafés and traditional roadside stalls. Coffee shops have become primary venues for discussing a wide range of everyday issues, including social and political concerns. Coffee-drinking establishments are widely accessible due to relatively low entry barriers, serving as informal gathering spaces where social divisions are temporarily reduced, and collective discussions can take place. The association of coffee with both poverty and egalitarianism thus highlights its role as a socially inclusive medium that links economic realities to everyday democratic interaction, rather than as a contradiction.

Ultimately, Coffee reflects a complex mosaic of the country's political history. Therefore, coffee should serve as a tool for legitimizing power between political elites and the public (Hakim & Amir, 2022), also serve as a symbol of solidarity (togetherness), resistance to tyranny, reduce social barriers, and a sign of stability (a barrier and a sign of reliability). Thus, in political terms, coffee narrates a history of contestation and persistence, in which it is at times revered and at other times portrayed as a negative force.

Previous research has primarily focused on the economic, agronomic, and cultural aspects of coffee, including global consumption trends documented by the International Coffee Organization. In 2017, coffee consumption reached 1.5 million kilograms in the US and 0.4 million kilograms in Japan (International Coffee Organization, 2018). The wider political implications of coffee-drinking culture have not been comprehensively explored.

A comprehensive framework that clarifies the relationship between coffee-related social practices and political processes, particularly electoral dynamics, is still lacking, and existing research primarily focuses on case studies or isolated observations. This study argues that the main limitation in the existing literature lies in the absence of conceptual integration. Research on coffee culture, deliberative spaces, and political participation has developed in separate academic traditions, resulting in a lack of systematic understanding of their interactions.

It would not be an exaggeration to argue that coffee has become part of many people's daily lives and thus can be a contextual factor in communication. This assumption is indirectly supported by questionnaire-based research findings. Coffee contains caffeine, which is the most widely consumed psychoactive substance in the world. Huntley and Juliano emphasized that people believe caffeine enhances social and mood, meaning a cup of coffee can support processes of policy discussion and formulation. Research in Japan shows that coffee can improve a person's positive mood and strengthen social interactions (Yokomitsu et al., 2015).

Discussions about coffee and Indonesian politics can involve several interesting aspects. In general, coffee in Indonesia plays a significant economic role as a major export commodity. Furthermore, the coffee-drinking culture is an important part of daily life in Indonesia. In a political context, the coffee industry is often influenced by economic policies, trade

regulations, and socioeconomic issues. For example, policies related to agriculture, international trade, or food security can impact the coffee sector.

It is important to consider how commodities such as coffee can become the subject of political attention, including issues related to social justice, workers' rights, and environmental sustainability. However, the positive impact of coffee on social policy has not been systematically examined through empirical research. Furthermore, it remains unclear which expectations or impacts of coffee on social improvement are supported by empirical evidence.

In the 2024 elections, coffee will play a significant role in political campaigns. Coffee shops often serve as meeting venues for candidates and their campaign teams, where campaign strategies are debated, policies are discussed, and interactions with voters are arranged. Coffee shops provide a relaxed, comfortable environment for discussing political issues and often serve as spaces where voters can engage directly with candidates (Rohman & Pang, 2016).

Furthermore, coffee is often served at campaign events, including parades and public gatherings. Candidates often distributed coffee to their supporters as a gesture of camaraderie. This creates an emotional connection between the candidate and voters and can contribute to a positive impression. A visit to a coffee shop before heading to the polls can become a ritual that reinforces voter participation. A morning cup of coffee may provide an extra boost and give them a moment for reflection on their decision before entering the voting booth.

The importance of coffee in increasing voter turnout is also reflected in early-voting practices, where many polling stations offer free coffee to voters. This can be an incentive for voters to vote early. However, broader institutional dynamics reveal that regulatory frameworks and legislative

guidelines are often insufficiently upheld in governing state and societal affairs. As a result, public trust in legal frameworks and political institutions has declined, including aspects of political culture and social discipline rooted in Indonesian society.

Every political activity in society always occurs within the cultural context. This means that over time, a dialectical process of reciprocity develops between political life and cultural values within the broader social system. This process fosters collective trust and reinforces social commitment. Although this represents an unwritten consensus, it continues to be practiced and refined over time. The strengthening of political culture in any nation is achieved through processes of political socialization, which transmit political values from one generation to the next.

The adaptation is also a form of individual interaction with their environment. Adapting to the world of work depends on compliance with labor regulations, which part-time workers must follow. Coming from education and entering the workforce is not easy, as it requires the ability to exchange ideas. The motivation for this study arises from the growing recognition that everyday cultural practices often intersect with political behavior.

In many democratic societies, political discussions no longer take place solely in formal venues such as party offices, campaign rallies, or legislative halls; instead, they frequently occur in informal settings where citizens interact organically. Among these informal settings, coffee shops have functioned as an accessible public sphere where individuals can exchange opinions on governance, policy issues, and electoral choices. This dynamic necessitates a deeper exploration of how coffee-drinking culture contributes to political engagement and whether it can influence citizens' perceptions and behavior in elections.

Although the historical, economic, and sociological aspects of coffee drinking have been

well-documented in previous research, little attention has been given to the evolving political role of coffee shops in modern democracies. Coffee shops have shifted from unstructured recreational spaces to semi-structured venues for political engagement, particularly in developing democracies such as Indonesia (Mario, 2024). Coffee shops are no longer merely places for consumption; they are now strategically placed micro-public spheres where political actors interact with voters through casual conversations, campaign networking, and the formation of public opinion.

Despite their increasing significance, coffee shops have rarely been considered systematic electoral tools in prior research. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how everyday social practices are integrated into electoral politics in developing democracies by positioning coffee shops as politically significant spaces.

The objectives of this research are four: (1) to examine how coffee-drinking culture creates deliberative spaces for political dialogue, (2) to explore how social interactions within these spaces influence political awareness and engagement, (3) to assess the extent to which coffee culture contributes to shaping electoral behavior, and (4) to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the intersection of everyday cultural practices and political processes.

Through this inquiry, the article contributes to the growing body of literature that integrates cultural studies and political science, emphasizing the significance of social practices in shaping democratic life. It argues that coffee culture should not be viewed merely as a lifestyle trend or an element of consumer culture, but rather as an active component of the political scope, one that fosters dialogue, strengthens civic engagement, and potentially influences electoral outcomes (Igiassi, 2019).

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Coffee Culture as a Social Practice

Recent urban research indicates that coffee shops are no longer just “consumption-oriented spaces” but also serve as spaces of connection and community, facilitating interaction, work, and social networking, which are closely associated with the formation of public opinion and the development of social capital. Cross-city studies in the United Kingdom highlight the role of coffee shops as “third places” that enrich community vitality and create opportunities for co-creating space between entrepreneurs and consumers (Noaime et al, 2025). These findings reinforce the argument that the spatial configuration of coffee shops provides essential conditions for everyday public conversations with political implications.

The evolution of coffee culture has been closely tied to broader socioeconomic transformations, including urbanization, the rise of creative industries, and the growing demand for flexible social environments (Safitri & Arina, 2022). Coffee shops are no longer perceived solely as spaces for leisure consumption but have become multifunctional arenas where people engage in work, informal meetings, and political discourse (Ferreira, Ferreira, & Bos, 2021). This shift highlights how everyday practices, such as coffee consumption, can carry latent political significance, shaping how individuals encounter, interpret, and discuss issues of governance and policy.

Furthermore, coffee shops serve as microcosms of the public domain where socio-political dialogues emerge spontaneously. In many urban settings, these establishments provide an accessible and low-barrier venue for citizens to engage in informal political discussion. Unlike formal political forums, coffee shop discussions often unfold organically and are less constrained by formal procedures, enabling

diverse perspectives to coexist (Samnuzulsari, Edison, & Yudiantmaja, 2019).

Cultural dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping how coffee shops function as deliberative environments. In societies with strong communal traditions, coffee-drinking rituals often extend beyond consumption to encompass social bonding and collective reflection. This is particularly evident in regions where local coffee culture intersects with identity politics, creating spaces where cultural heritage and political consciousness mutually reinforce each other. These practices cultivate civic identity and a sense of belonging, which are essential for sustaining democratic engagement.

Moreover, the political significance of coffee culture is not uniform but varies according to spatial and socioeconomic contexts (Mario, 2024). In metropolitan areas, coffee shops may attract middle-class professionals and intellectuals, fostering discussions that align with policy debates and urban governance issues. Conversely, in rural or semi-urban settings, coffee spaces may function as hubs for grassroots political organization, reflecting localized concerns about land use, agricultural policies, or resource distribution. This spatial variation highlights the need to put coffee culture within broader political-economic frameworks (El Bilali, Strassner, & Ben Hassen, 2021).

Lastly, the commercial dimension of coffee culture cannot be overlooked. As coffee chains and independent cafés increasingly incorporate branding strategies that emphasize sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community engagement, they indirectly shape public awareness of global political-economic issues such as trade justice and environmental governance. Thus, coffee culture operates at multiple levels, including local, national, and global, relating consumer practices to broader structural dynamics of power and policy. Future research must further explore these interconnections to understand better how

everyday social practices both influence and are shaped by political processes.

2. Public Sphere and Deliberative Spaces

The concept of the public sphere, as formulated by Jürgen Habermas (1996), refers to a social arena where citizens engage in rational-critical debate on issues of common concern, independent of state or corporate domination. In this sphere, discourse is guided by principles of equality, inclusivity, and reason-giving, allowing individuals to deliberate freely and contribute to the formation of public opinion (Lubis, 2020). Traditionally associated with formal venues such as parliaments or civic forums, the public sphere has been reconceptualized in contemporary scholarship to include informal and semi-formal settings where political dialogue emerges organically.

Deliberative spaces are the tangible and intangible settings that enable such discourse. They may take the form of institutional platforms—town halls, citizen assemblies, or everyday venues such as community centers, online forums, and coffee shops. Within these spaces, participants exchange perspectives, evaluate arguments, and negotiate meanings, contributing to the broader deliberative system that reinforces democratic governance.

Recent studies emphasize that deliberative quality can emerge in casual, non-institutional contexts, provided that interactions are open to diverse viewpoints and respectful dialogue. Coffee shops, for example, serve as micro-public spheres where citizens engage in low-barrier political conversations, fostering social capital and potentially influencing electoral preferences. Thus, the study of public sphere and deliberative spaces has expanded beyond formal institutional structures to examine how everyday social environments shape democratic life.

The expansion of the concept of the public sphere reflects a growing recognition that political engagement occurs across a continuum

of formal and informal settings. While traditional institutions such as parliaments and policy forums remain crucial, everyday venues like cafés, co-working spaces, and digital platforms increasingly serve as nodes of deliberative activity. These spaces often provide more accessible and inclusive environments where diverse groups can participate without the procedural barriers or hierarchical constraints commonly found in formal political arenas. As a result, the boundaries between civic life, leisure, and political discourse are becoming increasingly fluid.

Coffee shops represent a particularly compelling case of informal deliberative spaces because they combine the personal, the social, and the political dimensions (Darmawan, Hakim, & Imawan, 2025). Their informal atmosphere encourages spontaneous interactions among patrons who may not otherwise engage in political dialogue. Conversations that begin with discussions of daily life or local events often develop into more substantive exchanges concerning governance, policy issues, or electoral choices. The fluid nature of these discussions allows for the inclusion of multiple perspectives and fosters an environment in which civic awareness can be developed organically rather than through structured political programs.

Moreover, these micro-public spheres are embedded within broader socio-political and economic contexts that shape the nature of deliberation (Faisal et al, 2021). For instance, the demographic composition of coffee shop patrons, including students, professionals, and activists, affects the tone and content of political discussions. Similarly, the café's location, whether in urban centers or rural areas, influences the issues that dominate public discussion, from urban planning and environmental policy to agricultural subsidies and rural development. This suggests that deliberative spaces are not merely neutral containers of dialogue but are actively shaped by spatial and socioeconomic factors.

The deliberative potential of such spaces also depends on the extent to which they encourage critical engagement rather than reinforcing echo chambers (Justwan, Baumgaertner, Carlisle, Clark, & Clark, 2018). When coffee shops become spaces where individuals interact only with peers who share the same mind, the quality of political discourse risks being diminished, as conversations merely reproduce existing beliefs rather than challenge them. This insularity may foster a sense of solidarity but limits opportunities for democratic learning and critical reflection.

Research indicates that informal public spheres, which are also accessible, can sometimes foster homogenous discussions that reflect the social composition of their patrons. However, when intentionally designed or curated to attract diverse groups, for example, through cultural events, public talks, or open forums, coffee shops can serve as sites of substantive deliberation, where different viewpoints are critically examined, allowing people to learn from one another as citizens. This highlights the importance of intentional design in fostering inclusive dialogue within these spaces.

The emergence of digital technology has transformed coffee shops into hybrid spaces where local conversations combine with online social media debates (Peluso, 2023), positioning them as more than just physical gathering spots. This integration amplifies the influence of these interactions by connecting them to broader policy debates and public concerns. These locations should therefore be viewed as essential hubs in a hybrid digital-physical setting that influences public opinion and sustains political participation.

Theoretically, this hybridization can be better understood by examining the intersection of Henri Lefebvre's political economy of space and Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere (Karas, 2024). Coffee shops function as semi-public forums where people debate political ideas and negotiate interpretations about political

events, such as elections. They are fundamentally commercial spaces oriented toward profit.

This contradiction can be understood as reflecting the rise of aestheticized capitalism in urban environments. To appeal to middle-class customers, coffee shops frequently incorporate carefully curated interior design, lifestyle branding, and symbolic representations of contemporary urban identity. In the context of neoliberal urban development, coffee culture is often used as a tool for urban renewal, assisting in the transformation of municipal identities and promoting regional economic development (Xu et al, 2024).

Coffee shops serve as politically contradictory spaces, simultaneously reproducing capitalist consumption patterns while facilitating forms of discourse that may challenge prevailing political narratives (Yeetin & Buakaew, 2018). Therefore, this study conceptualizes coffee shops as politically integrated environments in which economic interests, spatial practices, and democratic discourse converge, rather than treating them as merely commercial operations or neutral social spaces. Particularly in the context of electoral politics in developing democracies, this perspective provides a more nuanced understanding of how common consumption spaces can simultaneously support market logics and promote political engagement.

3. Political Economy of Everyday Spaces

The political economy of everyday spaces highlights how economic relations, power structures, and spatial arrangements come together to shape social practices and political behavior. For example, the design of urban transport systems and housing markets can create specific patterns of dependency that influence people's choices and political engagement within their environment (Johnston, 2025).

In the context of coffee shops, this perspective goes beyond viewing these

establishments merely as sites of consumption. Instead, it positions them within broader systems of capital accumulation, urban development, and cultural commodification. Coffee shops are embedded in global value chains, connecting local consumption habits to international trade networks and labor markets, while simultaneously influencing how individuals engage with public life at the micro level.

Furthermore, the commodification of space in urban environments reflects deeper political and economic dynamics, where access to and control over social spaces are often mediated by market forces. The rapid proliferation of branded coffee chains illustrates how neoliberal urbanism reshapes public interaction by promoting privatized, semi-public venues that merge commercial and social functions. These spaces, while fostering informal deliberation, also embody contradictions by encouraging political dialogue within a framework of consumerism and economic inequality (Zukin, 2020).

The global coffee economy encompasses dimensions of labor, trade justice, and sustainability, which are fundamentally political. Research on fair-trade coffee production and ethical consumption indicates that consumers' choices are not only driven by taste or lifestyle but also reflect awareness of global inequities and environmental concerns (Bacon et al., 2012). This ethical dimension of coffee culture underscores that everyday consumption can serve as a site of political agency, connecting micro-level practices to macro-level economic and policy debates.

Thus, the political economy lens reveals that everyday spaces like coffee shops function as platforms for the reproduction of social norms and power hierarchies. Access to these spaces, the amplification of certain voices, and the shaping of political discourse are all conditioned by socioeconomic status, cultural capital, and urban policy design. Thus, while coffee shops may operate as arenas of civic engagement, they are also sites where inequalities and exclusions can

be obvious, reflecting broader patterns of political economy.

Positioning coffee culture within the political economy of everyday life highlights its dual role as both a commercial venture and a democratic space. This dual nature raises important questions about the sustainability of such venues as genuine deliberative arenas, particularly in light of pressures from gentrification, corporate standardization, and changing urban consumption patterns. Addressing these issues requires drawing on insights from cultural studies, political theory, and economic geography to better understand how coffee, space, and power come together to shape modern civic life.

The political economy of everyday spaces highlights how social practices, such as coffee drinking, are embedded within wider systems of capital accumulation, labor relations, and cultural commodification (Puspitawati & Rozi, 2025). Coffee shops, while often perceived as neutral leisure spaces, are positioned within global commodity chains that involve smallholder farmers, multinational corporations, and local entrepreneurs. These interconnections illustrate how the spatial and cultural dimensions of coffee consumption are structurally linked to inequalities in land ownership, trade policies, and value distribution within the coffee industry (Bacon et al, 2012).

Moreover, urban regeneration projects often integrate specialty coffee culture as part of place-branding strategies, signaling a form of "aestheticized capitalism" that attracts middle-class consumers while marginalizing less affluent communities (Zukin, 2020). This trend reveals how political and economic logics intersect to shape not only the physical layout of cities but also the symbolic value of coffeehouses as markers of social status and lifestyle choices. Consequently, visiting a coffee shop, often perceived as apolitical, becomes embedded in broader processes of neoliberal urbanism.

Power relations are also negotiated through these spaces. Coffee shops can operate as nodes of soft power, where narratives of sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community engagement are curated by businesses to appeal to socially conscious consumers. However, these narratives often obscure the persistence of exploitative labor practices in coffee production and reinforce patterns of consumption that primarily benefit corporate actors rather than producers or workers (Anggarini, Nani, & Aprianto, 2021).

Finally, examining coffee shops through the lens of everyday political economy challenges the separation between "economic" and "political" spaces. Coffee shops, therefore, are spaces for social interaction and key sites where economic interests, cultural identity, and political discourse converge, making them vital to understanding how contemporary capitalism shapes civic participation.

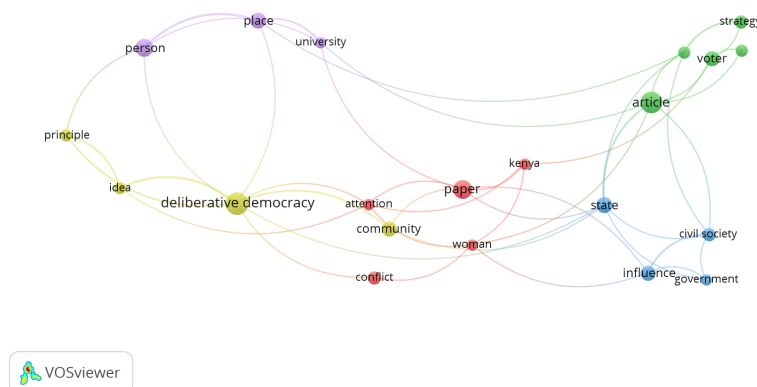
C. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a narrative literature review approach to explore the relationship between coffee-drinking culture and political processes within the context of elections. A narrative review allows for a more interpretive and thematic synthesis of existing knowledge. This method is particularly suitable for emerging topics where the literature is diverse and dispersed across multiple disciplines, such as political science, cultural studies, sociology, and urban studies.

The research design adopted a qualitative approach to integrate theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from previous studies. By focusing on interpretive analysis rather than statistical aggregation, the study highlights how coffee culture functions as a socio-political space that influences public opinion and electoral behavior.

While the narrative review offers flexibility in synthesizing diverse sources, it has limitations in

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Source: Authors, 2026

Figure 1. Bibliometric Map of Related Literature (2021—2026)

terms of replicability and comprehensiveness when compared to systematic reviews. Potential bias may result from selectively including literature, although this study reduces such risk by cross-referencing multiple databases and ensuring thematic saturation (Snyder, 2019).

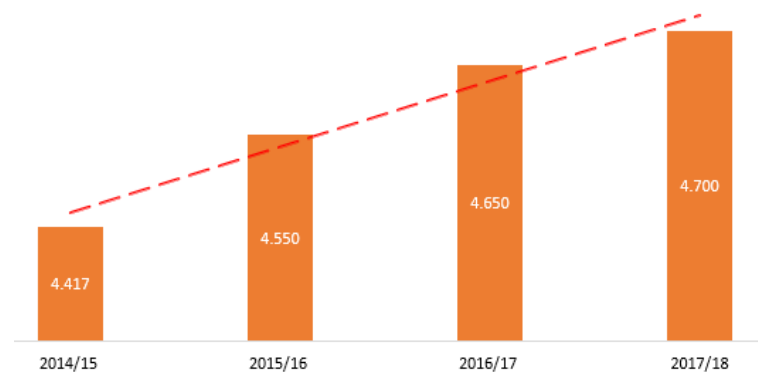
Given the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, a narrative review is appropriate for capturing nuanced insights and connecting theoretical debates with empirical observations. This method allows for contextual interpretation, highlighting gaps in existing research and identifying opportunities for future studies, particularly the underexplored link between coffee culture and electoral engagement.

This study used a systematic literature review approach, following a structured process to identify, select, and synthesize scholarly works, policy papers, and credible secondary sources. To ensure a high degree of thematic saturation and to mitigate potential selection bias, the literature search was conducted across multiple international and national academic databases, including Web of Science. The search terms included “Spatial Politics,” “Deliberative Democracy,” “Coffee Culture,” and “Electoral Behavior.” The selection procedure prioritized peer-reviewed works published within the last

five years and used VOSviewer and Publish or Perish, yielding the following results.

Based on a literature review of 115 journal articles, 21 keywords were identified and grouped into 5 clusters. The bibliometric mapping shows that existing studies are largely concentrated in three research clusters: deliberative democracy, state–society relations, and electoral behavior. However, the connections between spatial practices and voter-oriented political processes remain relatively weak. This pattern suggests that the role of everyday social spaces as mediating arenas between deliberation and electoral mobilization has not been sufficiently explored. Therefore, this study contributes by bridging deliberative democracy, spatial politics, and electoral processes through the analysis of coffee-drinking spaces.

The final step involved mapping key concepts into a cohesive analytical framework that highlights the political significance of coffee culture. This framework served as the basis for the study’s findings and discussion, positioning coffee spaces as integral to democratic engagement and political economy discourses.



Source: Pradika, 2019

Figure 2. Coffee Consumption in Indonesia 2014-2018

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesian coffee currently ranks fourth in terms of production. President Joko Widodo promoted Indonesian coffee during his visit to New Zealand (Dwinanda, 2018). According to the President, Indonesia is one of the world's largest coffee-producing countries. Coffee cultivation in Indonesia has a long history and plays a vital role in the country's economic growth, influenced by its geographical conditions, which are ideal for coffee plantations.

Indonesia's location provides an ideal microclimate for coffee growth and production. Large-scale coffee cultivation began after the New Order government launched the Five-Year Development Plan (Repelita). Smallholder farms began to receive government attention during the first Repelita phase (1969-1974). Coffee was also a priority crop for development in Dairi Regency, North Sumatra Province, where the government provided financial assistance to support coffee cultivation.

The abundance of coffee farms in Indonesia has not necessarily improved the standard of living of coffee farmers; this is due to sales constraints. Coffee prices are often determined by intermediaries, commonly known as coffee shops. The challenges faced by coffee farmers may be one reason the government has issued policies encouraging partnerships with investors to establish coffee enterprises.

Meanwhile, foreign investors interested in establishing partnerships and developing capital arrangements came from the United States. Then, a company called PT Sumatra Specialty Coffees was established and has been operating effectively since April 2007. The influence of foreign cultures entering Indonesia has resulted in changes in modern consumer behavior. This modernization has transformed people's lifestyles, sometimes leading to the neglect of traditional traditions.

Western countries are role models for progress. Modernization and advancement have made life increasingly fast-paced and oriented toward instant gratification, leading people to adopt a consumerist lifestyle. Previously, people prioritized primary and secondary needs. Over time, tertiary needs have also become essential to fulfill lifestyle needs. Consumer lifestyles have become integral to today's society.

In this study, consumer behavior is closely related to coffee consumption patterns and the broader social ramifications of these trends. Indonesia is one of the world's largest coffee-consuming countries, where the beverage has developed into a significant social custom rather than just a consumer pastime. Social activities, casual get-togethers, and commemorations of significant occasions are frequently associated with coffee consumption. Around 4.6 million 60 kg bags of coffee were consumed in Indonesia in

2016–2017 (International Coffee Organization, 2018), positioning the country as one of the world's top coffee-consuming nations. Additionally, as Figure 2 shows, Indonesian coffee consumption has been increasing steadily.

Both the growth of the coffee commodity market and the establishment of a coffee-drinking class as a key socio-political demographic are reflected in the linear growth in Indonesian coffee consumption. This coffee consumption culture is commonly practiced in coffee shops. Currently, coffee shops have become popular social destinations (Sudarman, 2023). Particularly during election seasons, the growth of the coffee-drinking culture contributes to the formation of informal political spaces where individuals can interact, shape opinions, and engage in political mobilization.

As this phenomenon indicates, coffee consumption extends beyond a leisure activity; it serves as a communal practice that fosters critical thinking and the exchange of ideas. Coffee shops function as informal learning spaces where people can discuss politics without being constrained by the organizational frameworks of regular institutions (Farnanda et al., 2018). In Indonesia, these kinds of exchanges are routinely seen at metropolitan cafés and *warung kopi* (coffee stalls), where discussions of public policy, local elections, and candidate performance take place daily.

These locations frequently serve as venues for unofficial campaign activities during election seasons, such as volunteer coordination meetings, small-group discussions between candidates and community members, and the sharing of political information through face-to-face and on-site social media. These venues often act as social hubs where diverse groups, including students, professionals, activists, and community leaders, interact, blurring the lines between casual socializing and intellectual exchange. The informality of the setting reduces barriers to

participation, allowing political discourse to emerge more organically.

Moreover, the spatial layout of coffee shops, open seating, communal tables, and accessible atmospheres, encourages prolonged discussions and sustained interaction. The accessibility of these spaces across different socioeconomic groups also broadens the diversity of perspectives exchanged, enriching the deliberative quality of the conversations within these settings.

Additionally, coffee shops contribute to the formation of micro-public spheres, where ideas are debated, refined, and contested before reaching larger forums such as civic organizations, media platforms, or political campaigns. These interactions may influence individuals' political awareness, ideological orientation, and even their voting behavior. Importantly, such discussions are not limited to national issues but also encompass local governance, community development, and everyday political concerns that directly affect people's lives.

The intertwining of coffee culture and intellectual discourse reflects a distinctive characteristic of Indonesian political life, in which social and cultural practices intersect with civic engagement. By framing political participation within the conviviality of coffee drinking, these spaces normalize political dialogue as part of daily routines rather than treating it as an exceptional event. This dynamic strengthens the culture of debate and reinforces the role of informal social venues in sustaining democratic practices.

A cup of coffee has accompanied creative and intellectual processes and production, including the scientific field. In fact, its role has not always reached its full potential. Throughout history, coffee shops in England have been used for heated discussions and socio-political interactions. As is well known, coffee culture in Indonesia has always been associated with intellectual activities, such as discussions, the exchange of ideas and arguments, and discussing political issues. From *angkringan* coffeehouses to

roadside coffee shops to urban cafes, these activities typically represent intellectual engagement.

The term "*ngopi*" (drinking coffee) is often associated with reading, an activity that reflects the process of learning and the discovery of creative ideas and concepts. A cup of coffee has accompanied creative and intellectual processes and production, both in the scientific field.

Today, the meaning of drinking coffee has transformed. Many people interpret it as a lifestyle-oriented activity. Over time, coffee requires facilities and infrastructure that support coffee lovers (consumers). Therefore, coffee shops are increasingly emerging and gaining popularity among young people and the broader public.

However, it is also crucial to understand the logic behind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as illustrated by the shift from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the relationship between economic, social, and environmental components. Millennials have transformed coffee drinking into a lifestyle that is increasingly prevalent in the 21st century.

This millennial generation prefers drinking coffee at roadside coffee shops or urban cafes. Interestingly, millennials view coffee as a platform for exploring and exchanging ideas, including topics they have never encountered before, to broaden their knowledge. Many millennial-style coffee shops boast advanced technology, such as Wi-Fi, comfortable sofas, a cozy atmosphere, and a variety of trendy coffee options.

The environmental aspect of management does not stand alone but is closely interconnected with economic and social dimensions. In industrial areas such as the property sector, the opportunity to integrate environmental and economic aspects is significant. This depends on wise and profitable environmental management. Social factors that extend beyond the surrounding

community are closely connected. Millennials are using coffee spaces as platforms for social engagement and change, while also highlighting underlying economic considerations.

By creating a culture inseparable from traditional culture, coffee drinking has now become a lifestyle, as observed in Pontianak. Pontianak is a city where coffee shops are a favorite destination for people of all social classes. Young and old, officials, and even workers make coffee shops their most frequent destination, alongside their homes and workplaces. Research has shown several factors influence the popularity of a coffee shop: free Wi-Fi, a comfortable environment, and high-quality coffee.

These factors have made coffee shops a popular gathering place for the people of Pontianak. Coffee shops are enjoyed by various groups, with young people using them for discussions, playing games, or simply meeting up. Seniors also use them to exchange information or simply enjoy a cup of coffee in a relaxed setting.

As elections approach, political actors seek to capitalize on every opportunity to gain votes. Coffee shops are no exception and seek to capitalize on this. Many coffee shops become strategic sites for political campaigning, both overt and covert. Research has shown that coffee shops, as highly frequented social spaces, attract political actors seeking to engage with voters directly. It is increasingly evident that coffee shops have evolved into a distinct form of political culture in various regions.

Coffee shop visitors, who typically only visit for casual purposes, have transformed into political forums for political actors and the public in the lead-up to the 2019 elections. The public's growing enthusiasm for this election has contributed to coffee shops becoming a political culture. The role of coffee shops in political culture is supported by several indicators.

Indicators contributing to coffee shops becoming a political culture in Pontianak include

their role as forums for discussion across communities, as gathering places for young people and groups, and as resting places for employees during work breaks. These indicators have contributed to coffee shops in Pontianak becoming the most utilized venues by political actors for campaigning and gaining votes.

Research findings indicate that one indicator of coffee shops in Pontianak becoming a political culture is their role as forums for discussion across different segments of society. From the younger generation who use coffee shops to discuss organizational issues and college or academic assignments, to older people, who use coffee shops as a means of exchanging information, to elites, who use coffee shops to discuss business and work matters.

Beyond being places for discussion, coffee shops are gathering places, especially for the younger generation. The availability of stable Wi-Fi connections and comfortable environments has made coffee shops attractive locations for gamers to spend several hours per day participating in online activities. These practices have transformed coffee shops into digitally connected social environments in which leisure activities intersect with broader patterns of communication and interaction (Papacharissi, 2010).

Papacharissi argues that digital technologies have blurred the boundaries between private and public spaces. From this perspective, coffee shops function as physical gathering places and digitally mediated micro-public spheres. Leisure-oriented activities such as gaming do not necessarily exclude political engagement; rather, they create entry points through which political information circulates in subtle and indirect ways. The integration of digital practices into coffee shop culture, therefore, expands the range of political interaction, allowing electoral campaigns to operate within spaces that combine entertainment, communication, and social networking functions.

Coffee shops also serve as resting places for students, employees, and public officials. They often use coffee shops as a regular place to rest during work breaks. Their accessibility and comfort make them a popular destination. Coffee shops can be considered a political culture in Pontianak, as local communities and political actors have established routines and patterns for visiting them, and the public's trust in coffee shops, which political actors view as strategic opportunities for voter mobilization during elections.

Coffee and politics have a complex relationship in culture and everyday life, similar to the role of rice in Indonesian society. Most people see coffee as a metaphor for politics, where choosing between coffee and tea is likened to making political choices. Furthermore, coffee shops serve as places where communities build solidarity and express political resistance. On the other hand, there are also places like "Kopi Politik" (Political Coffee), which attract coffee enthusiasts and also serve as gathering spaces for activists and political actors.

Coffee is also a metaphor for politics, where coffee captivates through its aroma, while politics gains influence through subtle forms of persuasion. On the other hand, coffee also serves as a medium for political discussion and social interaction. Thus, coffee plays a crucial role in political and social contexts (Chander, 2017). This duality highlights the paradoxical nature of coffee as both a commodity of leisure and a catalyst for political engagement. On the one hand, it represents comfort, relaxation, and cultural ritual, while also symbolizing the tensions and complexities inherent in political life. The aroma of coffee may evoke a sense of familiarity and belonging, yet the conversations it sparks often lead to critical discussions, ideological contestation, and reflections on power relations. In this sense, coffee functions not only as a sensory experience but as a medium through

which individuals negotiate their positions within the political landscape.

Furthermore, coffee spaces—whether traditional roadside stalls, artisanal cafes, or modern co-working coffee hubs—provide an accessible platform for informal political discourse. These venues foster spaces where citizens can express opinions, critically engage with prevailing narratives, and collectively shape understandings of governance and democracy. The performative act of gathering over coffee facilitates the creation of micro-public spheres, where dialogue becomes both a social activity and a political exercise. Such spaces blur the lines between the private and public domains, embedding political consciousness into everyday life.

Additionally, coffee serves as a cultural symbol that reflects broader societal dynamics. It mirrors how power operates—sometimes subtly, through influence and persuasion, and at other times more explicitly through discourse and political mobilization. The ritual of coffee consumption carries an implicit invitation for individuals to engage with social realities, whether by discussing electoral strategies, critiquing policy, or simply debating the future of governance in shared social settings.

Ultimately, the study reveals that coffee's significance transcends its material value as a beverage. It becomes a metaphor, a stage, and a tool for civic engagement, highlighting its unique role in connecting sensory experience with the pursuit of political meaning and social cohesion.

E. CONCLUSION

During the 2024 Indonesian elections, coffee shops frequently functioned as informal venues for political engagement. Candidates and campaign teams often organized small-scale discussions in cafés and *warung kopi* (coffee stalls) to interact directly with voters. These meetings typically involved policy discussions, campaign messaging, and volunteer recruitment,

demonstrating how coffee shops became practical spaces for grassroots political mobilization.

Discussions about presidential candidates, campaign promises, and policy issues frequently occurred at informal coffee-drinking gatherings, as documented in media reports and previous studies. Compared to formal campaign events, these exchanges helped shape political beliefs in a more casual and socially ingrained way. This study demonstrates that coffee shops played a significant role during the 2024 Indonesian elections by functioning as hybrid spaces where informal discussion, digital communication, and grassroots mobilization intersected.

The literature review reveals that coffee shops serve as more than just consumption spaces; they operate as micro-public spheres where political dialogue and civic learning emerge organically. Three key findings are identified. First, coffee-drinking culture provides a conducive social environment for the exchange of political ideas. Second, the spatial and social characteristics of coffee shops encourage informal yet meaningful deliberation that can influence public opinion. Third, the interactions within these spaces show potential to shape electoral engagement, even indirectly, by nurturing political awareness and social capital.

The culture of political discussions in coffee shops has led us to frequently see legislative candidates and their entourages there lately. It is not just for coffee; the candidates want to express their ideas and interact with the various characters enjoying their coffee. Fortunately, we have not had any fights in coffee shops over political discussions, though there have been many debates. This means that coffee shops are spaces where people can listen and even actively participate without hesitation in expressing their opinions.

Politicians often use coffee shops as venues for campaigning, political lobbying, and even engaging with constituents in a more open,

informal setting, as if the shops are spaces that facilitate free expression and social interaction. Because of the freedom of conversation, a wide range of topics can be discussed in coffee shops, from the most general to the most specific, and can be discussed openly because the place offers freedom.

Coffee is associated with sensory experience, taste, and cultural meaning. Meanwhile, politics refers to thought, freedom, policy, and history. Coffee has the spirit of a warrior. The political spirit is inherently pure; however, any dirty action may come from those who practice it. Coffee and political discourse have a mutual attraction. The tradition of discussing politics over a cup of coffee has produced individuals highly skilled in public speaking, resulting in figures who can articulate and defend their idealized arguments effectively.

Coffee can soothe the soul, but for a political actor caught in corruption, do they have time to sip a cup? Coffee comforts with its aroma, but a corrupt politician is trapped and undermined by their own actions. Such a situation reflects a deeply troubling reality. However, in the world of coffee, there is a closely associated companion that is difficult to separate: cigarettes. This view continues to generate debate over whether cigarettes are an essential accompaniment to coffee and political discussion. For this author, this aspect remains important. Coffee is best enjoyed hot, and political discussions become livelier when the issue first surfaces and is openly discussed. Coffee pairs well with cigarettes, and future politics pairs well with programs and ideas. The political outlook on money becomes more pronounced, as does the political agenda itself. Coffee shops are among the most popular social destinations in Pontianak. Several factors contribute to a coffee shop's popularity, including free Wi-Fi, a comfortable environment, and high-quality coffee.

This is what makes coffee shops important hubs for discussion, social gathering, and breaks for students, employees, officials, and even elites

during their leisure time. Prior to the 2019 election, coffee shops were among the most frequently visited places, making them strategic targets for political actors to secure electoral support.

This is due to the community's established routines and patterns in visiting coffee shops, as well as the political actors' belief that these spaces can be used to enhance their electability. Campaigning is often carried out through direct engagement with the community, including informal discussions and the sponsorship of e-sports tournaments commonly held in coffee shops, as a way for political actors to increase their electability.

In sum, the findings confirm that coffee culture is connected with political processes in subtle yet significant ways.

"Coffee is not merely brewed; it also fosters conversations, cultivates civic awareness, and stimulates the essence of democratic life."

Coffee shops, through their social practices and spatial arrangements, create deliberative opportunities that can shape public opinion and potentially influence electoral engagement. This broadens the understanding of where and how political processes occur, suggesting that democratic life is not confined to parliaments or campaign rallies but also develops within everyday spaces of social interaction.

While this paper has highlighted the unique intersection between coffee-drinking culture and political processes through a literature-based approach, future research would benefit from incorporating empirical fieldwork methods, such as ethnographic studies, surveys, or interviews with coffee shop patrons and owners. Comparative studies across different regions and cultural settings could also enrich the understanding of how coffee spaces function as micro-public spheres in diverse political contexts.

Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches that combine political science, sociology, and cultural studies would provide deeper insights into the growing roles of coffee culture as a medium of political engagement in the digital age.

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