
A Cultural Dimension of American-Indonesian “Fast Food Diplomacy”

Sri Herminingrum

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

Email: hermien_18@ub.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article endeavors to elucidate the establishment of international relations between America and Indonesia by means of fast food franchises from a cultural dimension point of view. Since diplomacy in this context embraces the coexistent expression of cultures, the object highlighted in the research is the presence of American fast food icons, which are represented by Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and McDonald's. The concepts of cultural change are used as the basis of data analysis from this one-year field observation over the two franchises in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. This analysis aims (1) to uncover the innovations of KFC and McDonald's outlets to devise new forms of their fast food that fit Indonesian food habits, as well as to trace (2) the spread of their global ideas in the everyday habits of Indonesians, and (3) the influence of the existence of both upon the burgeoning American-Indonesian hybridized food culture. The result discloses that the business activity of KFC and McDonald's has not only created an affinity for economic benefit towards America and Indonesia through the hands of private enterprise, but has also engendered the diversified 'fast-food genre'.

Keywords: *America-Indonesia; international relations; cultural dimension; fast food icons*

INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is a matter of the management of relations between states or between states and other actors. Basically, it is concerned with the advice, shape, and implementation of foreign policy. As such, it is the means of articulating, coordinating, and securing particular or wider interests which employ a lot of media such as lobbying, corresponding, and the exchange of views. Additionally, Barston (2013) noted that the change of diplomacy today that was sparked by the cold war, the so-called modern diplomacy, is dominated by economic players. Economic activity, as the determinant in achieving worldwide international relations, was initiated by America at the end of World War I.

Learning from the Great Depression which shattered the order of societal life around the globe, Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State from 1933 to 1944, suggested reorganizing the International economic structure of the whole sphere to achieve global welfare and peace. This is

based on his assertion that “the character of international relations is derived from economic condition” (Norton, et al.; 1986: 773). Therefore, it is reasonably acceptable if during world history, that the economy has become the center of all aspects of human life. Economic power acts as an engine of inevitable changes. The interdependence in finance and international community trade simultaneously built a cooperative web and struck the wall of hemispheric borders. The American resolution to establish national and international prosperity was declared in the first inaugural address of President Franklin D. Roosevelt which notably underscored the importance of restoring world trade. In short, both institutional and private businesses should be empowered to play their roles in global economic growth. When America succeeds in expropriating power from countries worldwide thereafter, the process of globalization fosters American's expertise to handle the international relations including restaurant businesses, especially fast food restaurants.

Although Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) opened its first small restaurant more than a decade earlier than McDonald's, these two fast food restaurants built their businesses in an era when America was in a turbulent economic situation. After World War I and towards the beginning of World War II, KFC, which started its business in the 1930's and McDonald's in the 1940's, demonstrated how American traditional values came to be part of the daily life of Americans. When the set of ideal values of individual freedom, self-reliance, equality of opportunity, competition, material wealth and hard work was degraded, difficult to apply or even heavily contrasting the reality; Harland Sanders and the McDonald brothers were among the Americans who were able to successfully merge idealism and reality. The motivation to gain material wealth prompted them to compete and work hard within the wrecked, unstable economic condition of America. They transformed a threat on traditional values into a sense of optimism that then became the American way of life, especially in overcoming difficult times.

Opportunities opened up for the KFC and McDonald's companies when America entered the post World War II era which was rendered as the steadiest period of growth and prosperity. Insomuch as, "to the vast majority of Americans, the post war economic boom was a vindication of the American system of free enterprise" (Norton, et al., 1986: 881). It was the opportune time to implement the value of equality in gaining access to opportunities through fair competition. Because the competitiveness which must be faced is tied directly to the aim of economic benefit, KFC and McDonald's certainly cannot separate their businesses from the demands of the consumers. In terms of business promotion in America, Marx Lerner (cited in Datesman, Crandall, & Kearny, 2005: 96-97) declared that the three main characteristics that the American consumers want, particularly from food, are comfort, cleanliness, and novelty. As the embodiment of the Frontier Heritage, the love of novelty is believed to stem from the people's pride in their ability to invent new things. Inventiveness and newness cannot be separated. Therefore, the three qualities that are searched by American consumers mentioned by Lerner were then expanded to include a new concept: convenience. The desire for convenience has also been developed by KFC and McDonald's fast food restaurants. Dine-in and take-out, the drive-through option, and delivery services are several examples of convenient concepts to entice consumers.

The realization of the American spirit of competition is executed by KFC and McDonald's by increasing their company's presence both in number and

quality. These two giant fast food restaurant businesses spread across the world, including throughout Indonesia, like an octopus's tentacles in a form of franchises. Inevitably, the vast impact of the fast food concept induced not only socio-economic sectors but also cultural change for Indonesians.

The excellence of the restaurant business undeniably relies on how the food is prepared, served, and promoted, which is akin to culture. Hence, Bentley (2007) believed that food is a symbol of cultural identity which builds up the barriers and differences between cultures of each group in society. Food choice depends upon a society's own desires and the conditions of the area they live in. Food is not only a basic biological need for people in order to survive, but it also interconnects with people's social and cultural needs in their community or society as well. In other words, food serves two important domains in human life, namely biological sustenance, and cultural expression including a person's identity in society, community, and that of self. In line with globalization, therefore, Friedman (1995) affirmed that food does not imply a mere by-product of culture because it covers significant relations of many interests, even power.

Together with the globalization era, the presence of American commercial enterprises continuously expands their markets. Limitless boundaries of time and space between countries accelerate the traffic of transnational turnover. Consequently, the fast food concept adopted by KFC and McDonald's flourishes in every corner of the globe. Through its fast food icons, America has also played a great part in changing Indonesian socio-cultural life, especially in constructing international relations.

The thought that technology is changing diplomacy cannot be disputed (CSIS, 1998) and, of course, America's power in technology accelerates the fusing of cultures in the world without exception. America has taken the predominant role in the global economy with a huge and promising market. Seeing how KFC and McDonald's drive international relations through their fast food franchise businesses in Indonesia, in the dimension of culture, this notion can be labeled as 'fast food diplomacy'.

The cultural influence of four KFC and four McDonald's restaurants upon people's every day culture in Malang city has been chosen as the object of this study. As the second largest city in East Java, after the province's capital city, Surabaya, based on the census of 2016, the inhabitants of Malang comprise approximately four million people. About 30-40% of this number are students coming from various areas or even different islands throughout Indonesia. This dense population

can be considered as comprising the potential customers representing the agents who build communication with their surrounding culture.

Gaining good relations needs cultural understanding, and acquiring cultural understanding needs good communication. Thus, Baldwin, et.al (2014) confirmed that culture is closely related to a symbolic behavior, namely communication. Food as a product of culture is also intricately tied to communication. It is created and changed because of communication. The dynamics of culture can be outlined by three means: invention or innovation; diffusion or the spread of artifacts, behaviors, and ideas across cultures; and hybridity. The communication between the two nations is bridged by the mutual influence of the two cultures with different backgrounds, resulting in a process of reactions and responses. For this reason, the purpose of this research is to uncover the presence of KFC and McDonald's in bringing the cultural impacts through creating innovation, spreading ideas, and shaping hybridity, and their by-products which are manifested in non-formal business sectors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Because food and drink are seen as a basic need that has no connection with culture, generally, they seem to be trivial things compared to other cultural products. It is not surprising, then, that people are not aware of the changing cultural processes taking place in their everyday life (Friedman, 1995; Bentley, 2007). Such situations continue to occur in Indonesia as KFC and McDonald's fast foods build communication with local food, namely creating conformable menus, and mixing the idea of traditional and global; interpenetrating concepts. For this account, invention or innovation, diffusion, and hybridity are the groundwork of the nature of culture itself.

Innovation: Cultural Communication Practice

Referring to the changing diplomacy in today's global capitalism, the integration of local or regional foods and 'global cuisine' is a natural cultural phenomenon (Kittler, Sucher, and Nahikian-Nelms, 2011) as a result of the unrestricted organization of the world. In this context, the link between people as consumers, economic growth, and culture, is inseparable. CSIS (1998: 31) scrutinized that "The urban economies of some of the most populous countries, Indonesia being one of them, continue to expand. Economic growth will continue to be fueled by innovation". Food and drink, as a symbol of cultural

identity (Mendieta, in Alcoff 2002; Bentley, 2007), are created to be locally acceptable wherein people will readily consume them. KFC and McDonald's, therefore, have been actively inventive and innovative with the food and drink they serve to achieve cultural and economic interests simultaneously.

Along with their expansion into countries outside the United States, both KFC and McDonald's apply various kinds of localized menus. To meet their marketing targets in the 1980's, McDonald's introduced various menus to suit the changing consumer tastes. The most noticeable is the incorporation of the rice meal component for Asian franchises as a gesture of understanding the importance of the Asian staple food, which has also become a promising offer.

Figure 1a. (above left) KFC *Nasi Ayam Goreng Crispy*; **1b.** (bottom left) *Bubur Ayam McD*; **1c.** (right) The Special McD menu for Indonesian Independence Day



Consequently, in Indonesia, McDonald's now offers greater menu variety. For example, 'Bubur Ayam McD' – rice porridge with chicken dishes (Picture 1b), or 'Nasi Teriyaki McD', rice and chicken grilled with Japanese condiments and processed with Japanese cooking techniques. These food items interspersed with the regular menu are very familiar to Indonesians as a daily breakfast. Additionally, in the Indonesian daily setting, KFC serves rice with crispy fried chicken or spicy hot wings using Indonesian spices and cooking techniques to localize its chicken dishes (Picture 1a).

By tracing the Indonesian identity, the year-long observation showed that the availability of special menus at special occasions offered by KFC and McDonald's are, for example, forging a connection with the celebrations of

religious holidays by the pluralistic people of Indonesia, such as the Moslem Eid-al-Fitr, the Christian Christmas Day, or even the Confucian Chinese Lunar New Year. KFC has huge promotions with reasonable prices for their thematic menus as a way of observing the religious holidays in Indonesia. Thematic menus from four outlets of KFC and four outlets of McDonald's in Malang were observed to jointly promote those holidays and the company's menu, and each of those companies designed the supply of their food products uniformly.

Within the month of *Ramadhan*, in which the Moslems observe fasting, KFC offers *Paket Dug Dug*, a very cheap meal package consisting of chicken drum sticks. The terminology used for this package resembles the sound of the *bedug*, the large drum placed in mosques to summon people to prayer or to signal the end of fasting time at sunset. These types of tempting meal packages are also offered by McDonald's in different formats. The Christmas celebration for KFC is a time to add little sweet treats such as black forest cakes, which are associated with Santa Claus, to entice child-consumers. The KFC scheme is a little different from McDonald's which serves their products in a chain of Christmas – Year End – New Year celebrations by enriching and adding the number of the variants. Another instance of McDonald's versatility appears during the celebration of *Imlek* or Chinese Lunar New Year, such as the Black-pepper Mayo Beef Rice, Beef Prosperity Burger, Black-pepper Mayo Beef Burger, in addition to their signature Big-Mac menu. In celebrating these events, McDonald's also adds slogans in connection with the theme. For instance, during the *Imlek* celebration, the slogan put forward was *Sambut Harapan Penuh Semangat*, 'embrace hope enthusiastically'.

In regard to Indonesian pride, KFC and McDonald's also serve highly diversified menus. In commemorating Indonesian Independence Day in 2016, KFC offers *Paket Hore Hore* or the 'hooray hooray' meal with all red and white ornaments – the colors of the Indonesian national flag. For the same event, McDonald's celebrate with lively red and white decorations. They erect billboards which display folk traditions that are only celebrated by Indonesians once a year during the Independence Day, in addition to the banners for menus surrounding the premise and in the restaurant. The adaptation of the specialized menus of McDonald's towards the local food and drink is shown in the hybridization of the *Burger Sate* menu which includes a burger with chicken and *satay* sauce which is made of peanut paste, French Fries for the side dish and *Teh Soda Markisa*, a passionfruit tea with soda for the drink. The other hybridization case would be *McFlurry Markisa* and *McFlurry Rujak Pedas*. The latter menu is

a remarkable innovation, deconstructing the commonly sweet-tasting ice cream by combining it with the local taste of hot-and-spicy or *pedas* taste as the main taste of the traditional dressing for Javanese salad, or *rujak*, which is comprised of fresh tropical fruits. Not leaving behind the tagline *Ini Rasa Kita!* "This is our flavor!" 'Our flavor' represents Indonesian identity, emphasized by the hashtag *#RasaKitaIndonesia*, and the eye-catching Golden Arches logo, as the perfect meeting point of American and Indonesian taste and identity. (Picture 1c).

Diffusion: The Spread of Ideas

Food as material elements of a culture shape "the dynamic of an ongoing cultural system as well as provide ways of doing things in everyday interaction" (Fine and Kleinman, 2016:7). Accordingly, the Indonesian traditional food also experiences a transformation. The ideas of fast food, instant ingredients, and flavored materials have been infused into Indonesian's eating habits.

Spreading global ideas represented by KFC has built new creations. Not only does the local menu influence the American fast food but the local performance is improvised to resemble the global one as well. The adoption of the branded cuisine of KFC, which is served in more than four hundred and seventy outlets in Indonesia, based on the statistical data of 2013, has easily assimilated with the local food. Before modern concepts gripped all sectors of social life in Indonesia, chicken which are fried with traditional spices have been traditionally called *ayam goreng*. The inspiration which springs from the term 'fried chicken' dramatically shapes another popular hybrid term, *Ayam goreng crispy*, referring to fried chicken with special ingredients which is modified from the secret recipe of KFC. *Ayam goreng crispy* can easily be found in every small traditional restaurant, even street food stalls¹ selling *ayam goreng* with a KFC-like appearance. Even the addition of *lalapan* (a Javanese side-salad) as the offered complement, resulting in *ayam goreng crispy* and *lalapan*, signifies that the local color actively participates in the cultural exchange process.

However, this phenomenon is no longer considered anything special. People no longer see any difference between the hybrid food product using the term 'fried chicken' with the term *ayam goreng*. For the sake of modernized *ayam goreng*, KFC is not considered as a legal label to distinguish the fried chicken created by Sanders from Kentucky. The acronym of KFC has been transposed by one local business into "HFC" which stands for "Hisana Fried Chicken", as shown in Picture 2a. It sells local products while at the same time the global logo is used to make the *ayam goreng* appear more modern.

Seeing the name "Hisana Fried Chicken" or "HFC", the owner of the *warung*, Hisana, uses the term 'fried chicken' to label the chicken fried with local ingredients but served with a global reputation. Interestingly, this traditional restaurant has many branches around local campuses, so it is very popular among students in Malang.

Figure 2 (from left to right): a. Manipulated KFC brand; b. Flour with Kentucky ingredient; c. Traditional hot chili-sauce.



Picture 2b illustrates flour with special ingredients labeled as 'Kentucky' which has been made to cover chicken drumsticks before being fried to create a crispy coating. The use of the phrase '*tepung bumbu ala Kentucky, ayam Krispi*' – flavored flour a la Kentucky, crispy chicken, has been created in the hope to gain profit through the power of a global brand. If the flavor is not the same as Sanders' recipe, at least the taste closely resembles the original and the appearance looks very American. This fried chicken fits the Indonesian taste when it is served as '*sambal*; a Javanese traditional hot sauce; fried chicken'. Obviously, the arrangement of *sambal* and fried chicken drumsticks (picture 2c) has thus become a modern Indonesian dish.

These findings assert Samuelson's notion (cited in CSIS, 1998:19) about globalization which underlines the increased integration of the world's economic matters and business; "the worldwide convergence of supply and demand". KFC's derivative products are not a mere integrated concept between global and local in every day interactions. The adaptation of the Kentucky brand in terms of its appearance and taste as the underpinning cultural symbol of the diffusion of two cultures, American and Indonesian, is aimed at for financial benefit.

Hybridity: Cultural Blending

According to Ritzer (2004), global fast food has produced an institutionalized form of every local culture. As worldwide fast food genre restaurants, KFC and McDonald's participate in parading various new kinds

of globalized local food. This intermingled concept can be traced in economic and cultural diplomacy in which "non-state actors" have proliferated in every sector, including in traditional interest groups (Baldwin, et.al, 2014). In the diplomacy world, "the proliferation of new actors" is the last level of the three features (CSIS, 1998:30) that accelerate the interaction of the global economy. Apart from shared-business, NGOs, universities, and interested members of the public, the non-state actors who play a role in cultural blending in Indonesia especially in the context of fast food are the 'ordinary' people who energize the Indonesian micro-economy.

America's success in penetrating the Indonesian market through KFC and McDonald's can be explored from the emergence of the new trends of overwhelming *warung* or *kedai* and *rombong* or *lapak*. As a part of the non-formal economic sector activity, this socio-cultural phenomenon indicates the dynamics of American-Indonesian relations. The fast food concept which strongly infuses non-formal agents is the hamburger, or more popularly known as burger, eating habits. Without any intention to put aside its origin, in Indonesia, evidently, all types of fast-food which have a connection to burgers are associated with the American traits of a 'can-do' spirit and convenience, attributing to creativity and practicality.

From a cultural perspective, this American fast food has then become an Indonesian cuisine which is offered in a new form that represents invention or innovation and consumed as a cultural habit. Innumerable *warung* or *kedai* and *rombong* or *lapak* serve variations of burgers modified to accommodate the local ingredients and local taste. Besides, marketing tactics are applied in a striking way by the sellers. They display unique mixed concepts between McDonald's logo and Javanese phrases as a creative elaboration to simulate a modern, yet local, promotion. Collaboration between global and local food, deconstructing the established standards of marketing, and producing new packaging are all important aspects that can attract the consumers' attention.

The local-global blended foods bring out a new cuisine which can be easily identified from the advertisements displayed. Picture 3 shows the promotion forms illustrating how global and local food types are combined; for example: *Kara' Burger*², *Burger Mendoan*, or *Burger Tahu*. They describe that there is a meeting point between Indonesia and America represented by the hybrid food and their complementary dishes sold along the streets in Malang. Burgers have become the inspiration and motivation for the traditional food sellers to develop their creative ideas. The *Burger Tahu* (Picture 3a), for example, is made with fried tofu, locally

known as *tahu*, as the chief component. Since the other components used are only vegetables with chili sauce, most likely this hybrid fast food is a healthier option. Its appearance, however, is kept to resemble the popular burger – an intermingling of commensurable local-global food without having to be labeled as ‘hamburgerization’.

The Javanese influence in the area observed certainly cannot be avoided because in Indonesia there is no food that can be labeled ‘Indonesian food’. The existing foods are local culinary dishes or local foods which mark each region or ethnic group as a part of the Indonesian archipelago. (Prabandari, 2014). This means that if the American burger is to be hybridized with the local culinary dishes in other regions in Indonesia, it will therefore lead to the process of deconstruction with different, local, characteristics. Accordingly, the result will enrich the variations of globalized food as part of Indonesian culture.

Figure 3 (from left to right): a. Burger Tahu; b. Hybridized McD logo.



Picture 3b depicts very traditionally-produced food, called *mendoan*.³ *Mendoan* cannot be separated from local taste but today it is always dismissed as old fashioned. Therefore, to make it ‘in’ with a modern idea, the promotion is renewed by adopting the American fast food to create *Burger Mendoan*. The use of the McDonald’s golden arches logo, which dominates the whole advertisement, manifests for the street food seller the power of the American brand in their marketing strategy. The ‘M’ logo is manipulated to be ‘*MenDoan’s*’ with a sensational guarantee ‘*dijamin maknyus*’ (Javanese slang meaning unbeatably delicious). Interestingly, the street food seller also does not detach at all from the origin of the traditional food by including the phrase ‘*Kuliner khas Banyumas*’, a special culinary dish from Banyumas, to evoke the memorable local food. The creative embellishment in writing the phrase which is

remarkably similar with the old Javanese-style characters shows a strong emotional attachment to their ethnic pride. The integration between the global brand and local traits is itself a new form of hybridization.

The branded logo of the KFC acronym, the red and yellow arches of McDonald’s, and the other complements which are combined by the street food sellers to label their hybrid food products can be regarded as a cultural phenomenon generated from globalization that forms global-nationalism. This new brand of Indonesian identity correlates to Mendieta’s argument that globalization is purging the authenticity of identity; “identities are never univocal, stable, or innocent. They are always an accomplished and ceaseless project” (in Alcoff, 2002: 414). The franchise restaurants of KFC and McDonald’s actually hold a key role in connecting the different cultures, in addition to the role of the local cultures as well. Okihiro’s term on “the dance for trans-nationalism” (in Maddox, 1999: 442) defines the meeting point of cultural transformation. America and Indonesia have been able to fit into or embody their hybrid culture provided by fast food franchises and street food sellers. Eventually, this hybridization has also embraced a globalized identity of Indonesians.

This deconstruction pattern is in accordance with the idea of McDonaldization formulated by Ritzer (2014: 18). He said that McDonald’s represents a powerful model for business agents in America. The extraordinary power of ‘Mc’ transcends the borders of countries which are thousands of miles apart from America, like Indonesia. The creative process of the street food sellers cannot merely be seen as an absolute dependence towards fast food, which therefore promotes the domination of capitalism – seeing business as usual. The agents of non-formal economic sectors indeed cannot significantly control their fate by wearing the ‘Mc’ outfit or manipulating the notion of a burger. But, the growth of Indonesian popular culture on account of American fast food demonstrates global-culture awakening. It is an expression of the rise of an indirect consciousness towards the importance of healthy natural food which is very local, but the taste is *en par* with, or even more delicious than, global food.

The promotional ways that form the American-Indonesian foods and their complexities apparently emphasize an agreement between KFC and McDonalds and their franchises in Indonesia. The promotions displayed by the street food sellers within the research area are the fabrication of American fast food and traditional Javanese food. This hybridization is able to flourish not only because the local taste is familiar for Indonesians but also the use of the acronym KFC, or the stand-alone

forms 'Kentucky' or 'Fried Chicken', or the McDonald's 'M' logo are marketable tools connected closely with the promise of local satisfaction and global prestige. In creating the advertisements, the street food sellers do not rely on conventional tools such as television, radio, or printed media which "serve as the premier platform for advertising" (Bakar, Desa, Mustafa, 2015: 310), even the modern form: online advertising. These "new actors", indirectly, have practiced one of the triggers of the fast globalization process: creativity.

To sustain their profit-oriented businesses in Indonesia, they accommodate mutual relations with their restaurant chains. In turn, for Indonesian street food sellers, adapting the KFC label, either in full or separate forms, promotes its derivative products. Utilizing the 'M' logo for a hybridized burger and advertising it in local forms, positions it as an 'in' food consumed by globalized people. On the one hand, the intermingled food exemplified by *burger-tahu* establishes the notion of hybridity suggested by Pieterse (2010); the "cut-'n'-mix experiences in consumption, lifestyles and identities, ordinary and everyday". These three components are integrated to represent modernity (McCracken, 1990) as one of the ever-changing cultural phenomena. On the other hand, the attractive promotion is created in order to be 'modern'. Borrowing Ha's term (2006), "sexy" advertisement which refers to the seller's dramatic provocation to raise awareness among consumers is the most effective marketing strategy.

In the context of communication, Sorrells (in Nakayama and Halualani, 2010) postulates that revolutionary changes in technology have dramatically accelerated the interaction and inter-relationship among people around the world. The absence of borders erases polarization. The notion of a dichotomy proposed by Nygren (1999) which emphasizes global signifying 'modern' and local signifying 'traditional' melts. Notions of powerful and powerless in every sector of politics, economics, social life, and culture encompassing all its manifestations become blurred.

The invention of fast food with a local taste and the innovation of unique menus which uplift the identity and nationalism of Indonesia initiated by the KFC and McDonald's franchises, although only in special occasions, have been crucial in building America-Indonesia relations. The juxtaposition between global/America and local/Java-Indonesia identities becomes the diversified fast food which underlines the success of communication between these two countries of different cultures.

The new forms and the other derivative products

spread by the ideas and ideals of KFC and McDonald's in Indonesia do not signify the occurrence of any political utilization of America, which would then cause economic exploitation. It is recommended that cultural change should not be seen in a hegemonic perspective. The position of America and Indonesia is in balance; hence they together maintain a functional relationship between them. Within a functional relationship, mingling identity which concerns two different cultural backgrounds do not exist in the concept of opposition. It was proposed by Kien Nghi Ha (2006) that a functional relationship is a symbolic domain of national self-representation which can take form because of the existence of creativity and / or innovation. This opens the channel for capital flow and increased productivity. He concludes that today's world is embracing "innovative expressions of the so-called postmodern era of late capitalism": an economic, social, and cultural dynamic which is generated by globalization.

If the flows of modernism and postmodernism are put in equal terms with globalization, consequently, the one with authority is the powerful country which supervises associated subordinates during its operation. America, as the symbol of the world's modernity, indirectly uses KFC and McDonald's restaurants as a proxy which bears the fast food genre to succeed in the Indonesian market. But in the context of postmodernism, the idea of "anything goes" (O'Donnell, 2009) makes the relations between powerful and powerless equally interdependent.

In short, cultural hybridization of America-Indonesia through fast food on the account of unceasing globalization symbolizes the presence of equal power. It is a prototype of transnational post-modernity. The creativity of the street food sellers, "the actors", in disseminating advertisements to consumers is unique because it is beyond the "primary platform" for advertising even in popular online ads. They do not only take a new opportunity for their common business but also articulate good local-global communication.

CONCLUSION

Because of the existence of KFC and McDonald's franchises, the three elements of cultural change: invention or innovation, diffusion, and hybridity can be miraculously found in this study. The relation between America and Indonesia in the line of fast food boosts the dynamic of an ongoing cultural system. It is pertinent to say that both KFC and McDonald's do realize that food is a cultural element of social integration. The operation of these restaurants has enhanced international

communication between America and Indonesia. In the different levels or scope of marketing, it can be an indirect indicator of the success of American-Indonesian 'fast food diplomacy'. The economically beneficial relationship not only covers the two nations, but is also spreading within the smaller scale of domestic markets. Fast food inspiration moved the Indonesian non-formal market sellers to innovatively create new-look products, constituting the American-Indonesian blended culture.

Smoothened by technology, cultural change occurring today also significantly fills the communication gap between countries with very different cultural backgrounds. Whether it is directly noticed or not, America shares its work ethic of invention and innovation both in formal and non-formal sectors through the operation of KFC and McDonald's restaurants. In the non-formal sector, the creativity in developing the hybrid products and even in unraveling the predetermined standard of the advertisements shapes one of the symbols; globalization.

America-Indonesia communication with the underpinning diplomacy through food is a representation of the new trend of international relations. This is a construct of interconnectedness embodying the social, economic, and cultural aspects, that has visualized a soft power which has been exceptionally played by KFC and McDonald's in the development of global politics in Indonesia.

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ENDNOTES

1) In the area where the reseach was done, small traditional restaurants are called *warung* or *kedai*, whereas the street food stalls are called *rombong* or *lapak*. These places are categorized as non-formal vendors which primarily serve local foods and drinks, also various kinds of local dishes and snacks. Most of these two types of street food providers are situated on the roadside. Compared to *warung* or *kedai*, however, *rombong* or *lapak* have a smaller consumer segment. Additionally, *rombong* or *lapak* erect portable settings which can be moved in

accordance with the location of its targeted consumers.

- 2) The original spelling of *kara* is *karak*. *Karak* is a Javanese word for dried-cooked rice (Indonesian: *nasi*). Based on an interview with the seller of the Burger *Kara*, the use of the apostrophe which replaces the last letter k aims to show that the food promoted is 'modern'. That is why the reputation or image should also be considered 'in'.
- 3) *Mendoan* is a very traditional dish from Central Java, which is the best known from Banyumas town, made of fermented soybean. Before being fried, *mendoan* is sliced into thin squares. This dish is commonly eaten with *rice*.

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