

The Kitchen Stage Activities: Reflecting Collaboration and Mobilization of Cultural Resources.

Prananda Luffiansyah Malasan.
Doctoral Student of Kanazawa University.
Email : pranandaluffiansyah@gmail.com

Abstract : It has been widely known that the spirit of collaborations recently has become prevalent in the midst of creative movements. As the capital 'X' is usually flanked between the names of two groups (or more) symbolizing the special collaboration, it becomes a powerful booster for their identity. Keuken festival (as the concrete case of this study) has been held for the five times—the organizer are still working for the six; which criticize inadequacy of public space with the encouragement of the inhabitants of Bandung city to appreciate the value of public space. In order to urge the message behind the festival widely, organizing committee has frequently collaborated with many groups, individuals, and brands in the vessel of creative works in festival. Not only in the tangible works that could be seen such as merchandise, goods, booths, but also in the form of intangible such as cooking activities and music performances. Focusing on the Kitchen Stage as a main area, this article tries to elucidate how the collaboration works that symbolized in 'X' letter are not only done by main actors, in fact, the visitors or supporters have obliquely involved in the midst of the making process that are regarded as sub -actors. On the other side, each actor has mobilized their capital to accumulate, transform and eventually reproduce into new entities under particular circumstances. In the end, general conclusion is drawn to describe the density of assimilation of two or more entities as interpretation beyond what has been performed within the societies.

Keywords: *Festival, Collaboration, Design, Culture, Mobilization*

Introduction

Just a couple of hours before the festival would have been started when I saw twelve times four square meters of stage with white enormous plastic sheet covers which was underpinned by the steel poles as a structure and huge board composed of pinewood beautifully decorated the face of so called the kitchen stage. Two stoves already connected into two gas canisters while a woman was putting some raw food on the fridge and still beneath the white plastic sheet covers, there was also a man installing portable sink that lately I knew that it would be used for cooking demo by the chefs which would be the cardinal point of the festival. Of course around thirties participants hastily prepared their own booth chasing for 10 AM of opening hour. Just a stone's throw away from the kitchen stage, there were two sarnafil stands erected; It seemed to be a place for purchasing official merchandises of this event as well as another 'collaboration products' which was made specially only for this event.

On the October 2014, Keuken festival was held for the fifth time, which took Balai Kota—the central park of Bandung City—as a place of event, offered The City Hall Fairground as a sub-theme of this event. The organizer had successfully conjured the city hall's appearance more younger than usual. From the beginning of festival around 2010, this event has constantly urged the campaign of the public space; hold several events in various places within the city and engaging people in order to increase their sense of belonging on their environment especially the

city space. Aiming at people who are under forties as the main visitor target—considering 60% of population of Bandung is under forties—the organizer strived to use creative way to promote this event.

Inhabitants of the city consists of several background, such as from the education, economical, age, and so forth that impacted on the behavior on each individual, moreover the social groups among the people. The organizer of this event had realized that they need to use ‘common language’ to deliver the message behind of the festival, because each group of society would have own language within them to express and share their knowledge. Food as basic needs of human, regardless the background of each person whether it is economical matter, age, or education that determine what person’s position in the society, Keuken Festival has purposed the food as a basic theme of the event, in order to encourage several kind of participants, communities in Bandung city[1].

The Festival

Flyer, X-banner followed by poster have usually been the promotional kits of the event, festival even some of the cigarette companies exerts this term to ‘decorate’ the appearance of street stall standing on the sidewalk, conversely, Keuken has dissented with those common way of promotion. Utilizing social media through the Internet, which is now easily accessed not only through the personal computer, but also what we have already known, the smartphone. With the users of smartphone in Indonesia had nearly reached 15 million users in 2013[2], the organizer realized that need to find new way to widen the event information utilizing the social media a tool of promotion. By way of connecting cyberspace and real space, they used pre-event of festival and spread the information in their social media kit, gaining awareness and attention from the visitors.

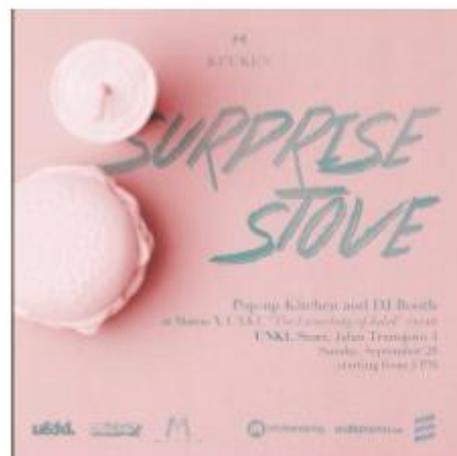


Figure 1. Surprise Stove

‘Surprise Stove’ –as the name of pre-event–was conducted around four or five times before the DDay of festival, encourages people to re-feel the secluded space in Bandung city and the vicinity. In the several places of the city space, which are often unmaintained, they invited people to play and eat the food made by ‘the guest chef’. In every Surprise Stove events, organizer presents new guest chefs cooking on a mobile kitchen, although they were not the professional ones. It is usually just simple activities, randomly determines where is the place to do a picnic, bring the portable stove, paper plates, and kitchen utensils. Additional stuffs such as picnic mat, toys, or any DIY (do it yourself) stuffs are usually prepared by the visitors. The chefs will cook the food, and simply distribute their result to the audiences who simply eat and enjoy the public space. They collaborated to cook with the musicians, artists, designers, or some people that are regarded to have a strong influence in their communities.

Along with cooking performance, there would be another activities such as photography class, music acoustic performances, and other activities to build environment fruitfully. The organizer usually promoted this pre-event through the electronic poster—putting the guest chef’s names and other communities that joined in this event—beforehand, and widely spread it through Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms. It would be spread automatically; thanks to the followers of ‘the guest chefs’ who always re-tweeting the poster and several sentence of the promotion tweets, as well as the member of the communities that also widely spread the information through their social media’s accounts. The organizer and other actors have commonly conducted these schemes of invitation and to be invited as well as to be spread, in order to expand their networks widely.

The Activities

As the food has become the nucleus of the festival, there is always Kitchen Stage and food tenants spread around the area from the first of Keuken was conducted. This event also furnishes additional features such as playground, street furniture, and other art installations. Nevertheless, it always changes depend on the theme of each festival. Kitchen stage as a salient point of this festival has always been looked by the visitors because the huge size of the stage located in strategic position, and they could see many guest performers cook and give meals freely for the audiences. This was advantage for the food festival visitors who did not bring cash but needed to fill their gut profusely. The variation of the guest chefs’ background which were mostly not the professional chef, have interestingly created new appearance and taste of the food. They have their own way to cook, although sometimes it deviated from the common cooking process. It is interesting to see that they have learned by the experiences or inherited authentic family recipes and so forth. It seems not a huge matter whether the cooked are successfully tasty or not, instagram-able or just enough to save on their own memory; as long as the chefs are attractive (supported with MC, and DJ who plays good tune), the crowd will be happy and appeal to enjoy the performances, although some of the crowds were also the performers’ friends.



Figure 2. Kitchen Stage

The organizer successfully invited nearly 60 chefs since the first Keuken. Almost all of them have strong influence to their communities, such as fashion designers, musicians, or politicians. Usually the guest chefs will be invited couple months before the day of the festival to have several briefs from the organizer, being interviewed for the Keuken's blog or other social media. In fact, they also actively support to spread the promotion through their own social media accounts. There were no particular difficulties inviting the guest chefs, just utilizing friend network within the committee, eventually lot of invitees were gathered. Some people carried out cooking performance by pro bono; it means they did not need amount of fee, not as if they perform for the music concert or acting in front of camera for TV drama. The reasons why they did this performance was a collaboration spirit with the event to deploy the message behind, or this was also first experience to perform as chef towards the public, and they just supported their friends who invited them to cook.

Cooking without music player is just a tedious performance. This idea has come up after the trial and error or experience through the pre-event of Keuken Festival. While the chefs cooked just next to them, music player spun the vinyl records to build warm ambience of performance. As I have already mentioned before, the general condition of the cooking performances consists of several activities, including this music performance. The organizer collaborate several entities into one vessel so-called Kitchen Stage.

The music performers here, neither band nor singer type of musician, they were Disc Jokey—commonly abbreviated as DJ—invited by the organizer to mix or compose the music to accompany the chef in cooking activities. They were requested to join the activities sometimes two months before until a month before of the event. According to one DJ that has involved once in this activity, he did not attempt to take effort in preparing; just imagine what would be happen,

who would be the crowd, how was the environment of the venue. Deriving idea from the behavior of the crowd, constructing image of what would be happen in the future, he has beautifully composed the 45minutes music escorting the cooking activities.

Mobilization and Creation of Cultural Elements

It had struck me when I saw many collaboration works was delineated on X symbol, which was flanked within Keuken and another collaborator's label. Either in the cyberspace realm in which organizer has used to spread the information of the festival, or also in the real space (in the day of event) that postulated through the collaboration-made products cutlery set, toys, fashion-wear or even tattoo, have beautifully been concentrated beneath the merchandise booth. On the other side, it is not merely portrayed in the visible or touchable term, but also the collaboration label was represented in the term of activities; such as cooking activities, pre-event promotion, and so forth. Surprisingly, some of works had voluntarily done, although it was costly enough to produce the works. This paper examines one of the prominent processes from their works: how they collaborated with other groups either in yielding tangible works—such as merchandise or art installation—or also intangible activities—cooking performances, workshop, etc. Revealing what is the main purpose behind the collaboration works, deeply explain its intention and how the letter of X unconsciously symbolizes not only the collaboration of the first layer behind the each brand, moreover, it has entangled more hugely people regarded as supporters, or followers of each brand. At the end, I will try to show that, collaboration work is not only to be considered as an assimilation of creative works by two or more actors, it is also represented the unification and mobilization of capital by the crowd/followers as sub-actors that supports each main actor.

Starting from how men are being endowed to entangle in one cultural system, particularly within the environment where the men spend their whole life within it. There are provisions terms of do's and don'ts, set of histories, which are shared and learned between each member of society[3]. This set of cultural, either conscious or unconscious has imposed every single person to determine what they are going to do or what they are not suppose to do. Although, the terms of culture seems to be a set of rules that confines people from their action, however, it also become a set of capital along with economical and social capital that serves the analytical tools to reveal the structure of class within the people in term of reproduction[4]. What has been postulated by Bourdieu about the notion of cultural capital in which belong to other capitals is how the process of acquisition, reproduction, implication into material quantities are seemingly never ended to give implication of class structure. Moriyama (2013) has agreed the term of cultural capital is conceived as a structure-oriented that tends to examine the culture as a form of capital to classify structure of class. However, in particular point, he proposes the notion of 'cultural resource' as analytical tool to look up the concrete actions of each actor utilizing cultural elements that objectified in one entity as a resource belonging to them[5]. In this term two words has been aroused: mobilization and utilization by actors for some purpose clearly become succinct elements to define what the cultural resource is.

These situations are always reflected as a symbol through the object or activities of the people. It is not merely non-human that inanimate, however, they have strategic role in the midst of collaboration work within the actors. It is considered to be a node as well as extension of actors reflecting the value of collaboration. Non-human—objects and activities—induces a new meaning for the social life shaping people’s feeling, needs, even stratification depend on the configuration of their environment. Callon (2004) with the idea of hybrid communities introduced that product has been developed through the never-ending process. He explains “the whirlwind model” which the objects are going to be made traversing from one hand to another hand and each actor that entangled within there, should be considered as a actor to reshapes and reconfigures the objects[6]. It is obviously done nowadays through our daily life; for instance, when we use the pen as a tool for writing, we will easily handle it then write down what we thought into the paper. But let us take a step behind to consider how the designer has designed the pen. I am pretty sure that the designer considered about the future users’ behavior in using the product; which means the designer should considers the users behavior, how the users hold the pen, what is the difficulty in using the pen and so forth. In this sense, the pen has become a hub to connect between the maker and potential users in which they are also involved in the making of the pen as an object. It means, the pen designer here is obviously as a maker or main actor, on the other hand, the future users—through their behavior and habit—has obliquely involved in the making process, they could be deserved as subactor.

What could be drawn from those two theories in this context, we could reveal that there are capital in which involves many actors and more widely other people that considered as sub-actors. They are gathered in one place, mobilizing their sources as capital from one place to other, having purposes of mobilization and turn it into cultural elements that depicted as “collaborative works”.

Behind The Merge of Two Entities

Let us analyze the activities what Keuken has made with other actors, such as cooking performance in this case the kitchen stage. The “X” letter frequently used to describe with whom the organizer has collaborated, it has not only become a symbol of collaboration as clearly written on the posters, moreover, it symbolized the assimilation of two or more huge entities behind the main actors. What should be examined is how the collaboration has involved other actors in behind what has appeared, or more focusing on the subject of the collaboration action. We may see the obvious entities are the subject who did the activities inside the kitchen stage, which consists of “guest chefs”, DJs, and MC. We should admit that they were the main actors on the stage making creative works as a result of these activities, either in the form of foods or music. But, is there possibility from other actors that involved within the process of ‘X’ work?

Start from the X symbol as twenty-fourth letter of alphabet, which is also known as a symbol of number 10 in Roman numeral[7]. Even though frequentation of this letter seems to be less used than other letters—approximately 0.150% [8]—however, it has several meaning in the usage of symbol. As I have mentioned before about the usage in Roman numeral term, X letter is used as

symbol in front of “rays” denotes a form of electromagnetic radiation that commonly known as “x-rays”. When Wilhelm Rontgen found this in a wavelength range on November 1895, “X” symbol become a letter before “radiation” to signify unknown of type radiation that he had discovered. On the other view, X has knowingly become an opposite of the tick symbol for some teachers to signify the wrong answer from the students, even though each place has own symbol to signify whether the exam’s answers were correct or wrong. Despite of the enormous usage of X letter both in term of language or symbols, however, the organizer of Keuken festival has used it in different context in term of creative development, including promotion, design and conceptual matter.

As we have seen before, in Surprise Stove as well as the Keuken as a main festival, they always show ‘the guest chef’ which more than 30 people had joined to cook since the first event was held. Various backgrounds of them such as musician until the politician has made this activity are more interesting. They often not to be paid for their performance, even though in the usual context of performing they should be paid—for example the musicians are usually be paid if they play their music—however, the spirit of collaboration that reflected on the X letter as well as their feeling of new experience to do performance in another way, this collaboration activities has smoothly done.



Figure 3. Scheme of Collaboration Process

Back to the context of collaboration, X are not simply what we have seen as a cooking performance. Two big entities are assimilated when two actors has admitted to do something for the festival. Why it is described as big entities? Think about, who are behind the actors. Who follows Keuken’s instagram, twitter or facebook? On the other side, who follows the actors that collaborate with Keuken to cook in the Kitchen Stage or Surprise Stove? This followers or crowd are not simply people who follow the social media’s timeline and see what their idols do,

but obliquely they are participating to spread the information of the festival, these kind of supporters behind the each actor deserve to be called sub-actors in which has an important within the creative process. They are considered as agent who indirectly involved to form, construct and shape the works. Indeed, they are not appeared in the process when the main actors or agents act to make the works, however, the behavior of sub-actors has appeared in the mind of main actors that become a part of consideration in the production of works.

In this the term of production, the Kitchen Stage as an inanimate object become a means, representation and X letter become a symbol of connection from the each edge to centre, from each culture in one place, or in the this case study, symbolize the assimilation of each culture into one element. Mobilization from each edge into the centre means the mobilization of capital source in which always to be brought and attached in the body of actors and sub-actors.

Conclusion

Through the explanation of dynamic process of culture that consists of capital as cultural resource, we could see the complex interlocking between one actor to another and one each agent to another agent. As the making process of the food that shown in this festival, particularly in the Kitchen Stage—in this regards as an object of collaboration—it has performed, what obviously could be seen, two or three performers together made the food, and another performer shows the music performance. This means the objects that yielded from the collaboration works, either tangible or intangible have become a node for the actors to mobilize, exchange, modify, and eventually reproduce into new entity that intertwine the whole actors behind them.

In the creative work case that collaborates two or more actors, what can be drawn is, first, this special occasion of collaboration work, which was represented as X letter, should be considered as a junction of many actors. There are, for sure, the main actors that become a key player of the making process in which considered each other and think about what idea or notion can be offered by the each actor to whom will collaborate with, or what idea should be reduce that unsuited for the work. On the other side, sub-actors who stand behind the main actor are also equally important within this cultural process. I emphasis on the role of sub-actors that unconsciously play a part in the whole of making process, although they might be regarded more passive in term of contribution. However, their action, habit, custom or any other behaviors are the guide for the main actor to create what they are going to produce. Second, this process has been conceived as the mass mobilization of the actors, include the capital that attached on them, here, the work is considered as terminal of each capital. They are deliberately brought, merge and modified the capital, in this respect, the work is also become the entity that made by the impact of mobilization process.

Here, the conjunction of two actions in one work is essentially need to be looked as the mass action of creating new culture. We should not merely consider the X work as a work of integrating two entities, but we need to perceptively examine the relationship between actors in mobilizing, exchanging and generating new entities. Furthermore, with this pattern, we could

critically consider and examine the process of works toward the advance competition of globalization that becomes more elusive.

Acknowledgment

This paper is made through the help and supports especially the organizing committee of Keuken festival who always shared their experiences and stories. I also would like to thank to Kanazawa University, Cultural Resource Management Program for the support of material and time for discussion.

References

- [1] Larasati, D. & Luffiansyah, P. Reclaim The Street; Eat! Activation of Public Space through Creative Community Intervention, Proceedings of Arte-Polis 4 International Conference Creative Connectivity and the Making of Place: Living Smart by Design, Wibowo, A.S, et al (Ed.), Bandung, July 2012, Architecture Program School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development, Institut Teknologi Bandung, (2012).
- [2] Hilmansyah, R. Pengaruh Kinerja Rebranding Process Terhadap Brand Image Sony Xperia Smartphone, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, (2013)
- [3] Schultz, Emily A. & Lavenda, Robert H. Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on The Human Condition, Oxford University Press, New York, (2012)
- [4] Fashri, Fauzi. Pierre Bourdieu: Menyingkap Kuasa Simbol, Jalasutera, Yogyakarta, (2014).
- [5] Moriyama, Takumi. Cultural Resource in Action, Mobilization of Culture in Madagascar Under French Colonial Role. Japanese Review of Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 14 (2013)