KOSTI Surabaya as a counterculture against the foreign culture in the era of generation 4.0

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Indonesian Old Bicycle Community or *Komunitas Sepeda Tua Indonesia* (KOSTI) of Surabaya is a subculture consisting of old bicycle lovers in Surabaya. This qualitative study aims to clarify and strengthen the idea of Internet as a resource and media for the development of subcultures, to investigate online and offline activities of KOSTI Surabaya, and to promote further research on the diversity of subcultures like KOSTI Surabaya following the development of generation 4.0 trend. The researchers collected data through in-depth interviews and observation to the community members. The result indicates that KOSTI Surabaya promotes and maintains the local and Indonesian culture through offline and online communication. This present study can support the conceptualization of subculture in the digital era. This community helps young generations to put Indonesian important values and norms into practice through their lifestyle, such as to build a good relationship, kinship, brotherhood, to create a good harmony in life. In addition, this community becomes a media to foster and maintain our local culture. KOSTI Surabaya is the resistance against the modern culture which makes this community as counter culture against foreign culture challenges. Not only the use of a means of transportation but also of the nature of individualist that starts to embrace most of Indonesian people in urban areas.

Introduction

Revolution 4.0 is an era where the digitization and automation of technology plays more roles in all aspects of people's life; social life, culture, economics to politics. The concept of the industrial revolution 4.0 by Klaus Schwab characterized by the combination of technology for the biased boundary between the physical, biological and digital aspects (Schwab in Lee et al, 2018). Some main characteristics of the revolution 4.0 are artificial intelligence, internet of things, super internet, automation of technology, genetic modification, and digital-based technologies (Lee et al, 2018). Despite of the development of technology where people living with the automation and good digital communication tools as well as modern transportation, a subculture which survives and chooses to use manual and classical bicycle as a means of transportation still exists. This type of bicycle is called as *Sepeda Tua* (old bike) in Indonesia. This *sepeda tua* (old bicycle) users are members of a group called *Komunitas Sepeda Tua Indonesia* (KOSTI) (Indonesian Old Bicycle Community). Although this community must have been pioneered by the old generation, their resistance becomes even more interesting to investigate since they exist among the young generation when many communities begin to switch from manual things towards automation and modern technology today.

This community is characterized by their old bicycle or *sepeda ontel* in Indonesian term. A subculture has unique and different condition compared to the dominant culture or mainstream culture. This community also can be interpreted as the collective behavior by a group of people who share interests, ideology and specific practices. Meanwhile, according to Barker (2003: 450) subculture is used as a form of resistance to the dominant culture of good resistance to the state, institutions, lifestyle, and everything considered mainstream. Komunitas *Sepeda Tua* (Indonesian Old Bicycle Community) then can be categorized as a subculture. One is the presence of KOSTI Surabaya, which can be regarded as a form of resistance from a group of people of the dominant culture, in this case the dominant culture in question is the choice of means of transport in this modern era such as cars and motorcycles widely used in Surabaya. In the context of Surabaya as the second largest metropolitan city after Jakarta, old bicycle community still exists in this city. This community will always appear during Car Free Day in Taman Bungkul; one of popular parks in Surabaya city centre. This is because they park their bicycles side by side and quite a lot. This allows others easily identify the existence of their community.

This community is a subculture born in the era of globalization reflecting the culture of environmentally friendly and healthy. They do activities with the means of transportation that does not cause air pollution like motorcycles and cars and to promote healthy lifestyles by cycling. This community also offers some accessories which is regarded as their identity as a traditional Javanese clothes, striated Surabaya, *beskap* or costume indicating the struggle of patriotism as well as the identity and ideology of this group (Pariyanto, 2015: 2).

Previous studies on subculture during the last three decades are usually associated with the study of popular music preferences (Hebdige, 1979), and several other youth groups that concentrate the preferences in music and related styles. In the development of this music tastes and preferences change become more diverse than ever before. Therefore, Anderson (2006) argues that the study of the relationship between music and culture has become no longer productive as ever. Although interest is for the good

of the music field, his statement has strong implications for the development of studies of other groups. So as the development of technology and information, studies also growing subculture that researchers should be able to study the youth groups of like-minded style that is affiliated with something other than music. Towards this end, Williams (2006) points out that the Internet has become a medium for subculture affiliation and negotiation of social identity. Use of the Internet as a resource for subculture show that subcultures can currently be affiliated in all locations without time limit.

Such research was first pioneered by the University of Birmingham that has established the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Dick Hebdige (1979) points out the agenda for the study of a subculture, which he defines as lasting response against the mainstream culture. To exist as a subculture, a new subculture must create a culture of "conspicuous consumption", style as bricolage, or semiotic guerilla warfare (Hebdige, 1979: 102-105). Hebdige argued a subculture that select from various items from everyday dominant culture and given new meaning through association with the subculture. Hebdige can see the style as a form of expression and the fight against the class structure in Britain. On the other hand, Muggleton (2000), challenging Hebdige and CCCS, he suggests that the youth subculture CCCS theorized and put this subculture in the system of oppression, conflict, and exploitation. The problem with the model is that he studied CCCS subcultural styles as text rather than studying the subculture itself. Muggleton tried to reframe the subculture studies by speaking directly to those involved in a particular group. Muggleton interviewed members of punk and mod subculture in the UK to understand how they define their group. Accordingly, this study focuses on

a community called *Komunitas Sepeda Tua Indonesia* (KOSTI) Surabaya. The researchers interviewed some members of this subculture and observed the social media they use, such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp group.

On the other hand, studies related to KOSTI Surabaya are very limited. First, Pariyanto (2015) investigated the meaning and ideology of the subculture of Indonesian Big Bicycle or sepeda Kebo in Surabaya. Second, Winata et al (2016) focus on designing interiors for *Komunitas Sepeda Tua Indonesia* (Indonesian Old Bicycle Community) in Surabaya. Knowledge of the role of KOSTI Surabaya as a counterculture in the era of the generation which utilize advanced communications and internet becomes the gap from previous studies. In fact, the existence of KOSTI Surabaya as one of the subcultures is less investigated. Therefore, investigating how a subculture becomes a counterculture against foreign cultures in one of the big cities in Indonesia, Surabaya becomes considerably important.

By analyzing Indonesian Old Bicycle Community (KOSTI) of Surabaya identified by social media such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, this study aims to (a) clarify and strengthen the argument that the Internet as a resource and media for the development of subcultures, (b) investigate online and offline activities of KOSTI Surabaya, (c) promote further research on the diversity of subcultures of KOSTI Surabaya following the development of revolution 4.0.

Therefore, researchers are interested to learn more about this old bike community known as KOSTI Surabaya, especially in the era of industrial revolution 4.0, when the majority of people takes advantage of digitization and slowly begins to leave manual things.

Method

This study is a qualitative research. A qualitative approach is considered suitable in the analysis of this study because the researchers want to analyze the phenomenon of the presence of the Indonesian old bike community (KOSTI) Surabaya as a counterculture to foreign cultures flourished in the city of Surabaya. Moleong (2004) explains that qualitative research aims to look at the attitudes, motivations, and behavior of the objects. In addition, qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of words conducted naturally without intervening in a conduit of information. Because it is a qualitative descriptive, this research can not be tested statistically true (Kountur, 2007).

The source of data consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained by doing unstructured in-depth interviews to members of KOSTI Surabaya. While secondary data is a literature study through data collection on books, journals, newspapers, and other online media related to this research topic. The researchers obtained the data by doing several stages. First, the researchers did in-depth interviews to the pre-determined informants. To get accurate results, the researchers used unstructured interviews so the informant could speak freely. The first interview was conducted on Sunday, November 3rd, 2019 in Taman Bungkul, Surabaya, while the second one was on Wednesday, November 13th, 2019. Second, direct observation by observing this community activities. The researchers followed their weekly activities in Taman Bungkul, Surabaya.

The researchers also performed text-based content analysis of those interactions occured in the cyber spaces like Instagram. This study focuses on the image, caption, and the comments made and archived in its instagram account. Instagram account is chosen for three reasons: (a) they usually have a higher volume of posts evidenced by routinely posting their activities, (b) they have a conversation and post held since 2017 and will continue until the time of the study. However, data from other social media also made reference as the research complementary. Third, the researchers analysed the documents and recorded data. The document is a collection of notes about events in the past (Sugiyono, 2010). Analysis of relevant documents or literature is used to search for data related the research topics. Then, these data are used as data triangulation along the tape to produce data accurate as the conclusion of the study.

The data analysis technique is the process of sequencing the data categories, organizing them into a pattern, category and unit basic description (Iskandar, 2009). The data analysis is intended to organize the collected data consisting of field notes, comments of the researchers, images, photographs, documents, reports, and others. Furthermore, researchers utilize CS Pierce's semiotic theory apart the meaning of signs found from interviews and text analysis online on the Instagram. Pierce semiotic theory is formed by three elements, namely (1) representation which is something representing the closest thing to the object, (2) the object which is something represented, (3) interpreted result including the person's interpretation signs (Piliang, 2003).

Results and Discussion

KOSTI Surabaya Subculture

KOSTI stands for *Komunitas Sepeda Tua Indonesia* (Indonesian Old Bicycle Community). They regularly gather around every Sunday during Car Free Day. This community as a matter of fact has some subcultures. Among them are PASKAS SIMO

GUNUNG BARAT, SENOPATI TENGGILIS, MAHESA GUBENG, GASELLA WIYUNG, SENOGAS, BESI TUA DEMAK, ORKESS TAMBAKSARI, POKSI SIMO, KOSIM SIMO, KOPRAL SOERABAYA, ONTHELIS INDIEKOM and others. KOSTI Surabaya accommodate all the old cycling community in Surabaya.

The main informant of this research is Mr. Slamet Mulyono or Rete. He is the regional coordinator of Kosti in Surabaya. He was chosen as a regional coordinator for two periods. The first period was in October 2013 to 2016 up to three years, while the second one was in 2017 when he was chosen based on the national election in Makassar for four years. Mr. Rete said that KOSTI Surabaya has approximately 30 subgroups and among them nineteen are considered active community. Besides in East Java, KOSTI also exists in some province in Indonesia. It can be seen in Komunitas Sepeda Onthel Seluruh Indonesia in Facebook group and kosti.or.id. Mr.Made, one of the member of KOSTI Surabaya, also said that KOSTI is the official organization that has official and legal document which makes them well-known not only in Indonesia, but also in the world.

Before KOSTI exists, at first the members did cycle by themselves and started to think how they could accommodate their hobbies in one community. This is where KOSTI begins to be established. Their cycling activity is called "*Gowes*" and the people participated are called "*Gowesers*". They have many activities, such as cycling from Surabaya to Bali, joining some local and even international cycling events.

Based on the interview result, they said that KOSTI Surabaya is a subculture which preserves the local cultures. They are very passionate about the local culture and Indonesian culture in general. For example, they always wear traditional Javanese clothes, striated of Surabaya, *beskap* and clothing

indicating Indonesian heroes' patriotism which later becomes their identity.

The most popular question addressed to this community is why among many means of transportation they choose old bikes. Mr. Rete as the chairman of KOSTI Surabaya said that:

> "That's what I've said from the very beginning that we got a lot of memories and quite long history as we think our activity is kind of caring and preserving the culture Miss. We think we can preserve the culture if we don't do it, then who will do that way? That's why we use old bikes aged over 50 years old" (Mr. Rete, 11/13/2019).

From the quote above it can be seen that KOSTI Surabaya want to be part of the community in assisting government to care for and preserve the cultural heritage and the history. Moreover, this is also the part of their hobby for cycling.

The members of this community are not only coming from old generation, but also from the younger ones. Many young adults are interested in joining this community which makes them learn how to preserve the cultures, and they know their ancestors. It is indicated from the following answer:

> "It is part of us. Educating young generation is important to make them remember our ancestors where they only used bicycles back then. There is no car or motorcycles. Young generation need to know the history and take this very serious" (Mr Rete, 11/13/2019).

Accordingly, one of their activities is also a member recruitment starting from their family members. Even some of the members are families joining every activity conducted by KOSTI. Therefore, they have the full support of their respective families to pursue their hobby.

The resistance of the old bike community is that this community is not only a hobby,

but also a means of making memorable memory:

> "This activity is our hobby, so it is better to do it to the fullest. We also recruit new members who really care of this activity. Personally, we don't get any financial benefit, but we could build strong relationship, interact to old and young adults at the same time" (Mr Rete, 11/13/2019).

The author also asks whether there are special requirements if someone wants to join this community. One of the main conditions is of course they could cycle. Even if they do not have bikes, the community could facilitate this. Mr. Rete said that:

> "If someone wants to become a member of this community but does not have bicycle, we could provide one for her/him. If they for example want to participate the *gowes* and do not have bikes, we could provide 50 bikes for them. They only need to pay 100.000 rupiahs to use the bike. This applies to costumes and accessories as well. If they need clothes, then we also can provide for them" (Mr Rete, 11/03/2019).

From the above answer, it can be concluded that they could facilitate a community, institution, or even governmental organization if they need bicycles for different purposes. For example, if they need the old bikes for the decoration, this community will collect all the bikes to use in the events.

Interestingly, the group members are coming from different social class. The minority of them come from upper middle class. Most of them are a collector of old bikes with the high price, while Mr. Rete and friends consider the old bikes as one part of their life. Mr. Rete even has 20 collections of old bikes at home although everyday he only uses one. Other people may think that they are just old bikes. But the members think that

the old bikes are classic and expensive. The older the bike the more expensive accessories they have such as bike lights, mirrors and others in case of damage. The researcher then asked if some bikes are broken, whether they bring it to the normal workshop or not. They said that among them there is someone is good at repairing the broken bikes. They say that should the bicycle specialist who handle their bikes. This is because their bike is not a regular bike with historical value.

The members also actively participate in the regular events. For example, they followed *Jambore Sepeda Tua* (*Old Bicycle Jamboree*) archipelago in the Anniversary of Surabaya. This event is included in *the series Anniversary of Surabaya*. This event was attended by all *onthelis* from various regions in Indonesia, including Sulawesi, Lombok and Palangkaraya. As has become their habit, in this event, they also provide a bicycle for rent if there are people who are also interested in participating in their events. The people only pay the rental price of 50 thousand rupiahs with a guarantee of identity such as ID cards. Because this activity is one of the major agenda of KOSTI, there are a few springs of race competed well as riding slow bike race delayed until dancing contest. Mr. Rete has shown some photos with the national heroes outfit to the researchers.

KOSTI Surabaya on the Internet

The role of the Internet in interpersonal interactions is important for the collective identity of the groups engaged (Rheingold, 2000). These identities are shaped by the values and beliefs held and supported by the members of these groups. Thus, the Internet provides an opportunity for prospective members of a cultural group to find like-minded individuals. Williams (2006: 195) argues that for individuals who do not participate in face-to-face scene, the Internet

is more than just the media; This is social space through which personal and social identity is constructed, given meaning, and distributed through the ritual of computer-mediated interaction. The above quotation shows that they need to seek affiliation to the subculture groups which can reach them via computer communication. Computer-mediated communication is accompanied by several challenges for small group communication. Synchronicity, media richness and social presence are available through the medium of interaction occurring form (TE Harris & Sherblom, 2005).

This definition can be found in the in-depth interviews with some members of *Komunitas Sepeda Tua Indonesia* (KOSTI) Surabaya. The online traces of KOSTI can be found through the social media communication such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook inferred in the early stages (*Firstness*) which applies as representation or an icon most closely to the object represented which is a communication sign of old bicycle community members. The members communicate not only through direct meetings in public spaces in general but also, they form an alternative communication through social media to follow the development of technology and information such as through WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook.

The second trace (*Secondness*) of KOSTI communication in social media is from Instagram account @kostisurabaya indicating a form of membership of old bikes community in Surabaya. Based on the observation, this community is considerably active, not only doing their regular routines in Taman Bungkul every week, but also following some events. It is indicated from their online activities. They have three WhatsApp groups having different function and purpose. They also have an official fans page on Facebook account and official Instagram account with the name "*kostisurabaya*". They regularly post their activities on the accounts. For example, on October 13, 2019, KOSTI Surabaya participated in *Semarak Kreatif* event held by Indosiar TV station. In addition, the third trace (*Thirdness*) of KOSTI's communication in social media is on WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook interpreted by its members as a media of mutual greeting, communication to support and appreciate each other.

Moreover, social media can be a complement of face to face communication they do. Things are forgotten when face to
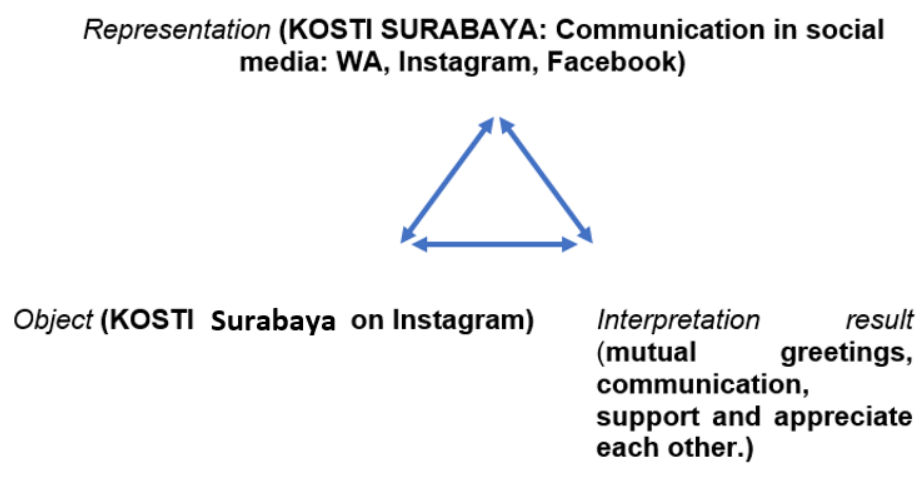

Chart 1. Semiotic Model of Peirce triadic: KOSTI Surabaya on the Internet

face can be directly discussed at any time on social media that they have to strengthen and deepen the relationship they have between one member and others. In addition it is easier for members who happen to not be able to do face to face to know the developments of the communities they follow with sufficient notice and monitor progress on their social media.

From the pictures in Figure 1 and Figure 2, it indicates that this Instagram account is used as a medium to greet, support and appreciate each other. First, comments are found form "*Pasekgres*", *Pasekgres* refers to *Paguyuban Sepeda Kebo Gresik* (the Big Bicycles Community of Gresik). In the biography, *Pasekgres* wrote "*Seperti Pudak dan Sego krawu*", in other words, *Pasekgres* is an asset of the city of Gresik. Thus the emergence comment of *Pasekgress* which is also a bicycle community, it appears that they still build strong relationship among them with limitations of space and time. The second comment came from the account "*Ghustolibin*". *Ghustolibin* is an *onthelis* community incorporated in 2019 IVCA in Bali, the Joint Bicycle Community in Rambipuji, Jember. The third comment is from KOSTI Pasuruan. Based on the comments on KOSTI Surabaya account, it indicates that they build strong relationship since they share hobbies, insights, and affairs.

Since it impossible to always meet each other because the members live in different cities, like KOSTI Surabaya living in Surabaya, while *Jogjarepublikonthel* in Jogjakarta, cyberspace like social media helps them to communicate. Virtual space has some distinct qualities in the chat room. Chat rooms can be effective across space and time. They found a common chat room regardless of what time they connect to the Internet in various cities. Obviously, chat room used by KOSTI Surabaya can be considered as a subculture space, not only connecting fellow members but also all members of KOSTI in Indonesia.

KOSTI Surabaya interactions involved in an online chat room allows members to transcend locality and time but also allows members to gather around for the planned or unplanned events.

As it has been explained above that this community is not only active in public spaces but also in cyberspace or social media. According to Mr David, a member of KOSTI Surabaya, that Instagram is created specifically to capture the moment they spent together and make it more visible to outsiders. As for the intense communication between members, they use short messaging application like WhatsApp. The following is the response of Mr. Rete related to the social media management that they do:

"In the community, we have 28 subcultures putting them into one group. We divided the group into three categories: one for the events, entertainment and jokes, and for sale information. Now we could do online communication, not use letters anymore" (Mr Rete, 11/13/2019).

From the answer above, it can be seen that they interact with and manage information in an organized way by dividing the group based on the the formal and informal activities. They also provide a special group to joke around. It is done so they will not miss important information which sometimes missed because of joking chats.

Challenges in social media communication can affect only online conversation more than face to face interaction. However, Williams (2006) indicates that the internet site becomes more relevant to the development of subcultures both as a source for affiliates and as a medium for subculture identity. Based on the understanding of the subculture of KOSTI Surabaya, and after observing their online
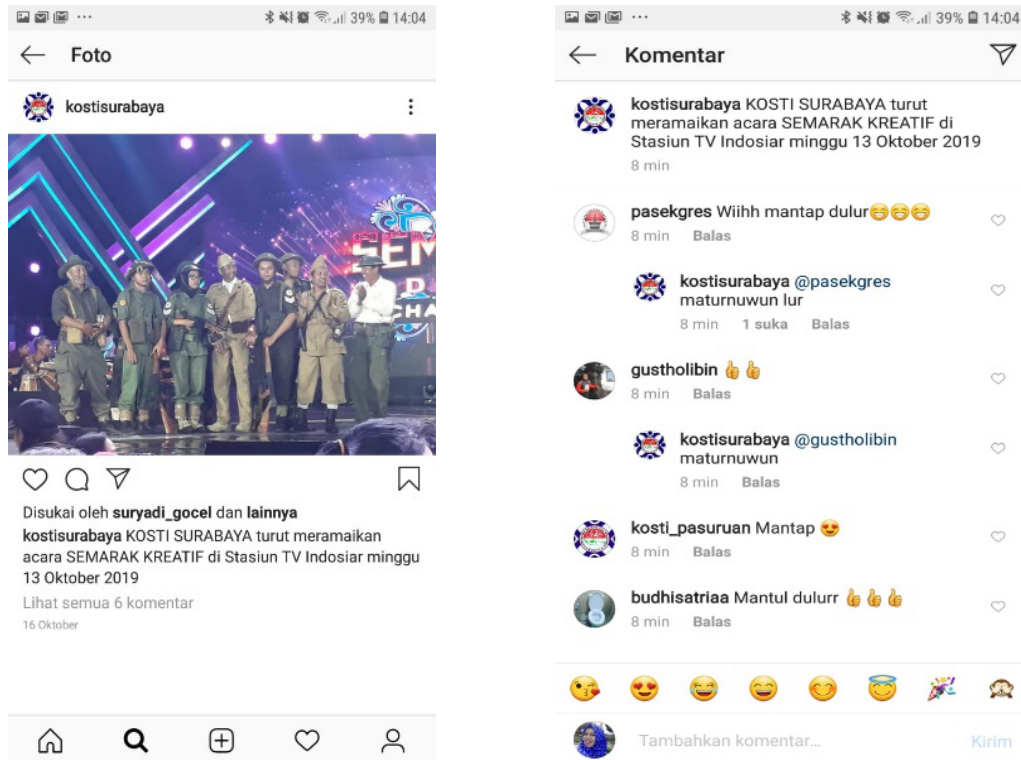
Figure 1. Instagram Posts of @kostisurabaya

activities, it indicates that KOSTI Surabaya involved in online chat is the same subculture as those engaged in face to face activities. Furthermore, this current research can enrich the conceptualization of subcultures in the digital age and give understanding about the relationship between subcultures and places of interaction.
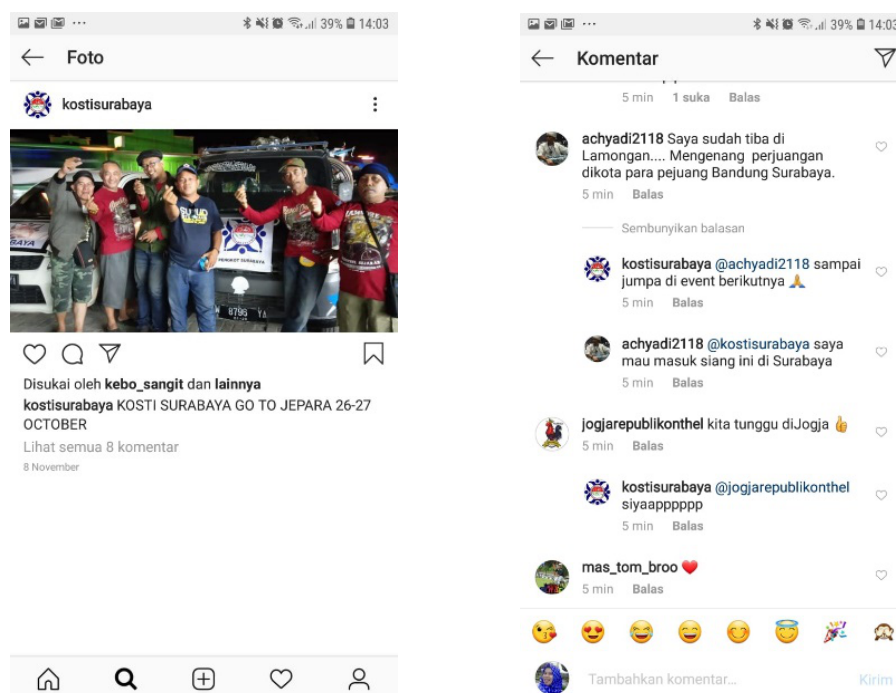

Figure 2. Post @kostisurabaya on Instagram

The Semiotical Meaning of KOSTI Surabaya

Language is able to create signs used by humans to create meanings in order to portray reality (Barry 2002). The activity traces are a picture of social reality built and established in the community of old bicycle in Surabaya. In connection with the theory of semiotics of Peirce that the sign is formed by three elements, including: (1) representation representing the most closely related to the object it represents, (2) the object represented by members of the community of old bikes, and (3) interpretation result as a person's interpretation of or against the traces or signs (Piliang, 2003). Based on the observation results, and analysis of online media and in-depth interviews, then the meaning of the signs found by the authors of the meaning perceived by members as a member of KOSTI Surabaya is the pride of being part of those who care and preserve the culture, have nationalism spirit, are simple and healthy. It also indicates the the reality of KOSTI Surabaya, the establishment of fraternal relations, kinship, harmony, and collective memory. Hence the formation of the signs on the model of triadic semiotics' Peirce is as follows:

The signs or traces found based on the results of the interview, in the early stages (*Firstness*) serve as representation or an icon of the closest to the object represented, namely KOSTI Surabaya consisted of old bicycle users, fans, as well as the culture attached to the community, such as the use of traditional clothing: *lurek, beskap*, Javanese tradition, and other heroic outfits.

The *Secondness* refers to the use of a form of association or group of users and lovers of old bikes and culture of the past (the index). Index is a reminder that there are still major sign that despite marked individually by *onthelis* that KOSTI Surabaya is a brotherhood sign or old bike community (symbols) that make them unite in one space which they refer to as a community.

In addition, the *Thirdness* refers to the community of old bicycle as a place of users and lovers of old bikes interpreted (*interpretan*) as a form of preserving and maintain the local culture, nationalism sign, simple and healthy life, fraternity, brotherhood, harmony, and collective memory. This meaning is in accordance with the understanding of people who share ideas and preferences to foster unity and harmony among the members, the vision and mission of an old bicycle community to establish brotherhood, kinship, harmony among fellow *gowesers*.

The existence of an old bicycle community in Surabaya has become the media in fostering and maintaining
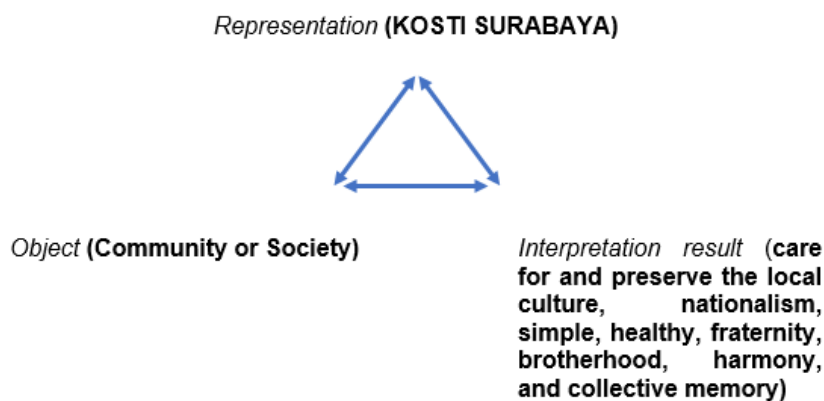
Representation (**KOSTI SURABAYA**)

Object (**Community or Society**)

Interpretation result (**care for and preserve the local culture, nationalism, simple, healthy, fraternity, brotherhood, harmony, and collective memory**)

Chart 2. Semiotics Model on Triadic Peirce: The Meaning of KOSTI Surabaya

cultural values in Indonesia. Through this community, the young generation can learn and have a lifestyle corresponding to the values that embrace the nation of Indonesia as the establishment of good relationship, kinship, brotherhood and harmony. Besides, this community enables the members to maintain and preserve the local culture of Indonesia. KOSTI Surabaya is the resistance of the existence of modern culture, which consciously or unconsciously have replaced the local culture. Then this community is a counterculture against foreign cultural challenges. Not only the use of a means of transportation but also of the nature of individualist which start to embrace most of Indonesian people in urban areas.

Conclusion

The use of online media as a meeting room can help researchers consider the various kinds of subcultures and in considering how the Internet can serve as a medium for the development of subcultures. Virtual media can connect people with similar interests. In the Internet media, physical interactions that exist within the subculture subculture lost when they get in touch with the digital space. However, the characteristics of KOSTI Surabaya can be identified by the virtual ways allowing digital and interaction style becomes the access to the Internet rather than physical closeness. For example, the most of the Instagram posts can be seen that they always dress for the struggle, costume hero, *beskap*, and other traditional clothing as striking for their identity. The Internet is accessible and user friendly where subculture can be formed, meet and interact. KOSTI Surabaya in this study only shows a few ways that this technology can be involved in the interaction on the Internet as a subculture and a new social space for identification and change subculture itself.

Based on the theory of semiotics of Pierce found some signs or traces of KOSTI Surabaya, their sense of pride in being part of the people who care and preserve the local culture using old bicycle, train the spirit of nationalism with the use of costumes struggle, both simple and have a healthy body. It was also found signs that describe the reality of KOSTI Surabaya, the establishment of fraternal relations, kinship, harmony as well as fostering collective memory for the members. Overall, KOSTI Surabaya is the resistance against the modern culture which makes this community as counter culture against foreign culture challenges. Not only the use of a means of transportation but also of the nature of individualist starts to embrace most of Indonesian people in urban areas.

Based on the understanding of the subculture of KOSTI Surabaya, and deepen their online activities, this study stated that Surabaya KOSTI groups involved in online chat is the same as the subculture of face to face activities. Furthermore, this study may enrich the conceptualization of subcultures in the digital age and give understanding of the relationship between subcultures and places of interaction.

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Declaration of Ownership

This article is our original work.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by the institution.

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