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GASTRODIPLOMACY AS AN AGROTOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CASE STUDY: KALIANGKRIK COFFEE, MAGELANG)

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Abstract

This research explores how gastrodiplomacy can serve as a strategic tool to develop agro-tourism, focusing on the case of Kaliangkrik coffee in Magelang, Indonesia. The study examines the roles of various stakeholders, including local governments, coffee producers, and entrepreneurs, in promoting Kaliangkrik coffee. Through interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, this case study identifies the challenges faced by local actors in aligning their efforts with national tourism strategies. The findings suggest that while enthusiasm for gastrodiplomacy is high among local stakeholders, challenges such as limited resources, lack of coordination between local and national levels, and insufficient international exposure hinder the full realization of its potential. Despite these challenges, the study highlights significant opportunities for Kaliangkrik coffee to leverage its sustainable farming practices to appeal to international markets. The research concludes that stronger collaboration between local and national authorities, along with targeted investments in gastrodiplomacy initiatives, is necessary to elevate Kaliangkrik coffee and support rural development through agro-tourism.

Keywords:

Gastrodiplomacy; Agrotourism; Magelang; Kaliangkrik

Introduction

Gastrodiplomacy has become an increasingly significant tool for countries to enhance their public diplomacy by utilizing culinary traditions to engage foreign publics. Rockower (2012) defines gastrodiplomacy as strategically using a nation's cuisine to strengthen cultural diplomacy efforts, bridging the gap between formal diplomatic relations and broader public engagement. It taps into food's emotional and cultural power, fostering a positive national image abroad. Countries like Thailand and South Korea have successfully utilized gastrodiplomacy to elevate their culinary brands on the global stage, significantly influencing their soft power strategies (Rockower, 2012; Chapple-Sokol, 2013). For Indonesia, with its rich culinary diversity, gastrodiplomacy represents an untapped opportunity to bolster its global identity, mainly by promoting its distinct coffee culture.

Agro-tourism and Public Diplomacy in Indonesia

Indonesia is a central agricultural hub with vast potential for agro-tourism. Agro-tourism integrates agricultural activities with tourism, allowing visitors to experience local farming products and practices. In recent years, it has gained popularity in regions such as Bali and Sumatra, where tourists can engage with local farmers and experience the agricultural process (Rosalina et al., 2023). One of Indonesia's most successful agro-tourism sectors revolves around coffee, with Gayo coffee from Aceh being a prime example of a product that has garnered international acclaim (Luneto, 2022). Agro-tourism efforts can also serve as a platform for public diplomacy by promoting local products internationally, contributing to rural development and strengthening national identity (Adeyinka-Ojo, 2020).

However, regions like Kaliangkrik in Magelang, which produces high-quality coffee, have not yet achieved similar global recognition. This presents a unique opportunity for gastrodiplomacy to be employed to promote agro-tourism in these underrepresented regions. Gastrodiplomacy can strategically elevate the image of Kaliangkrik coffee, positioning it alongside more well-known Indonesian coffees such as Gayo (Primawanti et al, 2023).

The Concept of Gastrodiplomacy

Gastrodiplomacy, first conceptualized by Rockower (2012), is a form of cultural diplomacy that uses food as a medium to promote a nation's identity abroad. It goes beyond traditional diplomatic efforts by engaging the global public, encouraging them to interact with and

experience a nation's culture through its cuisine. Rockower's gastrodiploamacy theory emphasises that food creates emotional connections and acts as a "gateway to understanding" for foreign audiences. Gastrodiploamacy has been successfully adopted by several countries, including Thailand's "Global Thai" campaign and South Korea's "Kimchi Diplomacy" (Rockower, 2012; Chapple-Sokol, 2013), which have aimed to spread national cuisines to strengthen their soft power and cultural influence abroad.

Kalyoncu and Tettner (2016) extends the discussion by highlighting that gastrodiploamacy transcends mere tourism promotion, positioning itself as a strategic national policy to foster mutual understanding and global influence. They argue that by strategically targeting foreign publics with a culturally rich experience, nations can cultivate a positive image that endures beyond formal state interactions. This strategic positioning of food diploamacy also benefits developing countries like Indonesia, where coffee diploamacy has the potential to elevate the nation's global standing by integrating local agricultural practices with public diploamacy efforts.

Agro-tourism and Gastrodiploamacy

Agro-tourism is a growing sector in developing nations, including Indonesia, where agricultural practices are increasingly being integrated with tourism to provide educational and immersive experiences for visitors. Agro-tourism allows tourists to engage with local agricultural systems, fostering a deeper understanding of rural life and the production of iconic products, such as coffee. According to Adeyinka-Ojo (2020), agro-tourism not only serves as a tool for rural development but also offers significant opportunities for countries to engage in public diploamacy by promoting their agricultural heritage and products on the global stage.

In Indonesia, coffee is a critical export product and a key component of its agro-tourism sector. However, as Luneto (2022) notes, agro-tourism efforts in the country are often fragmented, with little coordination between local stakeholders and national tourism authorities. Gayo coffee from Aceh is one of the few examples where successful coordination between local coffee farmers, government agencies, and international trade organizations has led to significant international recognition (Luneto, 2022). By contrast, other coffee-producing regions, such as Kaliangkrik in Magelang, have yet to achieve similar levels of international visibility.

Integrating gastrodiploamacy into agro-tourism efforts provides an opportunity to address these gaps. Gastrodiploamacy enables local agricultural products to be positioned as commodities and cultural ambassadors (Roslina et al., 2022). It can help promote under-recognized coffee regions like Kaliangkrik by tapping into international markets through cultural and culinary promotion, building a brand identity that resonates globally.

Coffee and Cultural Diplomacy

As both a cultural symbol and an economic commodity, coffee has historically played an essential role in diplomacy. Indonesia, one of the world's largest coffee producers, has used coffee for diplomatic relations since the Dutch colonial period (Primawanti, et al., 2023). Coffee diplomacy, wherein coffee is utilized to foster diplomatic ties and cultural exchange, has been successfully implemented by various coffee-producing nations, including Brazil, Ethiopia, and Vietnam (Intentilia, 2020). Indonesia's coffee diplomacy, however, remains underdeveloped, particularly when compared to these other nations.

Primawanti et al., (2023) emphasizes that coffee diplomacy should not be limited to formal government initiatives but should involve local communities, coffee farmers, and entrepreneurs in creating a cohesive strategy. The case of Gayo Coffee illustrates how a robust cultural narrative, combined with high-quality production and effective marketing, can elevate a local coffee region to international prominence. By focusing on similar principles, regions like Kaliangkrik could potentially replicate this success.

Challenges in Tourism Management and Diplomacy

One of the main challenges facing Indonesia's agro-tourism and gastrodiploamacy efforts is the disconnect between national and local tourism strategies. Roslina et al. (2022) argue that the lack of synergy between national-level tourism management and regional actors results in inefficiencies, with local tourism destinations often receiving inadequate support and promotion. In the case of Kaliangkrik, Magelang, local coffee producers face difficulty in gaining international recognition, partially due to insufficient coordination between local governments and national tourism bodies (Primawanti et al., 2023). The challenge of aligning these two levels of governance complicates the efforts to position lesser-known coffee regions as part of Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy strategy.

Moreover, the lack of engagement with key non-governmental actors, such as private sector businesses and local communities, further limits the effectiveness of gastrodiplomacy initiatives. As Rosalina et al. (2023) note, the success of agro-tourism and gastrodiplomacy depends heavily on the active participation of local actors who understand the region's unique cultural and agricultural context. Without their involvement, gastrodiplomatic efforts remain incomplete and often fail to achieve sustainable results.

The main objective of this study is to investigate how gastrodiplomacy can be employed as a strategy for promoting agro-tourism, with a specific focus on Kaliangkrik coffee. By exploring the roles of various stakeholders, including local governments, coffee producers, and communities, this study seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with aligning national and local tourism strategies. Through a case study of Kaliangkrik coffee, this research aims to provide concrete recommendations for leveraging gastrodiplomacy to improve the international profile of this coffee region. A comparison to the success of Gayo coffee will also be drawn to highlight the potential of gastrodiplomacy in building regional and national brand identities.

Research Problem

Although gastrodiplomacy holds significant promise for promoting agro-tourism, there is a notable lack of research examining how this concept can be applied in Indonesia. Most existing literature focuses on national-level gastro-diplomatic efforts (Rockower, 2012; Kalyoncu & Tettner, 2016), but few studies address the challenges local tourism authorities face in coordinating with national strategies. This lack of alignment between national and local perspectives often results in fragmented efforts to promote agro-tourism destinations (Rosalina et al., 2022). Furthermore, the involvement of critical non-governmental actors, such as coffee entrepreneurs and local communities, is often overlooked in gastro-diplomatic initiatives, leading to missed opportunities for economic and cultural development (Luneto, 2022).

Methods

This research employs a case study approach, focusing on Kaliangkrik coffee in Magelang, Indonesia. Case studies are instrumental in understanding complex phenomena in real-life contexts, significantly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are blurred (Yin, 2014). Since gastrodiplomacy and agro-tourism involve multiple actors, perspectives,

and strategies, the case study method allows a deeper examination of these interactions within a specific context. The case of Kaliangkrik coffee was chosen because, unlike more internationally recognized Indonesian coffees such as Gayo, Kaliangkrik coffee has not yet gained widespread global attention. This provides an opportunity to analyze how gastrodiploamacy can be utilized to strengthen the international profile of this coffee region.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders promoting Kaliangkrik coffee, including coffee farmers, local tourism authorities, coffee entrepreneurs, and government officials. The interview questions focus on the roles of these stakeholders in promoting Kaliangkrik coffee, the challenges they face in integrating gastrodiploamacy with agro-tourism efforts, and their perspectives on how Kaliangkrik coffee can be positioned on the global stage. The semi-structured format allows for flexibility in exploring emerging themes during the interviews while focusing on the research objectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Participant Observation

The researcher conducted participant observation at various agro-tourism sites in Kaliangkrik, such as coffee farms and local markets where Kaliangkrik coffee is sold. This method provides firsthand insights into tourist interactions and local coffee culture. It also helps to capture how local stakeholders present their coffee's cultural and gastronomic value to visitors, a critical aspect of gastrodiploamacy. Participant observation is essential in understanding the experiential elements of agro-tourism and how they contribute to forming a cohesive coffee brand (Spradley, 2016).

Document Analysis

The research also analyses secondary sources, including promotional materials, marketing campaigns, and government policies related to coffee agro-tourism and gastrodiploamacy, to complement the primary data. The analysis of these documents provides insights into the official narratives constructed around Kaliangkrik coffee and the broader governmental and institutional strategies for promoting agro-tourism in Indonesia. It also helps to identify the

gaps in coordination between national and local efforts in positioning Kaliangkrik coffee as a key player in Indonesia's coffee diplomacy.

The data collected from interviews, observations, and documents are analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, identifying patterns and themes relevant to the research questions. This approach is well-suited for qualitative research, allowing the researcher to systematically identify and interpret meaningful patterns within the data.

The primary theoretical framework guiding the analysis is Rockower's gastrodiplomacy model, which provides a lens for understanding how food can be used to build public diplomacy efforts (Rockower, 2012). The framework is applied to assess how the stakeholders involved in Kaliangkrik coffee's promotion are utilizing gastrodiplomacy and to what extent their efforts align with broader national strategies. The thematic analysis also helps identify the challenges and opportunities for using gastrodiplomacy to promote agro-tourism in lesser-known coffee regions like Kaliangkrik.

One limitation of the study is its reliance on qualitative methods, which may result in subjective interpretations of the data. However, using multiple data sources (interviews, observation, and document analysis) and the triangulation of these sources help mitigate this issue, ensuring a more comprehensive and accurate representation of the phenomena under study. Another limitation is the focus on a single case study, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. However, as Yin (2014) suggests, case studies provide deep insights into specific contexts, which can inform future research in similar settings.

Results

Stakeholder Roles in Kaliangkrik Coffee Agro-tourism

The interviews with key stakeholders—local government officials, coffee farmers, and tourism board representatives—revealed a fragmented but emerging strategy for promoting Kaliangkrik coffee through agrotourism. The local government has played a facilitating role, focusing on infrastructure development to support tourism activities in the region. However, the farmers and local entrepreneurs expressed concerns about the lack of cohesive marketing strategies and the minimal involvement of national tourism bodies in promoting Kaliangkrik coffee internationally. This lack of coordination has led to missed branding and market expansion opportunities.

Local farmers emphasized their interest in utilizing gastrodiplomacy to promote the unique flavours and history of Kaliangkrik coffee cultivated in the highlands of Magelang. However, they noted a significant gap in resources and expertise to effectively reach international markets. This finding is consistent with Roslina et al. (2022) who argue that the success of agro-tourism and gastrodiplomacy often hinges on the active involvement and coordination between various levels of government and local stakeholders. While the enthusiasm among local actors is high, the absence of a national-level gastrodiplomacy framework targeting specific agricultural products, such as coffee, limits the region's global visibility.

Challenges in Integrating Gastrodiplomacy with Agro-tourism

A recurring theme in the interviews was the challenge of aligning national tourism strategies with local needs. Local government officials expressed frustration with the centralized decision-making processes that often overlook the unique offerings of regions like Kaliangkrik. This disconnect between national and regional tourism strategies has led to fragmented efforts to promote Kaliangkrik coffee as part of Indonesia's broader agro-tourism initiatives. According to Luneto (2022), this challenge is not unique to Kaliangkrik; it is a common issue in many Indonesian regions where local tourism potentials are underutilized due to the lack of coordinated efforts between national and regional authorities.

Additionally, the interviews highlighted the limited participation of private sector actors, such as coffee entrepreneurs and exporters, in promoting Kaliangkrik coffee through gastrodiplomacy. Many entrepreneurs know the potential for using coffee as a diplomatic tool but lack the financial resources and expertise to develop effective gastrodiplomacy campaigns. This echoes the findings of Kalyoncu and Tettner (2016), who noted that while gastrodiplomacy is often recognized as a valuable tool for public diplomacy, its implementation requires substantial investment and strategic planning, particularly in regions with limited resources.

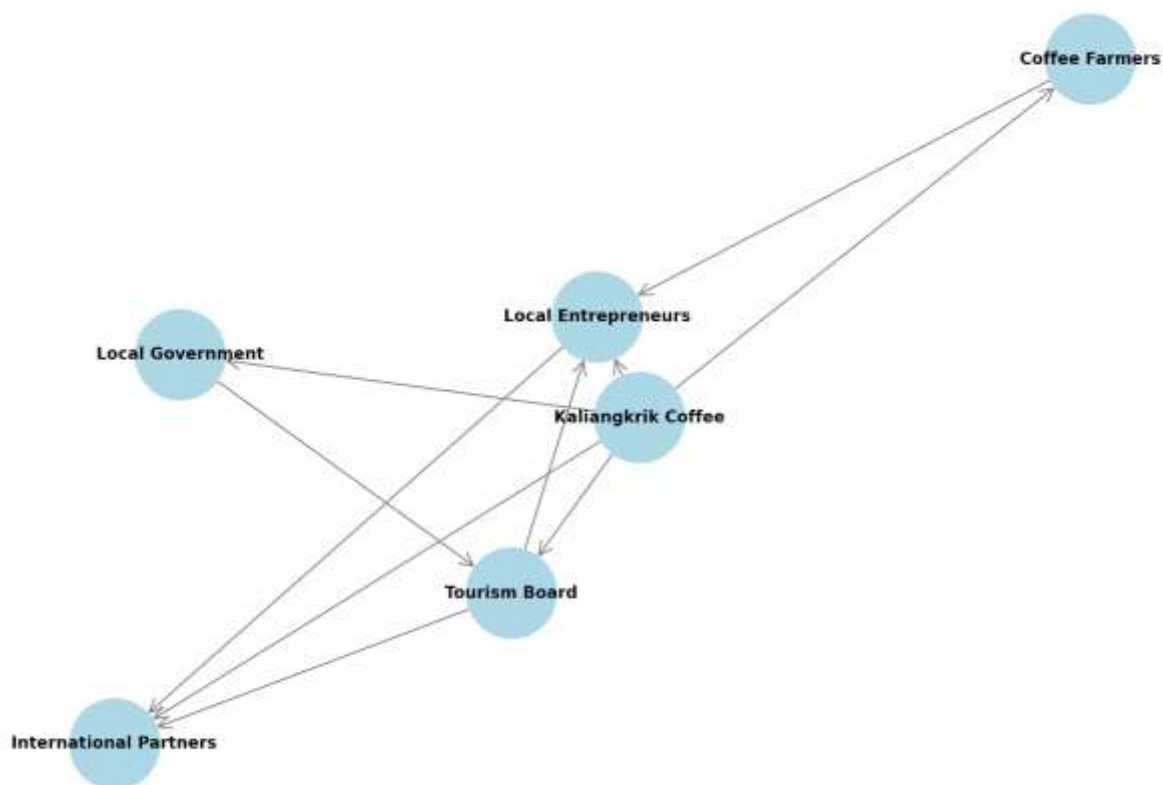
Another challenge identified is the limited awareness among international tourists about Kaliangkrik coffee. Unlike Gayo coffee, which has benefited from years of coordinated marketing and international recognition, Kaliangkrik coffee remains relatively unknown outside Indonesia. This suggests that gastrodiplomacy efforts in Kaliangkrik need to focus on creating a unique brand identity that distinguishes it from other Indonesian coffee regions.

Primawanti et al., (2023) supports the need for differentiation and stresses the importance of creating a distinct cultural narrative around local products to compete in the global market.

Opportunities for Gastrodiplomacy in Agro-tourism

Despite these challenges, the interviews and participant observation findings suggest significant opportunities for Kaliangkrik coffee to leverage gastrodiplomacy for global recognition. One key opportunity lies in the region's unique coffee cultivation process, which blends traditional farming methods with environmentally sustainable practices. Farmers emphasized that their coffee is grown using organic techniques, which appeal to the growing global market for ethically sourced and environmentally friendly products. This aligns with Rockower's (2012) gastrodiplomacy framework, highlighting the potential for cultural and culinary products to serve as ambassadors of a nation's values and identity. By promoting the sustainability narrative of Kaliangkrik coffee, the region can position itself as a leader in agro-tourism and ethical coffee production.

Interaction of Local Actors in Promoting Gastrodiplomacy for Kaliangkrik Coffee



The diagram illustrates the central role of Kaliangkrik Coffee in gastrodiplomacy and the collaborative relationships between key stakeholders. At the heart of the effort, Kaliangkrik Coffee is supported by a network of local and international actors. Local Government is responsible for creating policies and infrastructure that promote agro-tourism, while the Tourism Board works to integrate Kaliangkrik coffee into local tourism packages. The Coffee Farmers ensure the quality and sustainability of the coffee, engaging in traditional and organic farming methods that appeal to global markets. Local Entrepreneurs focus on branding and marketing strategies that position Kaliangkrik coffee as a unique, high-quality product. Finally, International Partners help connect Kaliangkrik coffee to global markets through trade shows, festivals, and other promotional events.

The arrows in the diagram represent the flow of collaboration and influence between these stakeholders. For example, Coffee Farmers work closely with Local Entrepreneurs to create a cohesive marketing strategy emphasising the coffee's sustainability. At the same time, the Local Government and the Tourism Board collaborate to ensure that coffee-related tourism is well-promoted. International Partners play a critical role in expanding Kaliangkrik coffee's reach by facilitating its presence in global markets, ensuring that the product and its cultural significance are well-communicated to international audiences. This interconnected network is essential for creating a successful gastrodiplomacy strategy, as it combines local expertise, tourism integration, and global marketing efforts to elevate the profile of Kaliangkrik coffee.

The involvement of local communities also presents an opportunity for more inclusive gastrodiplomacy efforts. Farmers, artisans, and small business owners wanted to integrate cultural experiences with agro-tourism offerings, such as coffee-making workshops and traditional food pairings. This approach could enhance the gastro diplomatic appeal of Kaliangkrik coffee by offering international tourists a holistic experience that combines coffee with local culinary traditions. Chapple-Sokol (2013) noted that successful gastrodiplomacy initiatives often incorporate multi-sensory experiences that allow foreign audiences to engage fully with a region's cultural and gastronomic heritage.

Moreover, interviews with local tourism officials revealed plans to partner with international coffee festivals and trade shows, which could provide a platform for Kaliangkrik coffee to gain exposure among global consumers and coffee enthusiasts. These festivals could serve as strategic venues for introducing Kaliangkrik coffee to foreign markets while

showcasing Indonesia's broader agro-tourism potential. This strategy is consistent with the experiences of other prosperous coffee regions, such as Ethiopia and Colombia, which have used international events to promote their coffee through public diplomacy (Intentilia, 2020).

Challenges for Implementing Gastrodiplomacy at the Local Government Level

Implementing gastrodiplomacy at the local government level faces several critical challenges, as identified in the interviews. One of the most prominent issues is the lack of funding and resources for gastrodiplomacy initiatives. Local officials expressed concerns that tourism budgets are typically allocated to infrastructure projects, with little focus on the strategic promotion of local agricultural products like coffee through public diplomacy efforts. This reflects broader national trends, where gastrodiplomacy is often overlooked as a potential avenue for enhancing Indonesia's cultural and economic diplomacy (Kalyoncu & Tettner, 2016).

Another challenge is the limited expertise in gastrodiplomacy within local governments. Officials acknowledged that while they recognize the potential of using coffee as a diplomatic tool, there is a significant knowledge gap in how to implement these strategies effectively. Unlike national agencies with access to professional marketing and public relations resources, local governments rely on smaller, community-driven initiatives, which may lack the sophistication required for international gastrodiplomacy campaigns (Roslina et al., 2022).

The political structure also presents challenges. Local governments often operate within a framework that prioritizes short-term, tangible outcomes, such as increased tourist numbers, over long-term branding and cultural diplomacy strategies. This is further compounded by the fragmented nature of Indonesia's administrative system, where local and national tourism bodies may not always collaborate effectively (Luneto, 2022). The absence of a clear gastrodiplomacy strategy at the national level exacerbates these challenges, leaving local governments without a guiding framework to align their efforts.

Conclusion

Despite these challenges, there is growing recognition among local officials that gastrodiplomacy, if properly implemented, could offer significant benefits for the Kaliangkrik region. The officials interviewed expressed a willingness to collaborate with national tourism

agencies and international partners to develop more comprehensive gastrodiplomacy strategies. However, this will require more vital coordination and resource allocation from local and national authorities to ensure that gastrodiplomacy can be effectively integrated into the region's agro-tourism and public diplomacy efforts.

This study highlights the potential of gastrodiplomacy as a strategic tool for promoting agro-tourism in Indonesia, specifically focusing on Kaliangkrik coffee in Magelang. Through in-depth interviews and document analysis, the research identified vital roles played by various stakeholders, including local governments, coffee farmers, and entrepreneurs, in promoting Kaliangkrik coffee. Despite the enthusiasm among local actors, the findings reveal several challenges in effectively implementing gastrodiplomacy at both local and national levels. These include limited funding, lack of expertise in gastrodiplomatic initiatives, and fragmented coordination between national and regional tourism bodies.

However, the study also identified significant opportunities for integrating gastrodiplomacy into agro-tourism strategies. Kaliangkrik coffee's unique cultivation practices, sustainable farming methods, and untapped potential to appeal to international markets through cultural branding present a strong case for further development. Local stakeholders are willing to engage in gastro-diplomatic efforts but require more significant support from national agencies, international partners, and the private sector to realize their vision.

A more robust collaboration between local and national authorities and targeted investment in gastrodiplomacy initiatives that promote Indonesia's rich agricultural heritage are necessary to move forward. Kaliangkrik Coffee, with the correct branding and strategic international exposure, can become a cultural and economic ambassador for Indonesia. By aligning local efforts with national tourism policies and leveraging gastro diplomacy's soft power, Indonesia can elevate its agro-tourism sector while promoting regional products globally. This approach will contribute to rural development and enhance Indonesia's public diplomacy efforts through the global appeal of its culinary and agricultural assets.

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