

McDonaldization in Sustainable Agro-industrial Production Systems: Socio-cultural Implications in the Context of Globalization

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Abstract

This study analyzes the concept of McDonaldization as applied at the Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (Puslitkoka) in Jember Regency and its impact on the productivity and efficiency of the sustainable agro-industrial sector. The fieldwork was conducted in Mangaran Village, Ajung District, Jember Regency, Indonesia. This site was purposively selected because the required inter-subject interactions are concentrated within a single village, making them readily observable. Such interactions enable the researcher to examine how Ritzer's concept of McDonaldisation is operationalised in the coffee and cocoa production processes and to explore the interplay of multiple value systems. Moreover, the cooperative relationships among local actors offer additional opportunities to observe contemporary practices of value negotiation in situ. Globalization has transformed business operations, including within agroindustry, due to rapid technological advancement and the accelerated exchange of information. Puslitkoka adopts the principles of McDonaldization—efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control—to enhance product and service quality while also generating employment opportunities for the surrounding community. The findings indicate that the utilization of modern technology and an emphasis on efficiency can contribute significantly to local economic growth. For further development, it is recommended that Puslitkoka continue to innovate, prioritize workers' welfare, and engage in participatory decision-making processes to promote sustainability.

Keywords: *McDonaldization; Globalization; Agroindustry.*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is the spread of practices, relationships, knowledge, and the organization of social life throughout the world.¹ With globalization, individuals and societies can change the way they interact and connect diverse cultures around the world. This process enables a faster and more efficient exchange of information. Globalization can spread technological

¹Mukhammad Handy Dwi Wijaya and Musta'in Mashud, "Social Media Consumption Among Students: A Study of TikTok Hyperreality," *Al-Mada: Journal of Religion, Social, and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2020): 170–91, <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v3i2.734>.



developments from the central to peripheral countries. This allows for innovation in various sectors, which can create knowledge about the use of technology in underdeveloped countries to increase efficiency and productivity. Technological advancements are currently key for companies to maintain their competitiveness and adapt to changes in a more competitive business environment.² The company's goal of continuously keeping up with technological developments is to accelerate productivity, improve time efficiency, and compete with competitors. Furthermore, this allows the company to create new product innovations and provide higher-quality services. Globalization is the process of connecting countries through faster and more complex exchanges, creating new economic and social structures.³ In this case, it can have both good and bad impacts on economic development by companies towards the surrounding community.⁴

Globalization in industrial development has brought about very rapid changes and had a broad impact on the economy.⁵ The industrial sector is closely linked to development, particularly in the process of industrialization as part of economic development. Globalization also brings opportunities for innovative new industries. Companies in Indonesia must quickly adapt to current global developments, due to increasing demand and the desire for instant gratification. Several industrial sectors in Indonesia have implemented technological advancements to ensure their industries remain competitive in the global market. Many companies now utilize machines to reduce work time and utilize information technology to increase marketing efficiency, such as the use of e-commerce for more accessible, faster, and easier product marketing. Technological developments in the industry are also occurring in the plantation sector, where companies are seeking to streamline their production patterns to maximize yields.

The development of the industrial sector at the Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (Puslitkoka) in Jember Regency is analyzed using George Ritzer's McDonaldization theory, which contains four existing concepts. Efficiency, as one of the concepts in McDonaldization, is a prominent element in contemporary reality. In this case, efficiency is seen as increasing productivity, such as a just-in-time service system, which creates faster and more

²Achmad Fatchur Rohman et al., "Contribution to the management results of Jodipan Colorful Tourism Village, Malang City," *Publication: Journal of Public Administration* 9, no. 1 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.26905/pjiap.v9i1.10560>.

³George Ritzer, *Globalization: The Essentials* (Google eBook), 2011, http://books.google.com/books?id=fYE4O_2hiOMC&pgis=1.

⁴ Sundari, Diah Syifaul Ayuni, and Rahma Sandhi Prahara, "Analisis Kondisi Sosial Ekonomi Dan Tingkat Pendidikan Masyarakat Desa Talok, Kecamatan Dlanggu, Kabupaten Mojokerto," *Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 6, no. 4 (2023): 773–88.

⁵Mukhammad Handy Dwi Wijaya, Istiyana Afifah, and others, *Introduction to Sociology: Concepts and Theories*, ed. by Aas Masruroh, *Addition of Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Sorbate (Anti-inversion) and Stirring Speed as Efforts to Inhibit the Inversion Reaction in Sugarcane Juice*, First (Bandung: Widina Media Utama, 2025), <https://repository.penerbitwidina.com/publications/588774/pengantar-sosiologi-konsep-dan-praktik>.

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efficient processes. This is reflected in various aspects of life, from the workplace to entertainment, where all existing activities are systematically arranged.⁶ Efficiency reflects the needs of today's modern society, which requires speed and convenience in every service. Furthermore, companies optimize productivity, reducing time and costs. Ritzer sees this approach not only in the fast food industry but also in other sectors. Thus, efficiency is a crucial factor in modern life, with everything organized to achieve maximum results with minimal effort.

One of the concepts of McDonaldization is computing power. Quantity is often prioritized over quality. In this regard, the production process prioritizes speed, sometimes quite high. This allows goods to be produced and marketed very quickly.⁷ This approach prioritizes efficiency and volume, neglecting quality to meet high demand. The next concept of McDonaldization is predictability. In a rational society, everyone would prefer to know what they have received at all times and in almost all situations.⁸ In this case, rational people tend to want what they get in various ways and almost always. This shows that everyone wants certainty about the product they receive. For example, when people go to a restaurant and want to know what's on the menu and the price, or they hope to receive clearer information about the product's quality and benefits. In other words, everyone wants comfort and security when deciding whether to buy something.

The final concept in McDonaldization, control, highlights the increased control achieved through the use of non-human technology. In this context, control refers to an organization's ability to better regulate and oversee operational procedures and customer interactions. Technology, such as automated machines and data processing systems, enables companies to improve service efficiency and consistency, reduce product inconsistencies, and ensure a uniform customer experience. Furthermore, through the use of structured systems, companies can exercise closer oversight over employees and operational activities.

Development is defined as an action to improve the quality of life in society, usually the progress referred to is progress regarding the economy or materials.⁹ One sector in this regard is the coffee and cocoa plantation research center in Mangaran village, Ajung sub-district, Jember regency. This industry has embraced globalization in its use of technology in its

⁶ Ritzer, *Globalization: The Essentials* (Google eBook).

⁷ Mukhammad Handy dwi Wijaya and Septi Ariadi, "Internalization of Islamic Values of Former Molimo Students in the Telulisan Congregation," *Al-Mada: Journal of Religion, Social, and Culture* 4, no. 1 (2021): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v4i1.1009>.

⁸ Ritzer, *Globalization: The Essentials* (Google eBook).

⁹ Rauf A. Hatu and Dewinta Rizky Hatu, *SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT (A Review of Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives)*, First Ap (Makasar: CV Mitra Ilmu, 2022).

production processes. This industry has positively impacted the surrounding community by providing employment opportunities.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is qualitative with an ethnographic approach. Ethnography is a research method that aims to understand and explain the values, behavior, beliefs, and language in a particular cultural group.¹⁰ With this approach, researchers can observe social and cultural interactions among members of the group. The ethnographic process usually involves in-depth observation.¹¹ During the research, the researcher conducted observations and interviews with group members to gain a more comprehensive understanding. In the context of this research, this approach is very appropriate, considering our focus is how the company applies certain dimensions in coffee and chocolate production patterns with workers. The research location is the Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (Puslitkoka) located in Mangaran Village, Ajung District, Jember Regency. This village was chosen because the necessary interactions between subjects can easily be found within one village area. This interaction allows the researcher to observe the application of the McDonaldization concept in the coffee and chocolate production process, as well as the interaction between various existing values. Furthermore, collaboration between subjects in this location also provides the researcher with the opportunity to observe the interaction of values in modern practices.

Data collection was conducted through observation and in-depth interviews with research informants. The informant selection technique used purposive sampling. The characteristics of informants were considered to be the most knowledgeable and understanding of the agro-industry process. The data used in this study were primary and secondary data. The primary data in this study were interview data to determine the implementation of the McDonaldization system at the Jember Regency Research and Development Center (Puslitkoka). Furthermore, the primary data were supplemented with observational data. Secondary data were obtained through documents, books, and journals related to McDonaldization. The data analysis technique used was an interactive analysis model, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

¹⁰ John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, *A Mixed-Method Approach, Writing Center Talk over Time*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429469237-3>.

¹¹ Ibid.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Puslitkoka (The Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Center) as an Agroindustrial

The Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (Puslitkoka) is a national coffee and cocoa research and development institution. In addition to its role as a research institution, Puslitkoka implements an agro-industrial business model. Agro-industry is derived from two words: agricultural and industry. Agro-industry refers to an industrial system that uses agricultural products as raw materials and produces inputs and infrastructure as inputs.¹²

The agro-industrial system is synonymous with the concept of upstream and downstream industries. Upstream industries are those that produce facilities and equipment for use in agricultural cultivation.¹³ Meanwhile, the downstream industry is an industry that processes agricultural products into ready-to-consume products.¹⁴ Both of these characteristics can be found at Puslitkoka. Based on direct field observations, it was discovered that Puslitkoka provides facilities for workers and technicians to produce various agro-industrial machinery and equipment.

There are three dimensions of agro-industry coverage,¹⁵ that is;

1. Agricultural Product Processing Industry

In addition to producing raw coffee and cocoa, Puslitkoka also has a factory that processes these agricultural products into a variety of ready-to-consume products. These products include various chocolate bars (under the "Vicco" brand) and various types of ground coffee. Regarding less-than-ideal agricultural products, our resource person, Mr. Ahmad Sabiqul Khair (head of production at the Puslitkoka factory), explained that these can be recycled into compost.

2. Agricultural Equipment and Machinery Industry

The agricultural equipment and machinery industry is divided into equipment and machinery for soil cultivation and crop cultivation, and equipment and machinery for processing agricultural products. For the latter type of equipment and machinery, Puslitkoka has its own manufacturing facilities and can even sell them as commercial products.

3. Service Industry and Agricultural Sector

¹² Muhammad Handy Dwi Wijaya, *Gajahrejo Village Beach Carpet*, 1 ed. (Malang: MNC Publishing, 2017), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=C3VMEAAAQBAJ&lpq=PP1&ots=PbWmLzJ_jf&lr&hl=id&pg=PA5#v=onepage&q&f=false.

¹³ Selo Soemardjan, *Social Change in Yogyakarta* (Depok: Bamboo Community, 2009).

¹⁴ World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2021," WEF, 2021, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2021/in-full/>.

¹⁵ Arifin Rente, "Introduction to Agroindustry," *Bandung : CV Mujahid Press* 1st edition, no. 23 (2016): 301–16.

Puslitkoka offers a wide range of services in the agricultural sector. Examples include expert certification, pre- and post-harvest laboratory testing, equipment and machinery testing, and various training programs for coffee and cocoa cultivation.

McDonaldization in Puslitkoka as Agroindustrial

The emphasis on the use of modern technology in upstream and downstream agro-industries marks the modernization phase in development theory.¹⁶ As a consequence of modernization, globalization has occurred, affecting various countries around the world. Globalization, a worldwide process, is characterized by the fluid exchange of goods, services, and resources in various directions across national boundaries.¹⁷ Globalization marks a stage in the modern world where space-time boundaries are becoming increasingly smaller and less meaningful, thanks to modern technology. One approach to the study of globalization is the McDonaldization theory, proposed by George Ritzer.¹⁸

McDonaldization as a process whereby the principles of fast food restaurants will increasingly dominate sectors of American society and throughout the rest of the world¹⁹ Based on this definition, it can be seen that there are principles that were originally used by McDonald's, a fast food company from the United States.²⁰ McDonald's success in expanding its business, allowing it to establish thousands of branches in various countries around the world, has led many other companies to try to emulate McDonald's principles. Examples include KFC, Burger King, Starbucks, and so on. This influence even extends beyond the fast food restaurant industry, such as in the home furnishings industry (IKEA), for example. Ritzer wrote that McDonaldization is able to transcend institutional and national boundaries. This broad influence of McDonaldization makes it a concrete example of modernization and globalization. McDonaldization emphasizes efforts to increase the profit of a business entity. As written by Dr. Adon Nasrullah Jamaluddin in "Sociology of Development" (2016), the early modernization movement was generally measured physically based on the productivity of society and the country. A similar economic paradigm is also emphasized in McDonaldization.

¹⁶Adon Nasrullah Jamaludin, *Sociology of Development*, Loyal Library Bandung, First (Bandung: Pustaka Setia Bandung, 2016).

¹⁷George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society: 20th Anniversary Edition* (Yogyakarta: Student Library, 2014).

¹⁸George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1993).

¹⁹M.Pd Sudarsono., S.Pd., *Sociology of Development*, ed. by Muhammad Wajdi and Adi Nugroho Susanto Putro, *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, First, vol. 11 (Makasar: Tahta Media Group, 2024), http://scioteca.caf.com/bitstream/handle/123456789/1091/RED2017-Eng-8ene.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2008.06.005%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/305320484_SISTEM_PEMBETUNGAN_TERPUSAT_STRATEGI_MELES_TARI.

²⁰Syamsir Salam Salam and Amir Fadhilah, *SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT: Introduction to Cross-Sectoral Development Studies*, UIN Jakarta Research Institute (Jakarta: UIN Jakarta Research Institute, 2009).

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There are four dimensions of McDonaldization²¹ which can be used to analyze and evaluate the impact of McDonaldization on an institution or sector of society. These four dimensions are efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. The following is an analysis of the application of the four dimensions of McDonaldization²² on the Puslitkoka agro-industry based on data from interviews and observations in the field:

1. Efficiency

Efficiency is the most optimal method for achieving a goal. Puslitkoka's business model is highly efficient. Nearly all of its agricultural processing equipment and machinery is manufactured independently. Thus, Puslitkoka does not rely on third parties for these machines and equipment. Nearly every corner of Puslitkoka can become a source of income.*revenue*) potential. The Center for Cocoa Research and Development (Puslitkoka) provides gazebo and plenty of seating under shady trees so visitors can relax. Educational tours are also available to visit coffee and cocoa plantations, as well as the agricultural processing factory and laboratory. Furthermore, facilities include a children's play area, a prayer room, and a cafe offering Puslitkoka's own products.

2. Calculabilitas

Calculability prioritizes the quantity of products and services offered. For example, Puslitkoka offers a wide variety of processed coffee and cocoa products (e.g., coffee grounds with varying caffeine levels). This allows Puslitkoka to ensure that the products it offers meet the diverse needs and desires of consumers.

3. Predictability

Predictability is the assurance that a product will remain the same at different times and in different places. For example, the Vicco Choco Bar offered by Puslitkoka guarantees that its taste will always be the same, even when purchased at different times and in different locations.

Control

Control is the effort to manage the various factors and elements operating within an industry, particularly the human element, such as employees and visitors. For example, the Puslitkoka regulation requires active work hours from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. WIB. This ensures that all employees arrive and depart according to a pre-agreed schedule. Visitors' movements are controlled through queues, product menus, the availability of seating, and so on. Visitors who choose to take an educational tour of an agricultural processing plant, for example, will be fully guided by *atour guide*.

²¹George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory, International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences: Second Edition*, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.32159-6>.

²² Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society: 20th Anniversary Edition*.

The presence of McDonald's principles in the Center for Agricultural Research and Development (Puslitkoka) demonstrates that McDonaldization has impacted various sectors of society. This is because these principles are a highly efficient method for developing a business/industry. Puslitkoka itself plays a vital role as an agro-industry that makes a significant contribution to national economic development goals, thereby creating jobs and regional economic development. However, there are also inhibiting factors that must be considered in agro-industry development. These factors include political intervention in agro-industry management, unsupportive bureaucracy, low investment, and limited access to cutting-edge technology.²³

Globalization has become a dominant phenomenon affecting nearly every aspect of human life. In the economic world, one sector significantly impacted is the agro-industry, namely the large-scale processing and production of agricultural products. Globalization has not only changed trade patterns and technology but also introduced the concept of McDonaldization, describing how the principles of efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control have begun to dominate various aspects of social life, including the agricultural and food processing sectors.²⁴

Agro-industrial McDonaldization in the era of globalization has complex socio-cultural implications. On the one hand, it promotes efficiency, modernization, and global market integration. On the other hand, it triggers cultural homogenization, shifts in local values, and changes in rural social structures. The socio-cultural implications of globalization and agro-industrial McDonaldization are ambivalent. On the one hand, it promotes efficiency, ease of distribution, and global market integration. On the other hand, it threatens the sustainability of local cultures, widens socio-economic disparities, and changes the structure of rural communities.²⁵

Apart from the social aspect, the cultural changes that have occurred are quite significant, one of which is the homogenization of culture through McDonaldization, which encourages the standardization of taste and product form, which results in the loss of local culinary variations.²⁶ For example: Local rice varieties are replaced with superior varieties that meet international market standards, traditional recipes are adapted to suit global tastes. Erosion of Local Identity Cultural values associated with agriculture, such as planting and harvesting rituals, are being abandoned because they are not compatible with modern production schedules. For example: The tradition of mutual cooperation during the harvest is replaced by machine work.

²³Rente, "Introduction to Agroindustry."

²⁴ Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*.

²⁵ Moeljarto Tjokrowinoto, *Development: Dilemmas and Challenges* (Yogyakarta: Student Library, 2004).

²⁶ Titiani Intan Firdaus, "Representation of the Hedonism of the Main Character in Kevin Kwan's Chinese Novel Rich Girlfriend," *Syntax: Idea* 5, no. 7 (2023): 883–92, <https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v5i7.2416>.

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Harvest celebrations are diminished due to tight production schedules. Cultural Commodification Some local products are repackaged for the global market by capitalizing on cultural imagery, but the original meaning of the culture is lost. For example: Cocoa is sold as “exotic” abroad, but local farmers do not understand the branding. Traditional food products are being reshaped for convenience, eliminating the ritual or social elements that once accompanied them.

The key to facing this challenge is critical adaptation to take advantage of global technology and markets without losing local wisdom.²⁷ This requires government policy support, consumer awareness, and initiatives from local communities to maintain cultural identity while competing in the global market.

Socio-Cultural Implications of McDonaldization in Sustainable Agro-Industry

1. Shifts in Work Patterns and Social Relations

The introduction of McDonaldization in agro-industrial systems has reshaped traditional modes of work. The emphasis on efficiency and control demands that workers conform to standardized, repetitive, and mechanized rhythms of production. While such practices enhance productivity, they simultaneously erode the flexibility and creativity once embedded in local working cultures. In many cases, workers become cogs in a larger industrial system, reducing opportunities for autonomy and innovation.

This transformation also redefines social relations in the workplace. Interactions that were previously based on kinship, cooperation, and informal networks are increasingly replaced by rationalized, formal structures dictated by organizational hierarchies. As a result, the bonds of solidarity within local communities are weakened, creating social distance between management and workers. Such changes highlight how McDonaldization not only restructures the technical aspects of production but also alters the fabric of social relations within agro-industrial communities.

2. Homogenization of Values and Culture

The principles of predictability and calculability, central to McDonaldization, necessitate the production of uniform goods that meet global market standards. This requirement often marginalizes local knowledge and cultural practices such as traditional methods of coffee processing, rituals associated with agriculture, or communal forms of labor organization. The privileging of uniformity over uniqueness reflects broader processes of cultural homogenization that accompany globalization.

²⁷Mustain Mashud, “Sociology of Development and Its Theory of Approach,” *Open University Module 2*, no. 1 (2014).

As local distinctiveness is devalued in favor of international standards, communities face the risk of losing their cultural heritage and identity. What was once celebrated as cultural richness becomes sidelined to meet market demands. This phenomenon underscores the tension between the pursuit of global competitiveness and the preservation of cultural authenticity, raising concerns about the erosion of local traditions under industrial rationalization.

3. Cultural Resistance and Local Identity

Despite the strong pressure of standardization, local communities often do not passively accept the dominance of McDonaldized practices. Instead, they engage in acts of negotiation and resistance, integrating elements of their cultural traditions within the framework of modern industrial production. For instance, workers may continue practicing forms of solidarity and reciprocity beyond the scope of formal regulations. Such practices demonstrate that cultural identity remains resilient, even within highly rationalized production systems.

This dynamic reflects what anthropologists call cultural hybridity, where modernity and tradition coexist, interact, and reshape one another. Rather than being entirely supplanted, local identities adapt and evolve in dialogue with global industrial standards. This negotiation provides an important reminder that globalization is not a one-directional process of cultural domination, but rather a contested space where local values can still assert relevance and influence.

4. Transformation of Lifestyles and Consumption Patterns

McDonaldization not only affects production processes but also transforms patterns of consumption and lifestyle. Coffee and cocoa products, standardized for global markets, embody cultural meanings beyond their economic value. The rise of global consumer culture, exemplified by the “coffee shop culture” and international branding, influences local tastes and preferences. As a result, local communities adjust their lifestyles to align with global consumer trends, shifting away from traditional practices of consumption.

This transformation has dual implications. On one hand, it provides economic opportunities for local producers to integrate into global markets. On the other hand, it risks creating dependency on external consumer cultures, potentially diminishing local identity and self-sufficiency. Thus, McDonaldization reshapes not only what people consume but also how they understand their place within global networks of production and consumption.

5. Ethical Implications and Social Sustainability

While efficiency and control contribute to greater productivity, they often come at the expense of workers' well-being. Mechanization and strict supervision can lead to exploitative working conditions, reduced job satisfaction, and the neglect of workers' rights. This imbalance

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raises ethical concerns about whether McDonaldization can truly support the principles of sustainable development if social dimensions are overlooked.

Sustainability must therefore be understood not merely in technical or economic terms but also in its socio-cultural dimensions. Ensuring fair labor practices, promoting participatory decision-making, and respecting cultural values are essential components of a socially sustainable agro-industry. Without integrating these ethical considerations, McDonaldization risks perpetuating inequalities and undermining the very communities that sustain the industry. The challenge lies in balancing the pursuit of global efficiency with the preservation of local dignity, values, and social cohesion.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the implementation of the McDonaldization concept at the Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (Puslitkoka) has increased the efficiency and productivity of the agricultural industry. Puslitkoka has been able to improve the quality of products and services and create jobs for the surrounding community through the use of modern technology and a focus on efficiency. Puslitkoka's success in implementing McDonaldization principles demonstrates that this technique is not only relevant in the restaurant industry but can also be applied to agriculture and agro-industry, enhancing their role in local and national economic development.

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