

BODY, ALCOHOL, AND THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH DRINKING PRACTICES IN URBAN SETTING

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Abstract *The phenomenon of alcohol consumption among urban youth is generally viewed negatively as deviant behavior and a moral threat. However, this study seeks to understand this practice through an anthropology of the body approach that highlights the experiences, expressions, and social meanings embodied in the body. This study aims to explain how alcohol consumption practices play a role in the process of identity search, solidarity formation, and negotiation of social and cultural norms in urban spaces. The method used is a qualitative approach through observation and in-depth interviews with young people in urban environments. The results show that alcohol consumption is not solely a form of deviance, but also a performative means to negotiate freedom, strengthen social bonds, and express self-identity amidst social pressures that demand compliance. These findings highlight that the body becomes an arena where personal experiences and social structures intertwine in shaping the meaning of consumption. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to view alcohol as a positive medium in the formation of identity, solidarity, and self-expression among young people, rather than merely an object of moral violation, thus opening new space for a more reflective understanding of the relationship between the body, culture, and consumption.*

Keyword:

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1. Introduction

Social and cultural changes in Indonesia's major cities are creating new dynamics in young people's lifestyles. High mobility, access to global culture, and the development of digital media are creating new social spaces where young people negotiate their identities and values. One phenomenon emerging from this dynamic is the increasing practice of alcohol consumption among students and young urban workers. This phenomenon is often viewed moralistically, seen as a sign of declining values or the influence of Western culture, which is seen as eroding local norms and morality (Nilan & Mansfield, 2014). However, this approach tends to ignore the social context and bodily experiences that underlie it. In anthropological studies, the body is seen not only as a biological entity but also as a social and cultural medium through which meaning and power operate (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987).

Young people's bodies can be understood as a space for negotiation between norms and freedom. Amid social pressures, moral expectations, and the demands of urban modernity, alcohol consumption becomes a symbolic means of self-expression, relinquishing social control, and building solidarity. The activity of drinking together is not simply the consumption of a chemical substance, but rather a social ritual that represents the relationship between bodies and the formation of collective identity (Douglas, 1987; Gusfield, 1987). In many contexts, this practice presents an embodied experience that negotiates the boundaries between self-control, pleasure, and togetherness. Therefore, understanding alcohol consumption among young people also means understanding how the body is used as a symbolic arena for articulating values, status, and social relations (Turner, 1969; Csordas, 1990).

Various anthropological studies on alcohol have highlighted how drinking practices reflect social structures and power relations. Mary Douglas (1987), for example, demonstrated that drinking patterns are inseparable from a society's symbolic systems, while Heath (2000) emphasized that the social meaning of alcohol is highly dependent on cultural context. In the Indonesian context, previous studies have largely positioned alcohol within the framework of morality and public health (Suryakusuma, 2004; Wamese & Wahyuningrum, 2019). As a result, the social, symbolic, and performative aspects of alcohol consumption among young people have received little attention. Yet, for many urban youth, drinking together is a way to build emotional closeness, affirm group solidarity, and mark the transition to adulthood.

This study aims to understand alcohol consumption practices among urban youth through the perspective of the anthropology of the body. Its primary focus is how the body functions as a medium for identity expression, resistance to social norms, and the creation of solidarity in urban life. By placing the body at the center of analysis, this research seeks to shift the perspective of alcohol from merely a moral and medical object to a social phenomenon that reflects the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian youth culture.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm, seeking to understand the social and symbolic meanings behind alcohol consumption practices among urban youth. This approach is based on the view that social reality is shaped through human experience and interaction (Geertz, 1973), therefore, phenomena such as alcohol consumption need to be understood from the perspective of the perpetrator and their cultural context. Therefore, this research does not aim to measure behavior quantitatively, but rather to interpret bodily experiences and expressions of identity as experienced by young people in everyday life.

In addition to an interpretive approach, this study also employs a phenomenological approach to understand the embodied experience of alcohol consumption. This approach seeks to explore how the drinking experience is understood, perceived, and interpreted by the subjects directly through their bodily awareness and interactions. Thus, the analysis not only interprets the social symbols behind the action but also considers how the body serves as a medium for the experiences and identities being negotiated.

The focus of this research is alcohol consumption practices as a form of bodily expression and social identity. The research informants were young people aged 18–28, both students and young workers, who actively engage in communal drinking activities. The research was conducted in 2022 in two major cities: Surakarta (Solo) and Yogyakarta. These two cities were chosen because of their strong urban character and because they serve as spaces where tradition and modernity meet, providing a rich context for observing the dynamics of youth lifestyles.

Informants were selected using a snowball sampling technique, based on

recommendations from participants involved in social activities related to alcohol consumption. This technique was used because the phenomenon being studied is sensitive and not easily accessible, making friendship networks key to finding relevant and reliable informants. Ten informants became the primary participants in this study. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participant observation, two primary methods in ethnography that allow researchers to capture bodily experiences and social interactions directly (Spradley, 1980). This ethnographic approach was also inspired by Spradley's *You Owe Yourself a Drunk* (1970), which shows how drinking practices can be understood as part of a social experience and group identity that is often viewed as deviant by the wider society. Observations were conducted in cafes, on campuses, and in community spaces where young people typically gather and interact.

Data analysis was conducted through contextual thematic analysis, identifying patterns of meaning that emerged in the informants' narratives and social practices. This analysis process followed the principles of thick description (Geertz, 1973), namely understanding social actions in depth through the cultural context and accompanying bodily experiences. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and member checking to ensure accurate interpretations. This approach aligns with the framework of the anthropology of the body (Csordas, 1990; Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987), which views the body as a locus of experience and an arena in which values, identities, and social power are negotiated. Based on this foundation, the study seeks to understand alcohol consumption as a social practice that reflects the cultural dynamics and identity searches of urban youth.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Body and Freedom

This research reveals that amidst the dynamics of urban life, such as in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, the practice of alcohol consumption by young people is not simply a biological behavior or moral deviation, but rather a form of bodily expression imbued with the meaning of freedom. Young people use their bodies to negotiate a space of autonomy amidst the pressures of social norms, religiosity, and public morality. In this context, the body is no longer a passive entity controlled by social structures, but rather an active medium for self-expression, testing moral boundaries, and articulating personal identity in a fluid social space. As Csordas (1990) argues, the body is a locus of cultural experience (embodiment) that enables individuals to understand the world and their position within it.

In cities like Yogyakarta and Surakarta, known as centers of culture and religiosity, drinking often becomes a negotiation between modernity and tradition. For some young people, drinking is not simply an act of consumption, but a symbol of intimacy, equality, and freedom within the community. They use their bodies and sensory experiences as a means to strengthen social relationships and mark important moments in their daily lives. Thus, drinking is not only hedonistic but also performative, with the body playing an active role in producing meaning and social solidarity. As one informant put it:

"It's okay not to drink, it's not a must, I said from the start that it's okay not to drink, it's just for fun and maybe some moments require alcohol as an accompaniment to liven up the atmosphere, but it all comes back to the need. For example, when you don't have money, you can't buy alcohol. Well, the proof is that it's okay," (Informant Doni).

This statement demonstrates that the body becomes an arena where will, pleasure, and self-control are consciously negotiated. Within the framework of the anthropology of the body, this aligns with Csordas's (1990) notion that the body is not merely a biological object, but rather the center of human experience (the existential ground of culture and self), a place where social meaning is embodied. Through the body, individuals not only experience the world but also negotiate their position and identity within broader social structures. In the case of urban youth, the decision to drink or not to drink alcohol is not solely determined by environmental pressures, but also by reflective efforts to control oneself, understand boundaries, and express personal freedom.

From Foucault's (1977) perspective, the body can also be understood as a locus of power and resistance. In this context, drinking practices not only demonstrate adherence to social norms about recreation but also a subtle resistance to the moral discipline inherent in young people's bodies. The body becomes a "technology of the self," or a means to regulate sensations, relieve stress, or expand social experiences in a controlled manner. One informant, Angga, admitted: "Before bed, I drink a little alcohol to relax..." while another informant, Tania, said that "drinking a little alcohol makes the body feel fresher and more comfortable for work." Practices like these demonstrate that alcohol is not simply a tool for getting drunk, but an embodied mechanism used to regulate mood, performance, and social interactions. This aligns with a study by Lyons & Willott (2008), which found that drinking practices among young people are often understood as a form of emotional regulation and social performativity, rather than an addiction.

Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective is also relevant for strengthening our understanding of how the body plays a role in alcohol consumption practices among young people. In Goffman's view, social life can be understood as a "performance" in which individuals play certain roles in front of others, using their bodies, expressions, and interaction styles to build desired impressions. In the context of this research, drinking practices can be understood as part of a "social performance" in which young people's bodies become the primary medium for displaying identity, freedom, and social closeness. When they drink with friends, choose where to hang out, or demonstrate how they sip their drinks, they are constructing a self-image, whether to demonstrate courage, maturity, or solidarity.

Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus provides an important foundation for understanding bodily freedom in this context. Habitus is a dispositional structure formed through social and cultural experiences, which then guides actions without conscious awareness. Young people's choices about drinking, the types of drinks they consume, the places they drink (bars, cafes, boarding houses, campuses), and how they present themselves while drinking are manifestations of habitus shaped by social class, education, and urban lifestyle. The body becomes a symbolic medium through which habitus is manifested: the way we sit, the way we sip a drink, or the choice of a particular brand are social acts that signal taste and distinction (Bourdieu, 1984; Featherstone, 1982). In this case, the body not only experiences freedom but also displays freedom as a lifestyle, a form of symbolic capital that reinforces social position among peers.

This bodily freedom is not absolute, but rather is always negotiated within a social field characterized by norms, values, and social control. Several informants stated that they only drink "when there are gatherings," "when close friends are around," or "when parents are not around." This demonstrates a reflective awareness and self-created moral boundaries. Bourdieu (1990) emphasized that social action is always rooted in the relationship between habitus and social field: individuals act creatively within the boundaries of existing structures. Young people's bodies practice freedom within those boundaries, a freedom that is conditioned, not absolute.

This analysis aligns with the findings of Thurnell-Read (2013), who highlighted how the male body in drinking culture becomes an arena for performativity of masculinity and social resistance, and Månsson, Samuelsson, & Törrönen (2020), who described how young people use alcohol to “do adulthood” amidst the discourse of a health-conscious generation. In the context of this research, young people’s bodies, particularly those living in Solo and Yogyakarta, practice freedom not through a total rejection of norms, but through creative adaptation and social performance that allows them to feel agency amidst societal moral pressures. This is evident in the following opinion of one informant:

“...my friends and I have held several events, starting with drinking with the college kids without any plans, suddenly drinking. When we drink with my circle, we have an idea and we chat about nothing, then the next day, for example, if we have a meeting, we try to express that drunken chat... several times, national events have been implemented through discussions while drinking..,” (informant Adam).

Furthermore, this study found that bodily freedom is also linked to the search for a balance between control and pleasure. Alcohol is used to create certain sensory and emotional experiences, a sense of warmth among friends, relaxation, confidence, or mild euphoria, which enrich social experiences. Hardon & Idrus (2014) in their study of the practice of “*Coba, Cocok, and, Candu*” (try, match, and addict) in Indonesia noted that substance consumption (both alcohol and others) is not always destructive, but can be a form of self-care for oneself and others in certain social contexts. Young people who regulate their drinking habits, body tolerance limits, and social moments are constructing their own body ethics, in line with the ethics of self-care (Foucault, 1988). As Tania expressed it, “I feel like I’m more like myself, being myself.” This quote suggests that through bodily experiences engaged in certain social practices, young people discover new forms of authenticity and self-balance. This demonstrates a reflective process that makes the body not just a vessel for pleasure, but a space for the formation of meaning and self-identity.

Thus, the bodily freedom of urban youth cannot be understood simply as resistance to norms, but rather as an active process of shaping the relationship between the body, social space, and identity. The body becomes a locus of experience that mediates between social structures (values, religion, economics) and individual will. The practice of drinking alcohol symbolizes the ambivalence of modernity. On the one hand, it is seen as a moral threat, but on the other, it becomes a medium for expression, social connection, and personal autonomy. Synott (1993) asserts that the body is always a social text representing values, power, and meaning that are constantly being negotiated. In the context of Indonesian youth, the body that drinks alcohol is a body that is rewriting its relationship with morality, modernity, and freedom.

Through the explanation above, we can understand youth alcohol consumption as a practice of freedom manifested through the body, not simply as deviant behavior. The body is not only a field of social control, but also a space for the production of meaning, where individuals practice freedom that feels authentic, even though they remain bound by self-created social boundaries. In this context, Becker’s (1963) thinking is relevant, as he emphasized that deviance is not inherent in an act, but rather the result of a social labeling process. Thus, the practice of drinking alcohol among young people can be understood as the result of a negotiation between the social label of “deviant” and the individual’s attempts to negotiate their identity and freedom in urban social spaces.

3.2 Solidarity and Social Performativity

One of the most consistent findings in this study is the function of alcohol consumption as a tool for building solidarity and social performativity among urban youth. Informant narratives indicate that communal drinking acts as a medium to accelerate intimacy, create a collective atmosphere, and facilitate the exchange of ideas, rather than just individual recreation. Natalia emphasized her preference for "drinking together with friends because the atmosphere becomes happier with the togetherness." This was emphasized by Bayu, who even described how conversations that occur while drinking sometimes produce concrete ideas because when drunk they are more courageous to be honest, which can create closer and more intimate relationships with friends or communities. "With alcohol, if you don't read, it reduces fear and reduces shame, so when you drink, you can just talk freely." This statement aligns with qualitative studies that position parties and communal drinking as a means of strengthening social bonds among peers, where interactions that occur in the context of 'drinking' generate practical social capital (MacArthur et al., 2017; Purves et al., 2018).

Theoretically, the practice of communal drinking can be read as a social performance that articulates a collective lifestyle: the act of sharing a glass, toasting, and the habit of casual conversation become micro-rituals that affirm the "we" within a circle of friends. Tuner's concept of liminality and community helps explain the phenomenon when informants gather for drinks, from which it can be seen how individuals enter a temporary space where normal stratification structures can be relaxed and more honest or expressive behavior becomes legitimated (Burrow, 2023). Empirical data supports this idea, as several informants stated that "when people drink, people become honest" or "the conversation becomes more meaningful," indicating a temporary shift in conversational norms and self-control that allows for more intense expression of opinions and solidarity.

The link between drinking practices and the production of collective ideas is also crucial. Arjuna, an informant, recounted how "drunk" chatter later transformed into concrete social products such as planning events, seminars, or routine community activities. "...my friends and I have organized several events, starting with drinking with the college kids, without any plans..." This phenomenon demonstrates that the solidarity formed is not only affective (a sense of closeness), but also instrumental, supporting collective work, collaboration, and productive social networks. Other research has found a similar function, where social gatherings involving drinking often facilitate practical coordination and information transfer that fuel collective action (Cox et al., 2019; Kaner, Islam, & Lipperman-Kreda, 2022). From a cultural sociology perspective, the ritualization of drinking serves as a space for the growth of social interaction, allowing informal ideas to be tested and absorbed into the group agenda.

Furthermore, the choice of beverage type and drinking method often serves as a sign of lifestyle or a performative form of distinction relevant to group identity (MacArthur et al., 2017). In the study, several informants mentioned differences in preferences (soju, wine, *ciu*, label brands vs. traditional) related to economic availability, taste, and the influence of hangouts. Purves, Stead, & Eadie (2018) showed how beverage brands and attributes are linked to the construction of adolescent identity. From this, we can see that through the research that has been conducted, it shows that in addition to the identity constructed through the chosen brand, the practice of drinking together by building a "shared style", ways of speaking, choosing a place (a friend's house, a cafe, a bar, a campus), and small rituals (toasting, sharing a bottle) can emphasize solidarity. In other words, solidarity is born through the performance of a collective lifestyle incorporated in the body and interactions.

The affective dimension of solidarity is also closely related to mood management and group emotional regulation. One informant referred to drinking as an "icebreaker" that reduces

awkwardness, as Bayu put it: "If I don't drink, I feel less confident." Bayu believes this can facilitate intimate conversations. This, when linked to studies on the social effects of drinking on friendship dynamics, shows that emotional intimacy (shared mood) when consuming alcohol together can contribute to an immediate sense of closeness and facilitate short-term social support (Testa et al., 2019; Larsen et al., 2022). Consequently, the resulting solidarity is not always stable or long-term, but it is highly effective for collective moments, sufficient to produce bonds that are then used as capital in shared activities.

On the other hand, drinking-based solidarity is not free from tensions and boundaries: some informants emphasized certain conditions, such as "must be with people you already know" or "don't overdo it." This indicates the existence of internal norms to maintain the group's reputation. In related literature, a similar phenomenon is referred to as "rules of engagement" in drinking practices, or unwritten rules that prevent collective rituals from degenerating into social threats (Cox et al., 2019; Chok, 2024). This suggests that solidarity through drinking is always regulated: there are collective mechanisms to mitigate risks, for example, to prevent excessive intoxication, protect vulnerable members, and minimize the disruption that can arise when intoxicated. This suggests that solidarity relationships can be maintained without destroying the social network itself.

It's also important to note how space and place are involved in the production of solidarity. The choice of hangout venue, such as a friend's house, a cafe, a bar, a campus, or a community gathering place, can shape the nature of interactions. Studies on urban rituals and recreational spaces confirm that location influences the intensity of bonds and the nature of collective experiences (Gamba & Cattacin, 2021; Burrow, 2023). In this study, informants described the transition from limited public spaces (e.g., during the pandemic) to private spaces (a friend's house) as an adaptation that maintained the continuity of drinking rituals and solidarity, indicating the flexibility of social rituals to maintain networks.

In conclusion, alcohol consumption among urban youth functions as a performative practice that builds solidarity, encompassing affection, the production of collective ideas, and the formation of shared lifestyles. However, it also demonstrates that this practice of alcohol consumption is always governed by internal norms and spatial context. The resulting solidarity is pragmatic and relational, effective for strengthening short-term bonds and encouraging collective action. However, it again remains dependent on rules, the context of place, and sensitivity to social risks. Observing this phenomenon through the lens of young people's daily lives and social interactions helps us understand that communal drinking is not simply a matter of substance consumption, but rather a strategic social practice for the formation of social capital and collective identity among urban youth.

3.3 Negotiating Morality and Identity for Young People

The research findings indicate that alcohol consumption among urban youth constitutes a complex arena of moral negotiation. Informants do not simply follow hedonistic impulses but consciously weigh pleasure, social reputation, and moral responsibility. As Aulia expressed, "I just want to try it to see how it feels," and Arga, who stated, "If it's the right dose, it's okay," it's clear that the decision to drink involves ethical reflection. This phenomenon aligns with Zigon's (2007) findings on moral breakdown and ethical demand, where individuals engage in new moral reflection when old norms become inadequate. Young people construct new moralities through controlled consumption as a way to build closeness without losing personal freedom (Paruzel-Czachura, Pypno-Blajna, & Sorokowski, 2023).

This process demonstrates that alcohol serves as a medium for young people to negotiate moral values in a fluid social context. Related studies confirm that the decision to drink or refrain

from drinking is often a moral strategy to maintain a balance between personal integrity and social acceptance (Caluzzi, Pennay, & MacLean, 2021; Samuelsson et al., 2022). In this study, informants tended to associate drinking practices with social occasions, such as celebrations, post-work relaxation, or markers of emotional closeness through community gatherings, all of which are situated within the framework of personal moral awareness, not deviance.

When viewed through Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, alcohol consumption is part of practical sense, a bodily habit resulting from social experience. However, in modern, reflective societies, this habitus becomes increasingly self-conscious (reflexive habitus). Young people in Solo and Yogyakarta display this reflective habitus by assessing when, where, and with whom they can drink. As Caluzzi, Pennay, & MacLean (2021) and Uscola (2023) demonstrate, today's young generation actively constructs identities of "drinker" or "non-drinker" as part of a moral and responsible lifestyle project. Thus, the practice of alcohol consumption can be seen as an arena where habitus works alongside moral reflection to shape social identity.

Moral negotiation is also evident in the emergence of informal rules within the youth drinking community. Some informants emphasized, "don't drink alone," or "drink with people you know," suggesting a moral economy (Thurnell-Read 2013). These internal norms serve to maintain the boundary between togetherness and harm, and emphasize collective social responsibility. This finding aligns with research by Lyons, Emslie, & Hunt (2014), which suggests that drinking practices in youth social spaces serve as a mechanism for building solidarity, while remaining governed by informal ethics to avoid stigma.

Beyond the social dimension, the morality of consumption also emerges in efforts to maintain reputation. For some female informants, drinking alcohol is associated with the risk of negative stereotypes, leading them to choose private spaces or specific social circles to maintain their self-image. A study by Hardon, Idrus, & Hymans (2013) in Indonesia found a similar pattern: young women negotiated bodily space and morality through substance consumption, both alcohol and other products, to gain recognition without being considered "immoral." In this context, morality does not exist as a total prohibition, but as a tactical terrain in which bodies and identities are negotiated (Foucault 1977; Synott 1993).

The identity of a "drinker" is not static. It is continuously constructed through social interactions, personal narratives, and digital representations. Informants noted that social media posts can either strengthen reputations: some chose not to post about their drinking activities because they realized that not everyone understood the practice of alcohol consumption. This aligns with research by Merrill et al. (2023), which showed that exposure to alcohol representations on social media influences adolescents' normative perceptions and drinking behaviors. In everyday practice, young people use social media as a means to negotiate their identities, projecting aspects of themselves that they want to be recognized by their peers, while simultaneously assessing the social boundaries accepted by their group.

Moral negotiations also touch on the realm of the body and health. Tania, one of the informants, mentioned once vomiting blood after drinking excessively, an experience that served as a moral reflection for her to "know her limits." This awareness demonstrates how the body becomes a living moral arena, as argued by Csordas (1990) and Scheper-Hughes & Lock (1987), who state that the body is not the object of morality, but rather the subject of moral experience itself. In Hardon and Idrus's (2017) research on substance use among young Indonesians, the body also functions as an ethical site where experience, pleasure, and guilt intersect. Thus, moral reflection on drinking practices is not merely the result of external supervision, but stems from the body's experience of experiencing limits and their consequences.

The socioeconomic context also influences the direction of this moral negotiation. Some middle-class informants view drinking imported or expensive alcohol as a symbol of status and a modern lifestyle, while informants with limited incomes prefer more affordable local drinks that still place symbolic value on togetherness and group solidarity. This phenomenon reinforces Bourdieu's (1984) argument about distinction, where consumption becomes a symbolic arena for asserting social position. Furthermore, these drinking practices also reflect a negotiation of personal and social values: young people adapt their drinking habits to conform to group norms, strengthen social identity, and simultaneously express personal preferences. Thus, alcohol is not only a means of entertainment, but also a medium for articulating identity, solidarity, and social position in a complex urban context.

Ultimately, these findings challenge the moralistic views that dominate public discourse on alcohol. Young people are not losing values, but rather creating new ones through reflective bodily and social practices. Their moral negotiations demonstrate what Zigon (2007) calls ethical work: a conscious effort to balance freedom, responsibility, and solidarity. Within the framework of the anthropology of the body, this demonstrates that morality cannot be separated from bodily experience, suggesting that ethics results from the body's reflection on its own pleasures and limits (Csordas 1990; Foucault 1977).

This view aligns with the classic ethnography *You Owe Yourself a Drunk* (Spradley, 1970). In his work, Spradley demonstrates that the practice of alcohol consumption among marginalized urban communities cannot be understood solely as a moral failing, but rather as a meaningful social act, a way to build solidarity, overcome suffering, and negotiate one's position amidst social pressures. Similarly, young people in urban Indonesia, particularly in the research locations of Solo and Yogyakarta, also interpret alcohol consumption not only as a form of pleasure or resistance, but as a means to negotiate togetherness, gain recognition, and form an identity within the moral landscape of modern society.

4. Conclusion

This research confirms that alcohol consumption among urban youth in Indonesia cannot be understood solely as a form of moral deviance, but rather as a complex social expression related to the body, identity, and modernity. The young person's body becomes a crucial medium for understanding how individuals negotiate the freedoms and moral boundaries imposed by society. This research demonstrates that alcohol consumption functions as a performative practice in which the body becomes an arena for resistance to social norms and a means of building solidarity and idealized lifestyles. This practice also marks the emergence of new forms of youth identity that seek a balance between the demands of modernity, the desire for autonomy, and the need for social recognition.

The research findings demonstrate that alcohol consumption is not simply an individual act, but rather part of a broader social and cultural network, where values, symbols, and power relations interact. In this context, the body acts as a dynamic site of meaning production, illustrating the tension between social control and personal freedom. Therefore, public policies and moral approaches that overemphasize prohibition without understanding the social context risk deepening stigma against young people.

This research recommends that the anthropology of the body in Indonesia continue to broaden its perspective by viewing consumption practices, both of alcohol and other forms, as a multi-layered and non-uniform cultural phenomenon. Future studies can explore differences in bodily experiences and moralities among young people across social class, gender, and region, to enrich our understanding of bodily dynamics in contemporary urban Indonesian society.

Furthermore, a policy approach that is more sensitive to cultural and social contexts is needed to shift discourse on alcohol consumption from a moralistic perspective to a more humanistic and reflective understanding of the social realities of young people.

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