

## Chapter 19

# Re-Imagining Kedai Pati: Local Third Places, Kota Bharu, Kelantan

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter attempts to rediscover and envision the revitalization idea of Kedai Pati, a gastronomic urban node in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. More than 50 years ago, Kedai Pati likely existed and acted as a local third place, whereby people tend to drop in for a quick snack before going to work or elsewhere. Kedai Pati is perceived as a valuable space for the local working men to informally attend on the regular or irregularly. At the present day, Kedai Pati still survives with its signature theatrical-service pantry operation, and seller-buyer social setting, which is part of a unique ambiance considered Kelantan's cultural heritage. These nodal gastronomic places around Kota Bharu town have been mapped to indicate their current location and studies on reimagining and rebranding the Kedai Pati itself have been made to promote and reintroduce its existence. Varieties of design proposals have then been put forward as it may indicate a new pop-up cart style for Kedai Pati.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kelantan is a state strategically located in an eastern coastal state of the peninsula of Malaysia. It is known for its unique way of life and nationwide fame, where its traditional heritage is expressed through

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its local dishes. The blending of Malay, Thailand, or Chinese influences gave exquisite exclusivity to their unique combinations of its ingredients due to their geographical location. Food is often used to increase the authenticity of a visit by bringing tourists closer to the locals. The richness of its heritage, which includes numerous culinary spots, has potentially contributed to the income and development of the local creative economy. According to Marzuki et al. (2011) and Aziz et al. (2012), despite its remote location from Peninsular Malaysia's main attractions, Kelantan is well known for its natural environments and distinct cultural heritage, which have influenced the development of the tourism industry in terms of generating local revenue.

The culinary experience is distinguished not only by its culinary variety but also through its local setting and hospitality service. As the expression 'eating out' or 'dining out' has become a part of the local customs in Kelantan as the increasing number of places scattered in the city centres and much of its smaller towns reflects much of this phenomenon. This situation is largely attributable to the local population's preference for eating outside at food stalls as well as the efforts of food industry entrepreneurs to boost their revenue. In the pricing category, the adjectives 'affordable', 'inexpensive', and 'reasonable' create a favourable impression of Malaysian cuisine as one that delivers excellent value for money (Kamarulbaid & Mustapha, 2021). Kedai Pati offers a wide range of culinary varieties from the local food palette; the culinary experience and modest design are significant attractions that might facilitate and encourage today's local entrepreneurship culture as well as the creative industry of 'Culinary Tourism'.

According to urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg, a 'third place' is any location other than a person's home or place of employment where they frequently congregate and interact with people they do not know very well. A third place is defined as a friendly and comfortable place frequented by regulars and ideal for reconnecting with old acquaintances, where making new ones is the primary theme of Oldenburg's treatise on the topic. Third places are also often related to small businesses, cafes, coffee shops, bars, pubs, restaurants, community centres, general stores, and so on. Even though such destinations are called third places, Oldenburg discusses only a few physical aspects of third places, such as their proximity and easy access from home or work, and highlights that these places are likely to offer food and drinks (Oldenburg, 1991). It can be concluded that a "Third Place" is a public place where people gather on their own, informally, and often that is not their home or place of work. One of the things that makes a "Third Place" is that it feels like home and is a place where people can relax, recharge, feel at ease, and meet new people. They are neutral places that are easy to get to and usually in buildings that don't stand out in the community. They are democratic and social, with a place to sit and a focus on talking. The mood is playful, and everyone is treated the same.

In the case of Kedai Pati, which is normally located in the suburbs of a town, it has become a place for workers to hang out between their homes and their offices. The long-seating benches and the bar-like designed setting of the kedai pati create a friendly atmosphere between the customer-owner as well as the customer-customer, to just mingle and talk freely with one another (see Figure 3). Ultimately, whether "kedai pati" can be considered a local third place depends on various factors, including its significance within the community and the extent to which it facilitates social interactions and community building. The concept of the local third place emphasizes the importance of public spaces in fostering social interactions, community engagement, and a sense of belonging. Public spaces are shared areas accessible to all members of the community, where people can gather, interact, and develop relationships beyond their private homes and workplaces. These public spaces can take various forms, such as parks, community centres, libraries, cafes, and local shops like "kedai pat". The key aspect is that they provide a welcoming environment that encourages socializing, conversation, and the formation of

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