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“SOPH” IN BABAR ISLAND CULTURE AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON IT

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ABSTRACT

Sopi is one of the traditional drinks that contain alcohol and it is consumed by many people in Maluku Province. For people in the Babar Islands Regency of Southwest Maluku, sopi is an important component in their tradition and in many dimensions of life. Sopi is the main component, to foster togetherness or bond of brotherhood. Serving sopi is also a form of appreciation or respect for guests. Sopi is an important instrument in traditional rituals and in solving problems or conflicts.

From a study of high school students in the Babar Islands, it was found that 100% of high school students were familiar with Sopi. They knew about its functions, had witnessed and even participated in traditional events involving the use of sopi, and were also aware the impact of consuming Sopi. As many as 29, 17 % of students (all male students) had also taste or drink Sopi. Furthermore 91, 67 % of students agreed that sopi remained preserved as a cultural instrument. The preservation of sopi as an important component of the tradition needs to be continued, besides the serious efforts to overcome the possibility of misuse of sopi, especially among youths in the Babar Islands.

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INTRODUCTION

Sopi comes from the Dutch term, *Zoopje*, which means liquid alcohol. This beverage is derived from the fermentation of ‘*Arenga pinnata*’ that has undergone distillation (Saiya, 2016). Sopi is asking for admission events

(marriage propose), marriage rituals, opening and closing ceremonies, etc., sopi is the main component involved. This study is then directed to discuss sopi in the traditional structure of communities in the Babar Islands, Southwest Maluku Regency. In this study also exposed the perceptions of high school students about Sopi in relation to culture, considering that they are the next generation and successors to local culture.

This research is a descriptive study, with the aim which to describe the function of sopi in the Babar Islands tradition, as well as the perceptions of high school students. The data collection is done by conducted interview and questionnaire. Interviews were conducted to some of the community leaders from the Babar Islands in order to identify various aspects related to sopi in relation to the culture of the Babar Islands community. Furthermore, the questionnaire was intended to identify students' perceptions about sopi.

Qualitative data in the phenomenological approach are analyzed by the stages of data reduction, the data grouped by categories, making data connected in each category, presenting data, making elaborations and discussions, and drawing conclusions. Furthermore, student response data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Sopi in the Culture of the Babar Islands Community

For people in Southwest Maluku Regency in general and in the Babar Islands in particular, sopi is not only seen as a traditional drink. Sopi is more than, it is perceived as an important component in culture. Sopi is a part that is not able to be separated from daily life. Sopi has a deep meaning and important role in the culture of Babar Islands. Regarding the meaning and role of Sopi, several community leaders from Babar Islands were expressed as follows:

"Sopi is a media that binds and unifies the lives of people in the Babar Islands. Sopi is used in informal family gatherings, in welcoming guests, in requesting entry events, and in various traditional events"

(S.Leunupun, community elder Rumahlewang Besar Village, Wetang Island)

"Sopi is a very important and decisive traditional material in every custom event. The existence of sopi in a traditional event cannot be replaced by drinks or other objects, because sopi is considered

sacred. When two people or two families had problems between, in order to solve the problems, sopi becomes an important component. Sopi is the key to opening the door of customary conversation, because before the conversation starts, both sides must drink sopi that is poured in the glass first. This indicates that they are willing to solve the problems faced by family and togetherness. Sopi binds both parties in a partnership or togetherness. Sopi also became a binder for an agreement made by both sides.

(Y.Watrimni, village elder of Nusiatu Village, Wetang Island)

"Sopi is one of the main components in traditional rituals in Southwest Maluku. The role of sopi cannot be replaced with other ingredients. Sopi is a binder for people who are involved in a tradition meeting. Sopi will be an introduction or opening act at the meeting, as well as a binder for all parties involved in togetherness or in a fellowship. Sopi symbolizes the wealth of natural resources; and the alliance between humans, ancestors and nature. Sopi is also a symbol of life, and hope - it is shed a little on the ground as a form of hope for a guarantee of prosperity and safety. Sopi is also used in solving problems; sopi is poured in a glass and taken together by the parties in trouble, indicating their willingness and sincerity to solve problems in a respectable way"

(A.Hiwruur., Village elder of Sermata Island)

"For people in Babar Islands, Sopi is a device or medium that unites, binds all the people involved in a meeting in the bonds of brotherhood. Sopi is also a form of our appreciation to others. Giving a glass of sopi to be drunk by friends or relatives shows appreciation for others"

(F.Lewier., community figure of Masela Island)

"Sopi is a tool to solve problems, reconcile, and unite people in the bond of brotherhood. In some cases, criminal matters reported to the police are returned to traditional leaders in the village (lek), to be resolved as a family. In the settlement of the tradition, the sopi is used to open the conversation, and when the settlement has been decided, the two parties return drinking sopi, as a sign that the two parties have made peace"

(K. Mosse, Elder of Tapa Village, Babar Island)

"Sopi is a part of the culture that has been passed down from the ancestors, as a communication tool to solve the problems that were addressed, as well as a means of unifying, friendship, and conciliation. Sopi has a very important meaning in society, a glass of sopi can solve any problem as complicated as the result is peace and joy. Sopi is very sacred and in custom is called lirmarna".

(M. Konoralma, Elder of the Pota Kecil village)

The opinion of the community leaders above illustrates the importance role of sopi in the culture of the people in the Babar Islands. *First*, sopi is a tool to foster togetherness or bond of brotherhood. In meetings between friends, relatives, or family, sopi becomes one of the main dishes. *Second*, sopi is a form of appreciation or respect for guests or other people. When there are officials visiting the village, or when there are guests visiting our home, sopi is the main component to be served. Giving a glass (one shot) of sopi to be tasted is a form of appreciation or respect for guests. *Third*, sopi is an important instrument in traditional rituals. Traditional rituals in Southwest Maluku in general, and in the Babar Islands, are inappropriate if sopi is not available. *Fourth*, sopi is an important instrument in solving problems or conflicts. Often there are problems or conflicts between individuals, families, family's name, clans, or even between villages due to land boundaries, elopement, harassment, self-control, etc. In the context of problem solving, sopi is used as a sign of agreement. Sopi, which is brought as a prerequisite for discussing and resolving problems, is poured out by tribal council and taken together as a sign of agreement and at the same time binds all people who have agreed.



Figure 1. Sopi in a Welcoming Guest (Author's documentation)

Since a long time ago, sopi has become a banquet to resolve conflicts, rehabilitate the situation

(*Naplola-Naploli*), and restore the integrity of life and to be happy together (Watloly, 2012). Here, any serious problems, according to the Babar people, can be discussed and resolved with just one bottle of sopi. The role of sopi in solving problems is illustrated in the following explanation.

In solving the problem (fights, quarrels, solving land boundaries, etc.), those who are troubled along with the chief or head of village are sitting together. A bottle of sopi and a glass is placed on the table. To start the event, sopi is poured in a glass and handed over to the one who direct the event. Then he raises the glass and says the greeting *Kalwedo*, and is answered by all the people by saying *Kalwedo*. Sopi is drunk by him, and then opens the meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting. Sopi is then poured and handed over to the chief of village or the elders, before drinking, he greets by saying *Kalwedo*, which also replied by everyone saying *Kalwedo*. Then he conveys the rules of customs according to the context of the problem. After that, sopi is poured into a glass and given to the speaker the prosecutor or the complainant. After greeting by saying *Kalwedo* and drank sopi, the spokesman conveyed the problems and demands. After that sopi is poured again and handed over to the spokesman of second party (defendant), says *Kalwedo*, drinks sopi and then explains and corrects the problem or apologizes if a mistake was made. Sopi is returned to the prosecutor to refute or respond to the second party's statement. In this case accepting an apology and asking for a commitment from the second party to no longer make mistakes. After that sopi was given back to the party who was demanded to say thank you for being forgiven, after that he said *Kalwedo* and drank sopi. After the problem has been discussed, the guide closes the meeting there by saying *O-kalweta* which means there is peace and joy for all who are there - then agreed by the audience by saying *Hoe*.

(M. Konoralma, Elder of Pota Kecil Village)

It is clear how Sopi plays importance role of in solving problems. Starting the discussion, sopi is drunk by each speaker as a symbol of sincere intention to solve problems, to make peace, to build brotherhood. When the agreement has been settled, the defendant side returns to drink sopi as a symbol of his commitment to no longer repeat his mistakes.

Sopi is an important component not only in traditional events but also in daily interactions. The interesting thing in the lives of the people in Babar Islands is the practice of loving one another, helping, respecting and serving each other. Serving guests for people in Babar Islands is a manifestation of the implementation of a meaningful life - living in Niolilieta cultural frame, which are live in peace, loving life, and sacrifice for each other as a brother (Watloly, et al, 2012; Leunupun, 2012). When there are guests visiting, the host will serve the guest with a glass (one shot) of sopi to taste, as a form of appreciation. Even when there are relatives pass by the front of the house, then kindly, the host will invite them to their home and served sopi as a dish.

Usually, when someone passes in front of the house, people in the Babar Islands will invite him to stop by, and then they will be given a glass of sopi to taste. This is an appreciation to the guest".

(F.Lewier & K.Mosse.)

It has become a habit in Wetang that if there are guests from other villages come by or visiting and walking in front of the houses of the residents, they will invite the guests to stop by. If the guests decided to stop by and enter the house, they will be served with a glass of sopi . This is part of the culture of Niolilieta in West Babar ".

(Y. Watrimni, Elder of Nusiata village, Wetang island)

"Serving guests is not only related to those who have a kinship or family relationship, for the people in Babar Islands, guests who visit their village or who walk past their homes are guests who need to be respected. Even they are not known by the residence, when they crosses the front of the house, then when they meet, they will be greeted and invited to take a short break in the living room. If the guest is willing to enter, sopi will be served as a form of appreciation to the guest, as well as the sincerity of the host to build bonds of friendship with the guest ".

(T. Orno, West Babar Community igure)

Sopi is also one of the requirements that must be brought by man families in the proposing event. Apart from sopi, other components brought are betel nuts and tobacco. In the island of Masela, in the process of proposing a woman, the men will bring sopi, betel nut,

tobacco, and basta cloth (traditional cloth of the Babar Islands). The following are the results of an interview with F.L. relating to the use of sopi at the entrance to request (proposed marriage) in Masela, Babar Islands,

Generally at the "Proposing" event on Masela Island, when a Man family comes to visit and are invited to sit, before the conversation begins, a spokesman of woman family (the host) will pour sopi in the glass and hand it over to the male family's spokesman (guest). After the sopi is drunk, then the host invites guests to convey the purpose of his arrival. A spokesman for the male family then puts a bottle of sopi and Basta cloth that has been provided on the table, and then conveys the purpose of his arrival with the family of the bridegroom. After that both parties will talk about the proposal. After the conversation is over, before leaving, a spokesman for the male family will pour sopi in the glass and hand it over to the host to drink. If the proposal is accepted, the basta cloth will be handed over to the host, but if the proposal has not been received or rejected, the basta cloth will be taken home.

(F. Lewier, Masela Island community figure)

Although sopi has important values and roles in the culture of Southwest Maluku, it also has a negative side if it is consumed in excess. According to Zulfan (2015), sopi contains ethanol. As a psychoactive ingredient, consuming ethanol can make a person experience a decrease in consciousness. In addition to containing ethanol, it contains addictive substances that will cause the effects of addictive for the drinker. This is what makes it difficult for many people to take it off, even though it knows the ill effects of consuming sopi. The effect of consumes excessive alcohol is dysfunction of thought and behavior disorder. This is triggered by the direct reaction of alcohol to the central nerve cells. That's what makes the drinker gradually increase the dose unconsciously to get drunk and even poisoned. Concentration goes down, emotions rise, and so becomes easily offended.

In the Babar Islands, there is also misuse of sopi. Sopi is widely used as part of alcohol consumption. Sopi is consumed in excessive amounts, especially by teenagers and young people. In the customary rules in the Babar Islands, sopi is a symbol or media; therefore it is drunk in small amounts. Sopi is usually only about a quarter to a third of glass (about one shot glass). Thus, it will not have the effect of

intoxicating or losing consciousness for those who drink it.

There are some cases that occur because of misuse of sopi. To overcome this problem, several villages in the Babar Islands have made rules and sanctions on people who abuse sopi (getting drunk and making trouble or disturbing others). In addition, the process of fostering family and coaching by village officials to residents, especially teenagers and youth, as described by the following respondents:

Villages on Wetang Island have special rules to prevent residents from creating social problems or security problems because of the misuse of sopi.

(Y. Watrimni., elder of Wetang Island)

In the villages of Masela Island, they have made regulations and sanctions for people who drink sopi to get drunk and make noise or cause harm to others.

(F. Lewier, elder of Masela Island)

There are regulations made by the Village Government of Tapa to deal with the misuse of

sopi. For every violation and disturbance of security and order committed by residents due to drunkenness or other reasons, customary sanctions will be given in the form of fines.

(K. Mosse, Elder of Tapa Village, Babar Island)

Education is always started from an early age so that they understand the ancestral values and do not consume sopi carelessly. Sopi is only consumed in certain events or according to the existing context and problems.

(M. Konoralma, traditional leader of the City of Pota Kecil)

Student Responses to Sopi

Based on the questionnaire of open-ended questions filled by high school students on Babar Island it can be identified that all kind of sopi is a familiar product to them. Sopi is a product that can be found in every day in the village where they lived. In general results of the questionnaire are presented in Table 1 as follow.

| No. | Response Aspects | Yes | | No | |
|-----|---|-----|-------|----|-------|
| | | f | % | f | % |
| 1 | Familiar with sopi | 23 | 100 | - | - |
| 2 | Knowing the function of sopi in Traditional rituals | 23 | 100 | - | - |
| 3 | Have participated in or witnessed traditional rituals involving the use of sopi | 23 | 100 | - | - |
| 4 | Had tasted or drank sopi | 8 | 34.78 | 15 | 65.22 |
| 5 | Recognizing the negative impact of sopi | 23 | 100 | - | - |
| 6 | Agree to the term of sopi preservation as a cultural instrument | 21 | 91.30 | 2 | 8.70 |

Table 1 indicates that 100% of high school students on Babar Island are familiar with sopi, its functions, have participated in or witnessed custom events involving the use of sopi, and are aware of the impact of using sopi. As many as 34,78% of students (all male students) have also tasted or drank

sopi. Furthermore 91, 30 % of students agree that sopi remains preserved as a cultural instrument.

The understanding of sopi and its role is relatively good among high school students in the Babar Islands. This can be seen from the students' written responses, as follows.

- Sopi merupakan lambang keluwatan hukum adat (meterai adat).
 Di desa saya, tradisi sopi biasanya ada pada acara pernikahan adat, ~~ada~~
 sasi adat, atau ada yg mengalami perselisihan harus di selesaikan dengan
 menggunakan sopi barulah masalah tersebut di utakan sah atau sudah selesai.
 Karena mereka menganggap bahwa sopi sudah melekat pada keseharian
 hidup mereka, sehingga sopi sangat berperan dan hal² tertentu.

(E. F. R, Grade XI)

di desa saya, tradisi Sopi yang ada hingga saat ini adalah: Sopi
di gunakan Untuk Menyelesaikan Masalah secara adat di rumah " tua,
Untuk Permisahan adat, dan juga acara "BADATI" biasanya Untuk
acara Buka.

(S.M, Grade XI)

From the responses above, it is clear that students understand the meaning and role of sopi in relation to the culture of people in Babar Islands. E.F.R. has an even deeper understanding. According to him, Sopi is a traditional seal or mark which use as a tool to approve the problem solving. This view is clear in

practice when problems are resolved in a customary manner, parties will drink sopi as a sign of commitment to make peace and not repeat the mistakes.

The students are also aware of the impact of excessive of drinking sopi, like it is shown in the following response.

dapat Membuat orang yang ~~menikmati~~ meminum
akan mabok / gangguan Fungsi berpikir
bukan Peracunan, ~~koncentasi~~ konsentrasi menurun,
emosi naik, mudah terlingung dan
Perubahan psikologis dan ingin berkelahi

(R.J, Grade XI)

Sangat negative Sopi adalah: Jika sudah minum Sopi berlebihan, maka
akan kehilangan kesadarannya atau biasanya di sebut dengan istilah "mabuk"

(S.Y.M, Grade XI)

The awareness of the impact on consuming sopi excessively or carelessly is important to prevent misuse of sopi. Sopi should only be used in traditional rituals, marriage proposal, receiving guests, and to resolve problems between residents or villages. Sopi should not be used carelessly, because it will obviously have an impact on health. Excessive use of sopi will also affect the level of awareness and will be able to bring up other social problems. Students' awareness of the negative impact consuming sopi will be able to prevent or reduce misuse of sopi.

Cultural preservation is also very depending on the understanding of teenager as cultural successors. In this regard, the students' perceptions about the preservation of sopi in the culture of people in Babar Islands are also examined. From this study it was found that 91,30 % of students agreed that sopi remained preserved as an important component in the culture of the people in Babar Islands. Some students' written responses related to this matter are as follows.

perlu! karena ^{sopi} adalah minuman
adat yang sangat di perlukan pada
saat Melakukan acara-acara adat, contohnya
pada saat melaksanakan ritual pernikahan
adat, Sopi adat dan juga sebagai
suatu tradisi yang di pakai orang
Babar untuk mendamaikan suatu perha-
ra.

(T.M.M, Grade XI)

Tradisi sopi perlu di pertahankan
 karena itu adalah materi adat yang
 susah ada sejak para adat leluhur
 kami menggunakannya sebagai materi
 adat / alat pemersatu.

(A.I, Grade XI)

The above students' written responses, indicating that sopi is a ritual or cultural component which is very important that need to be preserved, these students understanding on the other side gives hope that there is possibility or space in cultural preservation in the future. But On the other hand, there are also challenges to developing rules, policies, and programs in traditional villages (*lek*) related to efforts to prevent the misuse of sopi, especially among young people.

CONCLUSION

Sopi in the view of the people of the Babar Islands is an important component in social interaction as well as in traditional events and problem solving. Although it can have a negative impact on those who consume sopi excessively, sopi in the culture of the Babar Islands is irreplaceable. Sopi has a very deep meaning, which is a symbol of friendship, appreciation, and family ties. Sopi is also a mark or seal relating to the commitment of the agreement that has been made.

Students' understanding of the Babar Islands about sopi as an important part in culture is relatively good. Students realize that sopi is an important component that cannot be separated from various traditional events and from social relations that are built on villages (*lek*) in the Babar Islands. Students also understand the negative effects that can result from excessive consumption of sopi. Even so, when referring to the fact that there are still many cases of misuse of sopi, then efforts to deal with it seriously need to handle. Educational efforts by families and villages, as well as providing sanctions / punishment against villagers, who misuse sopi, are strategic steps that are expected to work effectively in overcoming misuse of sopi.

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