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Foods and Habits: Indonesian Traditional Foods as a Result of Dutch Colonialism

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Abstract:

Thousands of culture and natural resources are found in our country, Indonesia. Before became independent, Indonesia was ruled by the Dutch in colonialism period. Colonialism not only gave us bad memories, but also gave direct influence into our culture today. In colonialism period, Indonesian had to adapt with the Dutch culture which results an acculturation between both culture. Acculturation influenced every aspects in Bumiputera's life, including food culinary culture and habits. One of the culture and habit that still exist until now is Rijsttafel that serves many kinds of Indonesian traditional food, such as klappertaart, ontbijtkoek, rawon, selat solo, beef smoor, and brenebon ice. All of these dishes are still popular because it is supported by the lifestyle of society where the dishes originated from.

Keywords: *acculturation, culinary, culture, food, rijsttafel, traditional*

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that rich in culture. Before Indonesia got its name, British geographer, James Richardson Logan said that the word 'Indonesia' has acquired various geographical, political, and social meanings. The word 'Indonesia' refers to the vast archipelago because Indonesia has thousands of islands and it is located in the southeast end of mainland Asia. In cultural term, Indonesia meant 'Indian Island', because it was seen as an extension of the Indian subcontinent. 'Further India' is also referred to Dutch's colonial possessions, which they called as Dutch India or Dutch Indies. After the name geographically precise, Europeans called Dutch Indies as Southeast Asia (Brown, 2003).

Indonesia is one of the country in Southeast Asia that was colonized by the Dutch colonialism before gaining their independence. The Dutch who are also called as the Europeans that day, they travel to Indonesia by ships for hours or days of land. The arrival of the Dutch in Indonesia on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was intended to search for spices, such as cloves, nutmeg, and mace. This spices led Europeans to seek a fast sea route to reach Indonesia (Taylor, 2003). In the late sixteenth century, the Dutch arrived in Indonesia and begin to monopoly Indonesian spices. The Dutch established new business venture called Verednidge Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) (Israel, 1998). Colonial period in Indonesia officially begins and take control of the land. In 1900, the Dutch began to open welfare programs, such as Dutch language education and share the governance with the local people once they were already well-educated (Israel, 1998). In that colonialism period, many Dutch people were married with Indonesian women and had a child which then called as The Indo (Taeldeman, 2013). This marriage then led to the acculturation between Indonesia and Dutch.

The Dutch who lived in Indonesia, not only gave a bad influence to the country, but also gave a positive influence in many aspects especially culture. Food is one of the things influenced, where many traditional foods in Indonesia are exists because of the acculturation of both Indonesian and Dutch culture. Now we can see the food that was influenced by Indo-Dutch culture in almost every island in Indonesia. For example, klappertaart and ontbijtkoek as dessert in Manado, brenebon ice from Celebes, solo salad (selat solo), beef smoor (semur daging), beef black soup (rawon) from Java etc. (Alfa, 2016).

2. Food Culture and Consumption

It has been known that during the Dutch colonialism period, a lot of Dutch culture and tradition give a quite big influence towards Indonesian culture. Food acculturation is one of the Dutch colonialism influence in Indonesia. A lot of new food, ingredients, making process, or even serving and eating tradition are introduced to Indonesian citizens during this period of time. One of the example of eating tradition influenced by Dutch in Indonesia is called as *Rijsttafel*. *Rijsttafel* is a term used when several kinds of foods are served in one tabel. The word *rijsttafel* itself came from the Dutch word that means "rice table" (Etossi, 2014). This serving behavior consists of rice as a main dish that served with many side dishes. These side dishes includes vegetable soup, potato croquette, salad, pudding, fruits, breads, pickles, beef, coffee, tea, and so many more. Here, so many elements of various dishes can be combined. All these dishes can be prepared in advance and served later with all of the other dishes. Nowadays *rijsttafel* has been used regularly in Indonesia, such as family dinner or it could also found in traditional padang restaurant. The interaction of Indonesian citizen and Dutch people during the colonialism period is the key to the exchange of behavior between the two. It is known that not only the Dutch give their influence towards Indonesian culture, but also Indonesian culture gives its influence towards their culture just as much. This could happen with the help of the marriage between Indonesian and the Dutch (Rahman, 2011).

Food serving can also be differentiated on some factors, such as occasions and types of the course. There are many types of occasion in Indonesia, such as festive, holidays including national or religious, or everyday. With these various types of occasions, many different kinds of foods involved in this occasion and later become the symbolic food of each occasion. For example klappertaart has been known to be served at a festive or a celebratory occasion. It is usually eaten cold and is served as a desert. Unlike klappertaart, rawon and semur daging are usually served and eaten warm as a main dish. Rawon is usually eaten with a lot of soup in it and is usually eaten with rice and no other side dish. Meanwhile nowadays semur daging is usually eaten with rice and other side dishes like potatoes or other vegetable dishes. It has quite a lot of soup when it is made but usually eaten with only a small amount of soup in it.

3. Klappertaart

Klappertaartis one of the local dishes originated from North Celebes, Manado. The dish is made from coconut, walnuts, and raisins, and it tasted sweet and savory. Klappertaart was created experimentally by elite Dutch ladies during Indonesian colonialism period. They realized that Indonesia had a very huge coconut farm. According to Directorate of History and Traditional Values, in 1984-1985 the most productive commodities were coconut, coffee, and clove. Based on the data, coconut crops reached the highest productivity around 91 tons in a year (65%). At that time coconuts were utilized for copra, oil, coconut milk, and others. Because of this reason, the Dutch women try to cook cake with locals source, that is coconut (Scholten, 2000).

Klappertaart which means coconut cake has gained its wide recognition in Indonesia by the native Indonesian maids (*kokkie*) who worked for elite Dutch family, Indonesian educated aristocrats who become friends with Dutch people, and its massive sales in the market which leads to people's curiosity on how to make it. Many Dutch women also included the Klappertaart recipe on their cook book (Scholten, 2000). The main ingredients to make klappertaart are young coconuts, wheat flour, sugar, egg yolks, fresh milk, butter, eggs white, raisins, and cinnamon. Special ingredient that is added in klappertaart in Manado is walnuts. The taste of walnuts in klappertaart makes the dishes special.

On the other hand, there is relationship between food and culture. Manadonese habits are quite similar with the Dutch, because they like to gather, eat, and celebrate events together with families and friends. The Dutch habit is to gather around with a glass of wine besides eating dishes. This habit leads the manadonese to add rum in purpose of giving some of alcoholic-wine flavor to the klappertaart. Dutch colonization also influences the rum consumption in Indonesia. At first, rum is only consumed as beverage, but as Dutch people love the taste of rum, it becomes included in the ingredients of Klappertaart.



Figure 1: Klappertaart

4. Ontbijtkoek

Ontbijtkoek or ombekuk is a traditional cake from North Celebes. The name 'Ontbijtkoek' is made from two words, 'ontbijt' and 'koek'. 'Ontbijt' means breakfast and 'koek' means cake. From the meaning of the words, it is made to be served in the morning, but in Indonesia, ombekuk can be eaten wherever and whenever we like. Ombekuk is made from various spices,

such as ginger, clove, and cinnamon. This cake is cooked without margarine, butter, or oil. All spices contained in ombekuk makes it rich in aroma and could really improve its flavor. It has dry texture because the cake is not made with fat. Because of the texture, many years ago people eat it as a bread filler. People usually fill ombekuk inside the white bread with margarine spread. In the actual recipe, they made ombekuk with black flour mixture, but here in Indonesia they make ombekuk with wheat flour. Palm sugar is chosen by Indonesian people to make ombekuk, whereas previously, people used brown sugar as a natural coloring. Ombekuk is served in the form of sponge cake with toppings, such as almond, sesame, raisins, and chocolate chips (Odi, 2014) .



Figure 2: Oenbijtkoek

5. Rawon (Beef Black Soup)

Beef black soup or rawon is originated from Surabaya, East Java. This traditional soup is made from bean sprout, sambal, and black nuts or in Javanese called kluwek. All of the ingredients combination leads to its distinct black colour and strong nutty flavor (Kementerian Luar Negeri , 2015). Rawon is usually served with warm rice and boiled bean sprout. Indonesian people loves to eat side dishes, such as *kerupuk*, salted egg, and sweet fried beef or *empal*. In the making of rawon, beef is boiled and cut into small pieces. Combination of spices that is used in rawon is onion, garlic, galangal, coriander turmeric, black nuts, and many more. Several other spices, citrus leaves and lemon grass is added in to act as flavorings agent. First, all the spices are sauteed until the aroma is appearing. The beef is cooked with the sauteed spices and beef broth. Nowadays, rawon is not only can be found in Java, but also on another islands. It categorizes as everyday traditional food, but not really served in special occasion.



Figure 3: Rawon

6. Selat solo

Solo salad or selat solo is a steak mimicry that is popular in Mangkunegaran and Kraton Kasunanan Solo. The word Salad in Solo salad is referred to the vegetables contained in this dish, that has the appearance resembling to salad. Salad is one of the western food, but in Indonesia Selat solo is made with a hint of soy sauce that characterized the Central Java society (Baskoro, Selat Solo, Perpaduan Makanan Barat Bercita Rasa Tradisional, 2015). People who live in Java, especially East Java is really identical with sweet foods. It is said when colonialism began in Indonesia, spices were expensive and the locals then changed spices with other ingredient. Palm sugar source and production in Indonesia back then was massive, that is why Indonesian replaced spices in the dishes with palm sugar (Baskoro, 2015).

Selat solo is made with several ingredients, such as slices of meat, boiled beans and carrot, potato, pickled, mayonaisse which only made by boiled yolk (Utami, 2012). The sauce is made from beef broth, garlic, nutmeg, onions, peppers, and soy sauce (Fitria, 2011). Selat Solo now popular in other Java islands, for example in Jakarta. There are several restaurant that serves Selat Solo to restore the Javanese people longing for their traditional food.



Figure 4: Selat Solo

7. Beef Smoor (Indonesian Stew)

Beef smoor or in Indonesia we call it as *Semur Daging*, was named by the Dutch when they ruled Indonesia in the colonialism period. Semur daging was invented by the Indo-Dutch in 1600. Several Indonesian women works as a maid, or at that time was called as *kokkie* in the Dutch family. Dutch women gave their recipe called hachee to their *kokkie*. Hachee is European food that contains Dutch beef and onion stew that is cooked with small fire or this technique was called '*smoren*'. The word 'semur' was taken from this cooking technique, '*smoren*'. *Kokkie* who cooked semur daging added soy sauce, pepper, and clove to increase the aroma. This recipe is received by the Dutch women and then added into the cookbook, named Groot Nieuw Oost-Indisch Volledig Kookboek that published in 1902. They listed six semur recipe in the cookbook, such as semur ayam 1, 2, and 3, semur ayam Banjar, semur ayam Banten, and semur ayam Solo (Oktaviano, 2013).

Semur daging was made by many kinds of Indonesian spices, such as candlenut, coriander, cinnamon, cumin, nutmeg, and cloves. The dish is served in special Indonesian occasion that is Moslem holy day called Idul Fitri. In Betawi tribes, they eat semur daging with uduk rice or rice which made by santan, or with white rice. Semur daging categorizes as special food that is served in special occasion as it is mentioned above (Fit, 2014).



Figure 5: Beef Smoor

8. Brenebon Ice

Brenebon ice is an ice dish that can be found in Gorontalo, North Celebes. The word 'brenebon' is came from the Dutch for *bruine* and *bonen*. Bruine means brown, while *bonen* means beans, thus *bruine bonen* means "brown beans" or "red beans". For North Celebes people, red beans or brenebon is commonly used as a main ingredient for soup dish. But as time goes by, brenebon is also used for ice dish. Brenebon ice contained of red beans, pudding, condensed milk, and shaved ice (Aminah, 2016) . Brenebon is usually served in Moslem holy day called Ramadhan or Idul Fitri.



Figure 6: Brenebon Ice

9. Dutch Culture in Indonesian Culinary

The strengthen of Dutch culture hegemony in Indonesian culinary resulting Indo-Dutch foods is still well known by Indonesian citizen until this day. Strengthening Dutch culture hegemony has been done for many years through foods and the growing of advance transportation system. For example, canned food and groceries such as butter, oil, and flour are introduced through newspaper advertisements and through recipes that have been published in the household section of the newspaper. The growth of advance transportation system has helped the process of food distribution, so the Dutch culture can be recognized by Indonesians.

Furthermore, the strengthen hegemony is done through the introduction of cooking technology (Berkum, N.V., 1921) on the column of household newspaper. In the columns, there are a lot of information on how to process food well. The strengthen Dutch culture hegemony can not be separated from the active role of the Indonesian native people, usually called Bumiputera. Bumiputera accept it without leaving the local genius, so the result from the strengthening Dutch culture hegemony brings up a new culture as a result of the mixing of Bumiputera and Dutch culture.

The upper middle class families in Dutch east indies at that time mostly have chefs from Bumiputera women which also called as *kokkie*. In 1930, Dutch women held cooking courses for Bumiputera chefs (Nordholt, 2005). In addition, Dutch women are encouraged and expected to be role models for their maids to improve their skill. There is also *Roemah Tangga* school, whose teachers are European and Eurasian women. *Roemah Tangga* school encourage upper middle class Bumiputera to follow the culinary habits of Dutch society.

The influence of Dutch culture in Indonesian culinary can be seen from the various foods consumed by the Bumiputera before Dutch culture influences them. The culinary culture of the Dutch east indies varied considerably. Race based classification has an impact on people's eating patterns and habits. Luxury lifestyle deliberately created by the Dutch to show their social status, including in their eating culture (Rahman, 2011).

The influence of Dutch culture appears on the presentation of various foods that were originally only found in the series of ceremonies. The food served in the ceremony already has a certain meaning, so it can only be found at certain times. However, in the 1900s, there was a shift in the function of existing food, where the values of food functions were no longer only seen as tradition and religious values, but also more commercially functioned so they could be enjoyed anytime, and by anyone.

10. Conclusion

Food culture is one of the positive effect of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. Various food derived from Dutch culture, such as klappertaart, ontbijtkoek, rawon, selat solo, beef smoor, and brenebon ice. The dishes are usually served at *rijsttafel* way and special ceremony. Nowadays, all the dishes no longer seen as traditional values, but also use as commercial value. The process of strengthening Dutch culture hegemony can not be separated from the active role of the Indonesian native people, usually called Bumiputera. Bumiputera accept it without leaving the local genius, so the result from the process of strengthening Dutch culture hegemony brings up a new culture as a result of the mixing of Bumiputera and Dutch culture.

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