

RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUES IN CULINARY TRADITION WITHIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF WEST KALIMANTAN

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ABSTRACT

*The article aims to explore culinary traditions that penetrate the public space, which does not give room for tolerance because it has to deal with the rules of Islamic law. Food is perceived as being in binary opposition: having an integration effect or being a social conflict resolution. Food is presented in the public space as a duplication of scriptural sources, a marker of tradition, an ecological balancing argument, and an indication of social shift. This paper confirms that dining traditions have an Islamic ideology. It is indicated by the *ijab qabul* phenomenon that accompanies the culinary tradition procession as an entity enriching the concept of *fiqh* among people living in coastal areas. In addition, eating and its traditions affect environmental conflict resolution in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan. The traditions of food, land, houses, gatherings, and reciting prayers for safety are all important ethnic characteristics in West Kalimantan. These five entities, which are perceived by the people of Kalimantan as provisions for life, have proven to be of no subjective values; they are reserved only for anyone with productive land. However, farm products in the form of food are also distributed to anyone in need. When someone has fulfilled the *ber-saro'an* (the invitation to eat; *berontang* or *saprahan*) in a village, they are no longer treated as "strangers". This tradition is not only about eating, but also with the emergence of variants of Islamic *fiqh* in coastal areas, indicating psychological values.*

Keywords: Psychological Values; Culinary Traditions; Local Communities; West Kalimantan

INTRODUCTION

The academic debate at the focus of this article stems from the research of

Varadaraja V. Raman (2014)¹ who provocatively stated that food is *sine qua non* for life on Earth. This issue triggers a discussion about the theme of food, leading to both religious and historical dimensions. Consuming food has proven to be highly motivated by minority religions (Mumuni at.al, 2018). This fact indicates the complexity of the food chain and ecological balance, which is one of the wonders of the culinary world that is related to esoteric values. In the context of the span of the history of human civilization, food has been found to have countless regional expressions and varieties. Food has been commonly used in festivities, but on the other hand, food shortages and poor distribution have also led to famine. It is reasonable to say that in addition to being a source of physical satisfaction, food also has an environmental impact.

Concerns about food have spread across cultures and civilizations. In the pre-modern era, ethical issues surrounding food focused on issues related to the way food is consumed, whereas modern food ethics focuses on food production. When referring to this idea, there are at least three main trends in food ethics. The first two trends are genealogical to pre-modern traditions, including the legalization of religion and concerns about food. The third trend is a modern trend that brings food closer to the social, economic, trade, and political frames.

Most pre-modern food ethics focuses on dietetics, namely managing life according to self-made rules. Dietetics currently relies on measuring body weight and levels of anxiety, problems labelling, and consumer awareness about food product ingredients. Another trend surrounding food production is related to the contamination of food with hazardous substances, and even considered *haram* (forbidden); rejected products are considered intrinsically bad. In addition, there are also new forms of contamination in the form of pesticides, preservatives, and genetically modified products. Therefore, dietetics refers to caution for health reasons over ethical reasons.

Regarding this issue of food, the Islamic world faces problems not only because of threats to health and the environment but also because food has been transformed into a tool used by transnational culinary superpowers and a source of food raw ingredients to monopolize the food industry. The culinary industry controls the largest share of the world's economy. The most serious issue is that until the end of the 20th century, there was no guarantee of

¹ Varadaraja V. Raman. (2014). Food: Its Many Aspects in Science, Religion, and Culture with Pat Bennett, "Turning Stones into Bread: Developing Synergistic Science/Religion Approaches to the World Food Crisis"; Varadaraja V. Raman, "Food: Its Many Aspects in Science, Religion, and Culture"; A. Whitney Sanford, "Why We Need Religion to Solve the World Food Crisis"; and Steven M. Finn, "Valuing Our Food: Minimizing Waste and Optimizing Resources." *Journal of Religion and Sciences*. Volume 49, Issue 4. December. Pages 958-976.

“safe consumption” regarding food sources that were sold freely in the market. Contrary to this idea, the phenomenon of *halāl* food consumption in non-Muslim countries is a relatively new discussion, which is then known as the term ‘modern *halāl*’. Modern *halāl* is a concept that refers to the complexity of the relationship between markets, industry, religious institutions, and international trade in determining the standardization of *halāl* foods. It seems that economic corporations were not only established for capital gains but also to control and even dictate food production on a global scale. At the same time, we may also suspect the emergence of a food regime that is produced locally but in more sustainable agricultural practices and with greater control over food sources in the public sector.

UNSETTLED DEBATE ON DINING TRADITION

Gareth Reginald Terence White (et.al., 2018) argued that food production and distribution is a topic of interest. Meanwhile, Johan Fischer (2012) stated that the global market is currently developing the *halal* product industry rapidly within the framework of the global economic system with various interpretations: pros and cons. Fischer’s statement triggers the hypothesis that *halāl* products have transformed into a new market segment, although it implies anxiety because they cannot avoid the potential to prioritize economic profit motives.

The same issue was also discussed in a study conducted by Jagadeesan Premanandh and Samara bin Salem (2017) which indicated that there had been improper business practices in product packaging. The operational complexity surrounding *halal* authentication poses serious challenges to the integrity of packaged products. At the very least, Shahriar Kabir (2015), Gabriel Said Reynolds (2000) and Mohamed Battour et.al (2011) attempted to remind people that Islamic law pays great attention to food. Discussing a similar theme, a study by Ali Motamedzadegan, Saeedeh Ebdali, Joe M. Regenstein, Muhammad Siddiq, and Mark A. Uebersax (ed., 2018) examined food from the perspective of food commercialization with various discourses. Similarly, Tullia Tedeschi et.al (2018) through their research predicted that in recent years, interest in the authenticity of food ingredients is increasing. Once again, this fact has further proven that the problem of food is not a simple issue. It is proven that the food issue determines the personal and environmental safety of mankind in the world.

The various statements above should make many people aware of the concerns about the commercialization of food that uses religious issues as the motive behind the business activity. The issue of food commercialization still seems

to be an interesting theme to be discussed. We suspect that this motive is what strengthens a group of people who are trying hard to build a business empire that promises “big profits” because there is also a large market share by utilizing religious issues as its legal support. Carolyn Rouse & Janet Hoskins (2004) reported that contemporary African-American sympathizers of Sunni Islam consciously articulate eating and food as “something” that liberates them from the legacy of slavery, and convey the idea of purification. This research is also related to the health of the body and the release of the negative mental effects of non-*halal* foods. This research provides a new perspective that eating is not merely to fulfil physical demands, but it also “liberates” and serves as an expression of psychological purification and an effective way of mental-spiritual health.

Through her research using a bioethical approach, Mariam al-Attar (2017) criticized several Islamic approaches to culinary ethics and the debate about genetically modified foods. Al-Attar’s research has made many people aware of how important the authenticity of the food is because the current fact shows that there are so many improper practices in food processing and production. Moreover, a study by Richard Tapper and Nancy Tapper (1986) explained that food has become an important part of the tradition of the Islamic-Afghan society because it is connected with maintaining recognition of Islamic authority and camouflaging power relations. To them, the meaning of food has undergone a semantic change that leads to the ambiguity inherent in the values of “kindness” and “strength,” symbolism of blood relations, and ritual sacrifices. This research opens a new debate space in which food can bridge social relations, although it is still on a symbolic level. However, what should be noted is when food turns out to be able to form a bond of brotherhood from several people who were previously not connected through kinship ties. Food is proven to be effective in forming kinship networks as a brotherhood is bound from breastfeeding relationships.

A different study conducted by Kecia Ali (2015) concluded that in the debate around religious thought, there are traditions that seek to link food with gender; food practices, and gender norms as communal identities and boundaries of social construction. This research argues that women’s bodies and animal bodies serve as very strong markers of Muslim identity. This is because patriarchal thinking emphasizes male dominance and simultaneously allows humans to see animals as legitimate subjects of violence. According to Kecia Ali, the above statement implies that Muslims in industrialized Western countries must become vegetarians. On the other hand, for contemporary Muslims, meat is perceived as the identity of the superiority of “Islam”. The

statement that Muslims in industrialized Western countries must become vegetarians is certainly full of controversy, and even tends to be illogical. Similar research was also conducted by Rose Wellman (2017) that reported that in Iran, food is perceived as having the value of piety, kinship, purity, and closeness to God. The case of Iran opens our awareness to consider the full spectrum of quality, such as the act of kinship, nation, blood, and its relationship with food that has divine values.

The research of Daniele Mathras et al (2016) and Kishwar Khan and Sarwssat Aftab (2000) is an interesting example of how the environment can be created for the benefit of consumer protection based on Islamic teachings. The emphasis of this research is on consumer protection rights for all food products circulating in the market openly. From another point of view, using a gender perspective, Carla Jones (2010) concluded that the issues of consumer behavior are mostly faced by fashionable women in Indonesia. The problem is concerned with matters related to the material but superficial in religious appearance. Finally, from a very different perspective from several previous studies, Michel Desjardins' research (2004) presented a teaching strategy that involves using food media with games in the classroom to change moods and encourage students to skilfully relate food to religion. This research experimented with using food as one of the strategies that can be taken to support learning activities through psychological stimulation in students. This research again proved that food has a broad impact on the object of research in various aspects and themes that can be studied.

This article uses the method of literature review, indigenous psychology, psycho-anthropology, and narrative analysis, which was based on research conducted throughout 2020. This article describes various data in several areas in West Kalimantan including Sanggau Regency, Sekadau Regency; Nanga Taman-Sekadau Hulu Subdistrict, Mulia Hamlet of Sebus Village in Paloh Subdistrict of Sambas Regency and Semakuan Hamlet of Semanga' Village in Sejangkung Subdistrict of Sambas Regency and Kubu Village of Kubu Raya Regency. To obtain accurate data, the following respondents were selected: village heads, hamlet heads, traditional leaders, and community elites as reliable sources. There are eleven reliable respondents with three additional respondents. To determine the respondents from the community, the snowball purposive sampling method was used. All respondents are natives in each research site who have a good understanding of the community and can provide accurate information related to the research theme. The data were collected using various techniques, such as in-depth interviews, psycho-anthropological observations supported by narrative analysis, and

documentation of facts found at the research site.

FOOD AND THE MODERN HUMAN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

Food is an essential part of life. Food affects human psychology. Historically, food has often been a serious problem faced by society. Discourse in modern society indicates that there is anxiety about the food consumed. Food is no longer made using natural raw ingredients, not to mention the concern about contamination from harmful chemicals. Meanwhile, modern women who work outside the home often choose to serve processed and fast food because of the demands of the profession and at the same time find it difficult to allocate time to do domestic chores. In addition, many housewives help their husbands work hard to fulfil the needs of their families.

In a broader aspect, there are so many issues about food scarcity. Another worrying threat is panic buying for certain products for various reasons, especially during this current pandemic time. Many people and families have to struggle with this problem individually and communally. In contrast to the people in coastal areas, those living in the upstream stretch of the river and the interior of West Kalimantan have many local traditions that can overcome various food problems communally during food shortages. Working together to overcome food difficulties is known by the terms such as *berontang* in Melawi Regency, *arisan persatuan*, and *saprahan* in Sambas Regency, which are some interesting examples of food-related traditions. It is certain that almost all villages, from the coastal to the border to remote areas, have many traditions where food is the central point.

In a specific context, concerning the relationship between food and health, food poisoning has emerged as a health problem and the most frightening source of disease (Shariatifar et al., 2016). Ensuring food hygiene is a crucial issue across the globe. The most widely used hazardous materials in product mixtures are *khinzir* derivatives. In this context, the term *khinzir* according to the pharmacist's perspective refers to "additives" in food, vitamins, and drugs (Amr, 2009). Food contamination has become a worrying new problem in recent years. Pollution and contamination can occur due to natural factors, work accidents, or other factors that are difficult to control such as during processing and production. This factor has the potential to reduce the quality of production.

Other concerns about food also involve the slaughtering process as an important part of the process of serving food ingredients, namely the management of handling animals before slaughter without hurting the animals through

restraining, stunning, and casting. Technological developments, especially the stunning method before slaughter, have been declared to fulfil the element of *ihsan* to animals, namely by eliminating pain during slaughter (Shukriya, 2019). Meanwhile, from the Sufistic perspective, food is not only related to the category of legality in religion but is also related to the routine of spiritual practice (Reynolds, 2000). At this point, eating ranges from the spectrum of piety to *halāl* tourism (Battour et.al, 2011). As an illustration, the *halal* industry in Thailand has become one of the largest exporters of *halal*-certified food and products in the Southeast Asian region despite Thailand being a non-Muslim majority country. Only 4.3 percent of Thailand's 69 million people are Muslim. This shows that Thailand's strong position in the global *halal* industry is due to the tourism industry, which helps to improve *halal* branding, uniformity of halal definitions and standards, as well as effective support for local Small and Medium Enterprises (Khan, 2019).

In another perspective, the discourse around food is connected with brand identification and decision-making to consume food products. This can be seen from the coherence between the fatwa and decision-making regarding the prohibited consumption of food of certain brands or product categories (Muhammad & Mizerski, 2013). This assumption is based on the increasing number of the Muslim population and the increasing purchasing power of Muslim communities in the Asia Pacific zone where the halal food market is emerging as a potential opportunity for meat producers. The strict requirements of *halāl* standards to potential markets are challenging globally (Kabir, 2015). This fact awakens many parties about the effect of religion on consumer behaviour. Religion as a multidimensional construct influences psychology through four dimensions – belief, rituals, values, and community. Furthermore, religious affiliation encourages different psychological mechanisms when faced with issues regarding consumptive behaviour (Mathras et.al, 2016).

Several themes related to food make it clear that human life is to a certain degree challenged by food. Food has expanded to unimaginable limits. There are so many new territories that were previously considered non-food domains. For example, the relationship between food and halal tourism, contamination of food production, the slaughter of animals, a mixture of processed food products, the formation of a lifestyle, etc. Keeping this in mind, at least the psychology of the public has been mapped out when facing the challenges of the modern era regarding the provision of food sources. Food seems to be in a position of the struggle between the supply of food sources amid a crisis of limited agricultural land, land conversion, climate change, flows of human

movement, the threat of chemical use, the continued escalation of food needs, which almost always fail to meet the food production targets. This situation is made worse by the scarcity of food sources. If this problem continues, then the end is predictable. Soon people in the world will plunge into anxiety about the food crisis.

Currently, in this open era, new problems arise in the form of the threat of invasion of “foreign” food from global food-producing regions [countries] to the target areas of the global food market. This challenge is certainly no simple matter. Presenting food in a competitive format in such a free market is certainly not a way out of the food crisis which most people in the world are still struggling with. At this point, it is hard to imagine that there is still a group of people who are trying to maintain traditional food during a global food rush that is completely indifferent to local “tastes”. If this condition is left unchecked, it will immediately destroy the identity of local food. Even worse, it is very likely that there will be a reduction in tradition and culinary culture amid global food domination. *Saprahan, berontang, nyelamat*, and many more local food-related traditions are in danger of disappearing from the local community. It could be that, shortly, dishes such as *bubbor paddas*, typical cuisine of the Sambas Malay community, *sungkui* and *lemang* as icons of the Sanggau Malay community, *dodol*, and *gula durian, lamboi, umbut rotan*, and *tempoyak* typical dishes of Nanga Taman Village in Sekadau Hulu and countless other local foods of Borneo will soon be lost if not passed on to the next generation. This is a real threat. It is common when a struggle for dominance occurs. However, there is still a heritage of history that has proven to be able to survive to date. Bread, cheese, chocolate, tea, coffee are some interesting examples of “leftovers” from the struggle for dominance among humans. All these foods [and drinks] are silent witnesses to the dominance of civilization in the arena of human history.

ISLAMIC ELEMENTS IN THE DINING TRADITION OF BORNEO PEOPLE

The essence of food does not merely serve to “fulfil” basic human needs. Discussions about food include the raw materials for making food: spices, cooking utensils, recipes, the ways food is cooked [boiled, fried, baked, stir-fried, roasted, etc], how food is served, important events that come with special foods, ornament and equipment in processing and serving food. Unquestionably, there are many more dimensions related to food. All of the above are so varied and have their characteristics in each society. All these variants grow along with the social response to how to treat food. All of them

are tinted by the human psychological atmosphere. The way of interpreting the relationship between human psychology, food, and its availability in nature gives rise to various forms of expressive representation of food.

Furthermore, in the context of sources of the fulfilment of food needs, food is closely related to natural wealth. In the context of this article, it covers coastal, inland, and border areas, namely Semakuan Hamlet of Sambas Regency which is on the side of the upper Sambas river, Nanga Taman Village in the upper Sekadau river, and Semanget-Entikong Village in Sanggau Regency which borders Malaysia. These places have since long ago been known to have so many food-related traditions. All of these cultures grow in open community relations. In the process, religion also played a role in confirming the form of this relationship.

In this regard, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasojo (2017) emphasized that the acculturation of local culture and Islam have occurred since the arrival of Islam into the interior of Kalimantan through the Kapuas River. This acculturation also encourages the birth of local religious institutions that function to ensure the survival of the community system among indigenous peoples who still embrace local religions but already have kinship networks, Islamic trade, da'wah, and local knowledge. Furthermore, Zaenuddin emphasized that there has been a relationship between local traditions and culture on the one hand and Islam on the other. This relationship can be seen from the prayer rituals in wedding traditions and religious ceremonies. It can also be seen from the food served at *walimahan* (wedding reception). In addition, there is also improvisation in terms of food that has been adapted to the local culture of the Sintang community with a very distinctive banquet.

In another article, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasojo et.al (2019) described that cultural issues and inter-ethnic relations are important for the people of West Kalimantan by including local potentials that develop in the interior areas after the collapse of several Islamic sultanates that succeeded in bringing Islam to this area. Some forms of local potentials that are compatible with Islam in the local community include the belief in culinary arts that strengthen brotherhood, cultural heritage traditions for friendship with nature as the key to success, offspring as a gift that should be treasured, welcoming guests as the key to happiness as well as hard work and good manners. That said, Zaenuddin gave a new perspective on food. First, food is a form of acculturation of local culture with Islam. There are so many local people's foods that are influenced by Islamic traditions. Second, the food of West Kalimantan's local people always comes with a purpose. Food is interpreted by local people in West Kalimantan as an effective way of strengthening brotherhood. In addition, food can have a

special meaning which is different from the stereotypical perception that has been circulating about food.

In his research on the wealth of food in the Muslim community of Borneo, Ibrahim (2018) described the *Pangil* tradition in the Malay-Muslims in Ulu Kapuas, West Kalimantan. This tradition shows that the balance of life is highly respected by the Malay-Muslim community in this region. This can be seen from the context of rituals that are filled with dining, reciting the Qur'an, and praying for their ancestors. Ibrahim concluded that the *Pangil* ceremony teaches four things; the value of gratitude to God (*nyelamat*), sharing joys and sorrows (*nyelamat* and *beruwah*), social equality (ceremonial meal procession); and togetherness and mutual assistance (holding traditional events).

Through this research, Ibrahim stressed the urgency of rituals to achieve life balance which is uniquely pursued through dining, reciting the Qur'an, and praying. Ibrahim's research has a similar theme to this article, supporting the argument that the tradition of dining and ceremonial meal procession [as an expression of social equality] is the fastest way to achieve balance in life. Once again, this proves that in food there are essential values that determine life and human values. Eating is no longer interpreted merely as a means "to sustain life" but to achieve balance in life.

Should this be the case, it is very unreasonable that food is perceived merely as a means to fulfil a need. In food, there is a divine value and a sense of purification. Food also indicates Islamic education on the procedures for "treating" food. Food has become a topic of conversation and even the most spectacular point of civilization in the history of humanity. Perhaps important issues that have become the central point of human civilization from prehistoric to post-modern era will [continue to] be filled with and dominated by stories about food. Such discourse on food can even beat other conversations even though the theme is still part of the discussion on the theme of humanity. In the future, food will probably dominate the trending topics of netizens throughout the world. These indications have emerged for a long time since humans realized that food not only concerns physical dimensions and the fulfilment of human needs but moreover it also has proven to be an important element of humanity and has even been filled with the meaning of devotion and servitude to God. In this context, fasting is the best example.

The discourse on food has long been discussed in every religion of the world. Historically, food is not just an issue of human life. Food has been able to penetrate the "divine zone", and therefore, it is very natural that it is often used as a medium for various rituals of worship. The practice of paying zakat and food alms in the form of typical staple foods of each region, providing food

for the poor and needy, etc., can be used as interesting examples to explain this phenomenon. Food seems to mediate human relationships with God. Meanwhile, religion has conversely become the instrument of determining whether certain foods can be consumed or vice versa, along with the types of criteria. The more diverse the religious followers, the greater the pattern and spectrum of food consumption. Even in some parts, the scriptures of these religions give more weight to food. Food that was originally from the “low world” is then given a “high” weight when it relates to the dimension of servitude to God. Even to “hold” oneself from consuming halal food at certain times is perceived as part of one’s “test of faith” before God.

In a specific discussion about food, Islam introduces the concept of *halalan thayyiba* in setting standards for the quality of foods and drinks. This standard is not only for the sake of considering the ethical values and the sanctity of the two entities, but it is also closely related to the ethical values of divinity. Here, food has been transformed from being related to “the world and all the needs of humans” to being elevated to the “interpretation” in the divine sense. Food is no longer a profane dimension but has penetrated the world of divine immanence. In light of this perspective, it can be interpreted that food is not just a primary and basic human need which Maslow (1993) places as the lowest level of needs. It is proven that food is at the highest significance of human needs or at least higher than the hierarchy of needs as Maslow explains. The reason is simply that food is proven to be related to divine values. There is an argument that is being built by Allah the Almighty to teach humans how to consume foods and drinks. Education is in the form of building human awareness that food is not just to fulfil basic human needs but moreover it has a level of purity and a means to draw closer to Allah the Almighty.

Considering the awareness of the significance of food, there are so many traditions as a way of articulating this. In many cultures, it is known that various traditions include food in the context of one’s approach to Allah. Certainly, almost all activities connected with Allah include food. Take, for example, the *saprahan* [*saroan*] event in the Sambas Malay community. Some of the food ingredients are made available through *arisan persatuan* (social gathering). This tradition is typical of the Sambas Malay custom. Such a social gathering is a very interesting part of a series of *saprahan* events. The *arisan* is held to ease and facilitate those who hold the *Saprahan*. This gathering takes place in turns. In addition to the host holding the event, others voluntarily “pay” for the social gathering with items such as cash, sugar, syrup, eggs, etc. Later when it is another person’s turn to hold the event, the recipient of these items pays following what their invited neighbors brought to them or how

much the neighbors “paid” for in the previous event. If the payment is made in cash, the amount is by the “price” of the items paid by the neighbors before.

The *Saprahan* is always held in every series of traditions in the Sambas Malay community, such as house warming parties, marriages, social gatherings, thanksgiving, *aqiqah*, *tahlilan* for the deceased, etc. During wedding receptions, housewarming parties, and an *aqiqah* ceremony, there are a series of events as follows: on the first day, the “*acara mumbu*” (preparing spices) is held where people grind peanut, *keminting*, and coconut as spices for cuisine. On the second day, the “*acara motong*” (cutting meat) is held where they cut chicken and fish. Also on this second day in the afternoon, the guests bring chicken and rice to the host, and some members of the social gathering bring food such as beef, coconut, rice, other staples (eggs, sugar, syrup). On the third day, “*acara makan-makan*” (a dining event) is held.

There is no requirement for everyone in the village to join the *arisan* (social gathering). Attendance is also optional. In the *arisan*, all planned events to be held in the village are recorded, such as *aqiqah*, housewarming party, wedding reception.² All events are scheduled. No events are left unrecorded. It aims to avoid scheduling conflicts of the event. This is also a sign that there is no overlapping time for the *Saprahan* event. Everything is carefully planned. In addition, the village community can also be prepared to bring complementary items that will be “paid” before the *Saprahan* event is held at a fixed schedule.

“*Arisan persatuan*” (social gathering) is not just an ordinary social gathering. This “*arisan*” – as the name implies – was formed to establish strong unity, friendship, and cooperation in a village. “*arisan persatuan*” has been confirmed to exist in all villages in Sambas Regency. However, there is no official data on the number of these social gatherings in Sambas Regency. This gathering is funded through voluntary donations from residents. The funding system is in the form of food items, such as staple foods (eggs, sugar, milk, cooking oil, rice, coconut, and beef). Especially for beef, the value is determined based on the price per kilogram depending on the financial conditions of the person in the *arisan* when planning to hold the *saprahan*.

Membership of “*arisan persatuan*” is based on the number of household heads in the village. Each head of the household counts as one member. However, there are also more memberships from one household depending on the

² Within the Sambas Melay tradition, *saprahan* accompanying the *ngalek rumah* practice has the same level of public attention like the wedding party. In many cases the people may have the *ngalek rumah* for three days in a row. The *saprahan* and *ngalek rumah* carry not only party message but also beyond food such as kinship, togetherness and equality. The *arisan persatuan* is normally found with the participation of all village members and, in many cases, with people from the neighboring villages.

household's financial conditions. This is because in the "*arisan persatuan*" there is a tradition of reciprocal payments usually in the form of food items that a person receives from other villagers when holding a *saprahan*. But something is interesting about this reciprocal payment. When a member "pays" for this *arisan*, the host of the *saprahan* is allowed to negotiate the items brought to him by the villagers. Negotiation for the number of food items received is adjusted to the recipient's "ability to pay" because the amount of the items currently received by the host of the *Saprahan* will later be paid back to the villagers who brought the items to the host.

Beef, in particular, is treated quite differently, as its value is determined based on the total weight per kilogram at the time it is brought to the host. If it is paid in cash, it will be adjusted to the price of the meat at the time the *Saprahan* is held. For staple foods, it can be paid in cash equivalent to the price of the foods that were received or replaced with similar items.

Uniquely, all the items paid for in this "*arisan persatuan*" are well recorded. All circulations of goods, food items, and cash are accurately documented, although there is no requirement for everyone to "pay" for the *arisan* in each *saprahan*. Everything occurs voluntarily. Usually, those who are unable to make payment to the *arisan* are not required to do so during the *saprahan*. However, the person can pay for it in the next event. This condition is determined according to the ability to pay agreed upon by both parties.

In addition, what makes this "*arisan*" unique is that there is a philanthropic attitude and empathy. If the host wishes to serve beef cuisine by slaughtering a cow, then the people in the village will "bear" the cost together. The willingness to "bear" the cost aims to help the host with the *Saprahan* event, even though the host does not have sufficient funds. On the other hand, if a host slaughters a cow at their own expense, it will certainly help the members of the "*arisan*" who cannot afford such luxury.

To finance the "*arisan*" everything is divided equally. Slaughtering the cow, for instance, can be done at a particular member's own expense, but all members are still required to pay the price of the cow in cash by the selling price of beef at the time the *Saprahan* is held. The amount of cash is determined based on the price of per-kg of beef, which had previously been agreed upon by both parties. The price that must be paid later when it is another member's turn to hold the *Saprahan* is determined based on the amount of beef that each member brings to the host. If it is replaced with cash, the payment for the price of beef is determined based on the market price of beef at the time the *Saprahan* is held. The same is true for the payment of staples.

Even though the “*arisan persatuan*” is closely related to the principles of togetherness, cooperation, and tolerance among residents, it is still not allowed to burden both parties: the host holding the event and the people who donate. Everything happens on the principle of voluntary reciprocity. No one is deprived of their rights. Everything happens fairly but *arisan* members will understand if one of them has economic problems, especially in certain months when it involves quite a lot of people. At this point, it seems *Saprahan* is the turning point of the “*arisan*”, continuing to hold it will result in the inability of people in the village to bear the cost.

To add to its unique aspects, the “*arisan persatuan*” assists not only members of the same cultural and religious backgrounds, but also those from different religious, cultural, and ethnic groups. In every *Saprahan*, cultural, ethnic, and even religious boundaries are almost non-existent. Everything is in a fluid psychological relationship. When villagers of different religions need cash or goods, the community members in the village voluntarily work together to help them even when they no longer live in the village because they have moved to another village (*ngalek rumah*).

During data collection on the research site, there was a non-Muslim family who had just arrived from Malaysia because they worked as migrant workers there. They were residents in the “S” village in Sambas Regency. Their family left the village and settled in Malaysia for a while. When they returned to the village, their neighbors brought them some cash. The money was the result of selling fruit and farm products belonging to the family who left the village and worked in Malaysia. Interestingly, the Sambas Malay villagers who live in the “S” village discovered the money they gave to the family returning from Malaysia was actually used for inviting the villagers for their homecoming traditional celebration.

Another surprising fact is that the *saprahan* tends to be inclusive and there are tight social clusters. Based on the data collected from the research site, the *saprahan* and its introductory activities have a very close relationship between Islam and the tradition of “*arisan persatuan*”. The process begins with delivering the foodstuff to be served in the *saprahan*. It is usually brought by women from their respective homes to the host who holds the *saprahan*. At the same time, men bring cooking utensils and silverware for the *saprahan*. Some of them even make *tarup* and prepare fire stoves to cook dishes.

At the time of handing the food to the host, the women were seen shaking hands with the host [holder of the *saprahan* event] and saying: “*itok kamek sararah barras, palak, talluk to make food for tok sapprahan tok ii*”. The sentence uttered in the Sambas Malay language is a statement of consent (*ijab qabul*)

between the two parties, the contributor and the receiver. This “*ijab qabul*” is certainly not an “ordinary” tradition. It is not found anywhere else. This tradition has also been confirmed to be found only in Muslim communities. It also confirms that communal dining tradition indicates strong Islamic values. In many places, giving items intended for improving relations is not accompanied by *ijab qabul*. Rice, in particular, is treated differently; the host has prepared a kind of basket or container that will be used for storing the rice brought by villagers. This “*ijab qabul*” is a sign of “paying off” what one has received in the previous *Saprahan* event. This phenomenon is an additional reference for enriching the discussion on *fiqh* among people in the coastal area. It is obvious that the *ijab qabul* is not only known in *fiqh al-tijarah*, but also in *fiqh* related to the dining tradition.

In the perspective of Islamic psychology, *ijab qabul* is a sign of the release of burden from the obligation to “pay” a certain amount of money or goods that are used as revolving payments whose value is equal to what has been received previously. The *ijab qabul* has become a symbol of mutual consent of the contribution that one gives to the host. This consent shows a deep willingness to give and receive gifts between each other, no matter the economic value. The *Ijab qabul* also indicates a willingness to share the burden. The villagers take turns uttering the *ijab qabul* as they take turns holding the *saprahan*. It’s just a matter of time that makes the difference. Everyone in the village is bound in a cycle from one *ijab qabul* to another. The cycle of mutual assistance relieves the burden among people in the village, regardless of ethnicity, ethnic tradition, and religion. Every villager is equal. No one is special or has a higher position in social relations in the village. Young and old, rich and poor, men and women are all equal. They help each other to ensure things will go well for the host. All contribute according to their ability to fulfil their social obligations.

This phenomenon is very interesting to discuss. The *ijab qabul* during the handover of foodstuff before the *saprahan* is usually said with the host and the contributor both sitting on the floor with their legs crossed. The contributor holds the items with two hands and gives them to the host. The handover procession is carried out in a very friendly atmosphere filled with compliments and jokes that make everyone smile. It has a more psychological effect when the ones handing over the items are family members or relatives who come from a distant village or city. A lively reception is then held, and emotional expressions can be seen on their faces. Even though this procession is required as part of the *arisan*, the Islamic touch of the tradition of handing over food ingredients for the *saprahan* is visible. Everyone feels the desire to help each

other. It does not stop there. All the villagers who bring the food ingredients to the host also prepare a variety of spices and cooking ingredients to be mixed and processed into food. It has become a cycle that keeps repeating itself: getting together, working together, eating together, and concluding the activities with a prayer for the safety of the community in the village.

BORNEO MUSLIMS INTERPRETING FOOD

If traced from the name of the tradition, something is interesting that may not have been widely exposed, that the communal dining tradition in the Sambas Malay community --better known as *saprahan*-- turns out to have another variant of the term, namely "*bersatu*" [unified]. The name is based on the purpose of the *saprahan* tradition which takes three days from the beginning to completion. All stages involve "all the villagers". This indicates that the culinary and dining tradition [*saprahan*] is capable of uniting people in a community. It is evident from the involvement of everyone in contributing to the success of an event being held by a villager. Furthermore, those involved in this culinary/dining tradition (*saprahan/bersatu*) are also capable of overcoming religious barriers. Another interesting thing about this *bersatu* tradition is that not only are all the people in the village involved, as described above but they are also invited to the event and help ease the host's burden by helping to provide raw materials for food or spices. This kind of tradition implies mutual help because later it will be carried out in the exact same way when it is another villager's turn to hold the *Saprahan*. This *bersatu* tradition does not end here. It even continues until the *Saprahan* is completed. A villager whose economic conditions are categorized as being poor but is socially bound by tradition, can still hold the event as other villagers will always be prepared to help him.

It is presumed that the almost non-existence of social conflict is due to two factors, one being the bond of the *bersatu* tradition that has influenced the pattern of the people's lives in this area and the other being the communal land ownership. Even when a rice field or a fruit or vegetable farm, etc., is abandoned or neglected by the owner, its safety is guaranteed. Interestingly, there is a certain "part" of the harvest shared fairly among relatives or even neighbors despite having no kinship with the land owner. Since land produces commodities for food, its position is very decisive. The land is an asset that provides people with daily needs. It is an important asset that guarantees the welfare of all people in the village; not only for landowners or *tembawang* (communal land management) alone. For the people of "S" village, the land can be used by everyone to fulfill their daily needs. Everyone may take advantage of the harvest from the *tembawang* land with the permission of the

owner/heir. *Tembawang* has an important role in survival. *Tembawang* will be the last asset to be sold after no longer having other valuable assets in case an economic crisis occurs. “Land” and “houses” have important positions for the people of Sambas Regency. For them, land in addition to a place to grow crops is a property that determines their life. It is proved to be of no subjective value; Productive land can be used by anyone. However, the results of the land are also distributed to anyone who needs it, shared without a kinship barrier, strangers or locals, all done without expecting compensation in the future.

Regarding the widespread discussion about this local tradition, the focus of attention, for now, is how this local tradition can survive. There is a concern that the *saprahan* tradition will be abandoned along with the widespread of new patterns of behaviour in society. At least some conditions should be observed that could potentially erode the tradition. Currently, people have various professions which require a lot of time and attention so they have little to no time for communal life. Some people move somewhere to become migrant workers. The threat to the *saprahan* is real and someday perhaps this tradition will be abandoned. Meanwhile, from a different perspective, the food served at the *Saprahan*, as we observed, tends to be simple very familiar, and easy to find in the community. It can be defined as “village” food that is typical of village cuisine and is easy to process as well as popular in almost all walks of life. Most of the raw ingredients are taken from the farm or yards around the village. Part of it is purchased from the market in the city area or stalls around the village. This implies education about the simplicity of life and togetherness.

The *bersatu* tradition also indicates the preservation of the anti-conflict tradition. The unique fact is that when a ‘foreigner’ [migrant] or a non-native in the village is invited to the *saprahan*, it is a sign that he has been “included” into a village member and is no longer treated as an “alien”. The person immediately blends in and is regarded as “part of the big family of the village”. This further confirms that the *bersatu* tradition represented through the *saprahan* is not only responded to as a manifestation of the heritage of ancestral tradition but must further be seen as a social legacy filled with Islamic values. It can also be stated, *Saprahan* is not merely to get together to eat. The tradition is full of psychological significance and Islamic values. Since it is full of social values, this tradition has been passed down from generation to generation. This tradition seems to be an “escort” in the span of age and the journey of human life. There are many *saprahan* events carried out in this regard, such as the celebration of birth, hair-cutting ceremonies, marriage rituals, and even funerals.

In the context of its extended meaning, the *bersatu* tradition [*saprahan*] implies a sign that a social community is guaranteed the certainty of being able to get food regardless of their physical conditions and social status. It is proven that the traditions surrounding dining and food are not only related to *saprahan* but are also practiced in daily life. In the whole series of traditions surrounding dining and for the people in Sambas Regency, it is proven that it does not merely involve ceremonies which include gathering, working together to prepare a procession, it has also been transformed as a means of providing food assistance to anyone who deserves to be helped. Among the reasons is because they lack food due to physical and economic limitations, or even due to medical reasons.

This tradition has even overcome social boundaries. There is a kind of inclusive attitude and readiness to accept “foreigners”. It seems that this symptom has become a communal characteristic for the people there. Moreover, it is located in a rural area far from the city center. The communal characteristics of this society are common elsewhere.

Another interesting piece of data regarding this tradition [*saprahan*] is the division of the *saprah* assembly. In the previous section, it was described that the *saprahan* is open to anyone, However, there is a separation between women’s and men’s assemblies. The reason for such separation is quite interesting. The argument is based on theological reasons intertwined with the gender argument.

Although there are assemblies in the *saprahan*, basically in the culinary tradition among the people in Sambas Regency, everyone is treated equally. This egalitarian attitude is reflected in four important elements: gathering, eating, reciting prayers, and asking for the blessing of safety. Various descriptions of food and the *saprahan* along with several things related to them, it is evident that the *saprahan* is not merely eating together, but moreover, it turns out that it serves as a medium to gather to strengthen the friendship between people in the village; no matter if they know each other or not or if they have kinship relations or not, all of them are connected in a bond of getting together [unified] to achieve a more exoteric goal: asking for blessings from Allah the Almighty.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

As the culinary industry develops, spices are becoming increasingly strategic. It has occurred since the beginning of the arrival of the world community to the Indonesian Archipelago to obtain spices. Historically, spices proved to be

justification for the meeting between Europeans, Arabs, Chinese, people of the Indian subcontinent, and Asia. Suddenly, all the nations of the world were connected by the same interest: satisfying culinary desires. Imagine that food became the reason for people around the world to create the “spice trading network”. Everyone sought to “dominate” the spices and trade routes. In the end, everyone knew that the end of the spice journey was the Indonesian Archipelago, which was “the world’s spice center”. Along with the “spice journeys”, the spread of Islam also occurred during the trade.

Spices made a big change along the “spice routes”. Islam then spread to almost all stretches of the territory that were used by the spice trade routes. Even at the same time, suddenly the people’s lifestyle in the world also changed completely. Spicy foods became a trend. Spices were also used for the global food industry. It soon added to the chaos and bustle of the spice trade routes in almost all parts of the world, all connected with one destination: finding spices for food. There are so many spices used as the basic ingredients of food preparations. Discussions about food include the raw materials for making food: spices, cooking utensils, recipes, the ways food is cooked [boiled, fried, baked, stir-fried, roasted, etc], how food is served, important events that come with special foods, ornament and equipment in processing and serving food and many other dimensions related to food.

In short, spices are an important characteristic of a dish. Spices represent a particular ethnic/nation culinary civilization. Culinary spices can “teach” environmental awareness. This can be seen in the Muslim Dayak community on the Entikong border, West Kalimantan, where most of the food spices are taken from nature. Likewise, food ingredients such as vegetables and fruits are all taken from the forest. The principle of their life is that as long as they have salt, *micin* [flavouring], rice, and vegetables [although it has to be taken in the forest] they feel their life is safe. For them, this is enough to make them happy. Even if side dishes are not available, it’s not a big problem. Being able to survive is necessary, even if they have to work hard along with all the risks.

Regarding food, for the Muslim Dayak community on the Entikong border, nature has provided ‘all’ the necessities for human life. For nature to be sustainable, tradition/customary law teaches to take natural products as little as possible. They should not overdo it. If they need more, they can take some the following day, and so on. Forest products should not be taken at will. Take what is needed from the forest as needed. This is how the Muslim Dayak community in the border area maintains forest conservation. Forests are treated with respect because it is the forest that has provided the sustenance of life. Forests are a source of dependence, especially for ethnic Dayaks in

the border regions. This basic value raises their awareness of maintaining the sustainability of the forest and the land on which they depend. Well-conserved forests provide important resources for human life, such as wood, rattan, and bark (*kapuak*) as raw materials for making houses and home furnishings, sources of food ingredients such as vegetables, fruit, fresh animal food sources, and medicines that are so vital to cure illness. In conditions that are far from the city centre, people at the border have no other choice but to depend [almost all] for their fate on nature, rivers, and forests. The sustainability of the forest along with all the potential in it is non-negotiable. The destruction of nature, rivers, and forests is also a sign of the destruction of their lives. On this basis, it is very understandable that forests, nature, rivers, and land are very important for the border communities (Hariansyah, 2019).

Finally, spices are not just flavor enhancers or serve to characterize culinary dishes. An important element to cooking dishes is to make them more delicious to eat. When spices are used in food, they can immediately inspire the birth and maintenance of countless culinary traditions. Many people depend their fate on spices. A lot of money is invested in the spice business. Millions of kilometers of distance have been traveled by seekers of spices to reach the table of a diner. Spices also paved the way for Islam to be introduced to the people of the Indonesian Archipelago. Spices seem to give Muslims a way to a better life: enjoying culinary delights as a blessing from Allah the Almighty while practicing Islam more broadly, not just observing Islamic teachings and provisions related to food.

About the theme and the site of research on which this article is based, there are interesting facts about food. At least there is a new dynamic of *fiqh* among the people in the coastal [as well as inland] areas that food is not merely a matter of eating and fulfilling the human needs. In food, there are also indications of social values and the most important thing is that it is also filled with Islamic values. Verbatim excerpts of the interview held during research at least show strong evidence of the earlier statement. “When the spices were handed over by guests to their host, they said the *Ijab Qabul: ini barras kami sejumpat untuk bikin langgar kasai* (this is a little rice from us to make *langgar kasai* -rice that is soaked, then ground and added with turmeric).

CONCLUSION

The genealogy of contemporary academic debates around food has proven to have religious, historical dimensions, as well as the most profound meaning of humanity. The relationship between food and Islamic tradition places the debate on the subject in the public sphere: *halal* and *haram*. The culinary

tradition in the community of Sambas Regency is proven to have an Islamic ideology. This conclusion was made based on the fact that the handover food ingredients are accompanied by a specific *ijab qabul*. This *ijab qabul* enriches the *fiqh* concept of food (and drinks) among people in the coastal area. The *Ijab Qabul* is related not only to the concept of *tijarah* but also to the concept of food and drink in a tradition. The *Ijab Kabul* is not always concerned with economic transactions, but also with culinary traditions which involve no payment for economic exchange between the parties in the transaction. This *ijab qabul* is a sign of “paying off” what one has received in the previous *Saprahan* event, who now takes their turn to hold the *Saprahan*. This type of *Ijab Kabul* is not an economic transaction that requires paying for the price, but it is based on the intrinsic value of the same goods. All of this is done based on *ta’awun* with the principle of not burdening the two parties in the transaction. Hence, the work strengthens the existence of religious and psychological values in the culinary tradition of the local communities in the region.

Food has been proven to be in a positive binary opposition: the effect of integration or resolution of environmental conflicts or vice versa in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan. This conclusion is reinforced by multiple pieces of evidence, namely: dining traditions, land, houses, gatherings, and reciting prayers for the safety of the village regardless of religious differences, social and ethnic backgrounds. Everything happens in a fluid, friendly, familial atmosphere and conflict-free environment. All of these are important characteristics of Borneo ethnic groups. These findings contribute to the discussion of religious aspects and psychological values within the culinary tradition with a specific emphasis on Eastern tradition in Borneo societies. This work is limited to the studies of local communities in coastal areas in West Borneo. More comprehensive studies must take place to further elaborate the culinary tradition with a specific focus on psychological value construction within the religious and cross-cultural based communities in West Borneo.

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