

Opportunities and Challenges of Sanger in Indonesia's Gastrodiplomacy

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Abstract

This article attempts to examine more specifically the Indonesian government's gastrodiplomacy instrument through coffee, which in this context raises the theme of Aceh Sanger coffee. The main question that this paper seeks to answer is related to the potential of Aceh Sanger coffee to be used as an instrument in the practice of gastrodiplomacy by the government of the Republic of Indonesia. It also attempts to unravel questions related to the challenges faced by Sanger in the context of its use as a gastrodiplomacy instrument. This article describes the practices of gastrodiplomacy carried out by Indonesia and several other countries and finds the urgency of these practices for the government of the Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, this paper analyzes the potential of Sanger and several challenges that may be faced in the future. This study uses empirical methods by searching for and analyzing field data. The practice of soft diplomacy through gastrodiplomacy carried out by the government of the Republic of Indonesia is one of the national strategic programs. One of the important missions to be achieved from this agenda is an effort aimed at promoting a positive image of the nation at the global level. One of the most popular products abroad and a mainstay instrument in gastrodiplomacy is coffee from various regions in Indonesia. Sanger is a type of coffee blend from Aceh. Sanger faces challenges, especially in the future. The first challenge is related to its popularity, which is considered not yet widely known by people outside Aceh. Another challenge that needs attention is finding the social and cultural values of Sanger that can become part of the nation's identity.

Keywords: *Sanger, Gastrodiplomacy, Aceh, Coffee*

Introduction

This paper idea stems from the author's observation of the phenomenon of coffee lovers throughout the archipelago. The coffee fans movement is not only shared as a daily life, bigotry, hobby, but some are able to process it into an interesting academic discourse. The researcher felt the need to raise this simple idea into a research with the theme of Aceh Sanger coffee into the foreign policy. Coffee is an important part that is inseparable both as a daily life and as an identity for the people of Aceh. It is inappropriate to do activities without sipping the best coffee which is believed to increase stamina at work. Even extreme coffee lovers will consider that coffee is a characteristic that is integrated with the people of Aceh as an identity. Regardless of people's views on this matter, we agree that today the

coffee commodity is not just a natural product but has been transformed into a high-value natural product.

History explains that it was the Dutch colonials who introduced coffee cultivation in Aceh around 1908 which then began to be developed massively in the Gayo highlands, Central Aceh.¹ But long before that, it believed that coffee had entered Indonesia through the island of Java since 1699. Then the robusta and arabica types of coffee were brought to Aceh around 1904-1908.² Jorn R.Bowen in his writing entitled *Sumatra Politics and Poetick: Gayo History 1900-1989* states that in 1924 the Dutch and European businessmen had begun to dominate the land with coffee, tea and vegetable crops. By the Dutch colonials they called the land containing tens of hectares of coffee a "*Product of Future*" or future commodity that was considered very important to the world. This was after in 1933 there were around 13000 hectares of land in Takengon, Central Aceh planted with coffee.³

Apart from the long history of the emergence of coffee in Aceh, it is *sanger*, a coffee blend from Aceh that has recently become the favorite of coffee lovers. At first glance, *sanger* is similar to milk coffee. It's just that *sanger* is brewed with a composition of milk that is not dominant, so the coffee flavor will feel stronger. *Sanger* baristas vary in measuring the composition of *sanger* so that it can produce a variety of flavors and aromas in each coffee shop that serves it.⁴ The question that arises then is why *sanger*? Are other drinks not as popular? This condition reminds researchers of the phenomenon of *bubble tea*, also known as boba, among Indonesian youth in recent months. The Taiwanese drink with a mixture of palm sugar and balls made from tapioca flour has successfully captured the hearts of many young people and tourists around the world. Boba outlets then invaded the markets of neighboring countries including Indonesia.

A similar phenomenon occurred around 2020 when the Dalgona coffee drink that had gone viral in South Korea penetrated the markets of various countries and became increasingly popular. Without realizing it, due to the popularity of these drinks, many tourists came to Taiwan and South Korea, which in turn boosted the number of tourists, and revived the creative economy of the community. Both countries are increasingly active in promoting their countries through these unique drinks. This reminds researchers that President Joko Widodo is one of the figures who is quite intense in introducing Indonesian coffee drinks at various international events or agendas. "*Don't forget, if you drink coffee, drink Indonesian coffee*" is his jargon as in a state lunch held together with the Governor

¹ Rahmat Syah Putra dalam *De Atjehers: Dari Serambi Mekkah ke Serambi Kopi*, (Padee Books, Banda Aceh,2018),hlm.25

² Indonesian International Coffee Symposium (IICS)2014, Banda Aceh 19-21 November 2014 di Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK), hlm.2.

³ Jorn R.Bowen, *Sumatran Politics and Poetick : Gayo History 1900-1989*, (Yale University Press, London, 1991),hlm.76

⁴ <https://www.jawapos.com>, *Sanger Kopi yang bukan Sembarang kopi Susu* accessed on September 23, 2024 from the site <https://www.jawapos.com/wisata-dan-kuliner/travelling/02/12/2018/sanger-kopi-khas-aceh-yang-bukan-sembarang-kopi-susu>.

General of New Zealand Dame Patsy Reddy at Government House, Wellington, New Zealand.⁵

In the cabinet of President Jokowi's government 2014-2019 cultural and economic diplomacy is one of the foreign policy priorities carried out by the government of the Republic of Indonesia in foreign countries.⁶ This diplomacy agenda is considered to have potential value to improve the nation's economy as well as being a *soft diplomacy* tool at the global level. This model of diplomacy using a culinary approach in international relations is known as gastrodiploamacy. Gastrodiploamacy can be interpreted as public diplomacy carried out by combining cultural diplomacy, culinary diplomacy, and the essence of *nation branding* to make culture and food narratives real in various other countries through touch and taste.⁷ Quoting Paul Rockower's writing in *Recipes for Gastrodiploamacy, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* (2012), the practice of gastrodiploamacy is identically carried out by *middle power* countries as a *tool of diplomacy at the global level*, such as Indonesia.⁸

Based on the description above, then the researcher feels the need to see how the position of Aceh coffee in relation to gastrodiploamacy. Does Aceh's *sanger* coffee blend in this context have the opportunity to become part of culinary diplomacy? This is based on the fact that Aceh coffee is so popular at the national level and even abroad. Even the aroma and taste of Aceh coffee is considered one of the best in the world.⁹ Besides that, if you look at the popularity of Dalgona and *bubble tea* or boba which succeeded in raising the country's *brand-nation*, of course *sanger* will have the same opportunity. And if Aceh coffee through *sanger* has the potential to be part of the gastrodiploamacy effort, then of course there will be obstacles or challenges that will be faced.

Based on the background above, through this research, researchers try to explore in more detail and in depth about how the opportunities and challenges that allow Aceh *sanger* to become a vital part of gastrodiploamacy promotion. This research is expected to be able to provide and enrich the scientific repertoire on social aspects and international politics, especially in the study of international relations. This researcher also hopes to contribute to

⁵ <https://www.setneg.go.id>, *Diplomasi Kopi Presiden Jokowi*, accessed on September 24, 2022 from the site https://www.setneg.go.id/baca/index/diplomasi_kopi_presiden_jokowi

⁶ <https://www.krjogja.com>, *Diplomasi Kopi di Era Jokowi Bukan Sekedar Jargon*, accessed on September 24, 2022 from the site <https://www.krjogja.com/peristiwa/read/281610/diplomasi-kopi-di-era-jokowi-bukan-sekedar-jargon>

⁷ <https://jalurrempah.kemdikbud.go.id>, *Peran Rempah-rempah Bgi Gastrodiploamasi Indonesia*, accessed on September 24, 2022 from the site <https://jalurrempah.kemdikbud.go.id/artikel/peran-rempah-rempah-bagi-gastrodiploamasi-indonesia>

⁸ Rockower, P. (2012). *Recipes for Gastrodiploamacy, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. 8(3), 235-246

⁹ <https://disperindag.jabarprov.go.id>, *Tujuh Belas Specialty Coffe siap jadi Primadona di SCAA Expo*, accessed on September 24, 2022 from the site <https://disperindag.jabarprov.go.id/detail-post/8830/tujuh-belas-specialty-coffee-siap-jadi-primadona-di-scaa-expo>

the world of education and academics including those interested in the study of *low-politics* and contemporary global issues today.

Discussion

Overview of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy

Nowadays, *low-politic* issues have begun to take a considerable portion in various political and foreign policy discussions in the context of international relations. These issues are not only seen as current issues that need to be discussed but are also an important part of the important agenda of state discussions and lobbying. One of the crucial agendas is the effort to practice diplomacy by prioritizing food or culinary as the main instrument known as the practice of gastrodiplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy can be described as part of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, which is a subtle way to increase appreciation, build mutual understanding and improve the nation's image.¹⁰ Gastrodiplomacy is one part of the practice of cultural diplomacy that can be carried out by the government by introducing the culture of eating and food itself. Food can transform into a powerful non-verbal communication tool to change the perception of the international community and promote the country on the global stage.¹¹ And developing countries utilize this practice of gastrodiplomacy to shape what is called *national branding*.¹²

As a developing country, gastrodiplomacy is considered appropriate to introduce the country to the international public, considering that a lot of information about the country's image is not widely conveyed to the public. In addition, it is considered useful to provide a positive image of the country's conditions and its cultural and culinary wealth. This will indirectly make the country more popular or even gain praise and sympathy from the international community. Indonesia is one of the many countries that utilize culinary power as part of the practice of cultural diplomacy. It should be recognized that Indonesia's culinary and cultural wealth is quite diverse and interesting. Even in the past, Indonesia was known for its rich spices, which became the target of western countries. However, it is still unfortunate that Indonesia has not been able to fully develop its culinary appeal. In fact, Indonesia's name is barely known in the global culinary map. Indonesian culinary has not been widely circulated in the global arena compared to other countries.

One thing that also needs to be understood is that the practice of gastrodiplomacy can also be used as Indonesia's national strength as long as it is carried out optimally and holistically. However, of course it requires coordination, roles, and support from all elements of Indonesian society. Although in this context it is considered that Indonesia's

¹⁰ Tulus Warsito dan Wahyuni Kartikasari, *Diplomasi Kebudayaan: Konsep dan Relevansi bagi Negara Berkembang, Studi Kasus Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2007, hlm. 29-30.

¹¹ Adirini Pujayanti, Gastrodiplomasi – Upaya Memperkuat Diplomasi Indonesia, *Jurnal Politica*, Vol. 8 No. 1 Mei 2017, hlm.39.

¹² Paul Rockower, "Why Not Feed Indonesia to the World?" December 10, 2010, accessed on May 24, 2024 from the site, <http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/archive/why-not-feedindonesia-to-the-world/>

steps to work on the potential of Gastrodiplomacy are less fast than other countries.¹³ The Indonesian government is believed to have started introducing Indonesian cuisine to foreign countries since hosting the 1955 Asian-African Conference (KAA) in Bandung. Still during the Soekarno presidency, the Ministry of Agriculture also released a compilation book of archipelago foods, which was later known as *Mustikarasa*.¹⁴ The activity of introducing Indonesian culinary did not increased significantly in subsequent presidential periods. This not mean that the government did not pay attention to the regional culinary scene. Promotion of *Tumpeng* was even more prominent during the Soeharto presidency. The government paid more attention to the *food security* aspect than focusing on the culinary of the archipelago.¹⁵

The issue of cultural diplomacy was marginalized, during the regime of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), the government began to try to raise the issue of gastrodiplomacy again. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) made a policy known as '30 archipelago culinary icons' under the Ministry of Tourism. This step was then considered as the initial process towards the practice of gastrodiplomacy that we know today.¹⁶ Gastrodiplomacy has grown and experienced revitalization since the Joko Widodo government by forming the Creative Economy Agency (Bekraf) to strengthening Indonesia's *nation branding*. There are several ministry who are more actively involved besides Bekraf, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Trade. Each ministry will run programs that support efforts to popularize traditional Indonesian cuisine. Gastrodiplomacy in the era of President Joko Widodo began to be planned in a more structured manner since 2021. The government launched '*the Indonesia Spice Up the World*' program under the coordination of the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment (Kemenko Marves). *Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW)* is a joint program across ministries/agencies to support the increase in the contribution and added value of the culinary sub-sector to the economy such as marketing Indonesian spices or processed food products.¹⁷ With the existence of *Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW)*, it is hoped that it can increase processed food exports, especially spices.

Urgency and Strategy of Gastrodiplomacy for the Government of the Republic of Indonesia

The concept of gastrodiplomacy is increasingly popular after various countries realize its potential to increase *soft power* in the international arena. And Indonesia has so far promoted a variety of Indonesian culinary specialties such as tempeh, gado-gado, pickles, gudeg, rendang, chicken satay, soto, and fried rice. Even one of Indonesia's cuisines

¹³ Adirini Pujayanti, Gastrodiplomasi – Upaya Memperkuat Diplomasi Indonesia, *Jurnal Politica*, Vol. 8 No. 1 Mei 2017, hlm. 44

¹⁴ Agus Trihartono, et al, *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Pandiva Buku, 2023, hal.5

¹⁵ *Ibid* Hlm. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid* Hlm. 6.

¹⁷ <https://kemenparekraf.go.id/> accessed on June 05, 2024 from the site <https://kemenparekraf.go.id/hasil-pencarian/indonesia-spice-up-the-world-kenalkan-rempah-nusantara-ke-mancanegara>

has gained considerable popularity in France, where rendang has gained significant recognition and become a trend.¹⁸ We can see that there are several reasons why gastrodiplomacy is so important for the Indonesian government. *First*, Gastrodiplomacy can be utilized to form *National Branding*. This culinary diplomacy can be a forum or tool to introduce the richness and diversity of Indonesian cuisine. *astrodiplomacy* is an option to help the Indonesian government form an 'image' through its *soft-diplomacy*.¹⁹ *Nation Branding* is a strategy that aims to promote a positive image of the nation through 6 aspects, namely culture, society, tourism, investment, government policies, and export brands.²⁰

The practice of gastrodiplomacy can also refer to policies and both parties, both state and non-state agency, strive to foster a positive image of their country to the outside public. One of them is by using foreign tourists who can boost the country's income and image. And in order to form this *nation branding*, the Indonesian government expands the perspective with a new narrative, namely describing Indonesia as democratic, moderate, tolerant, and very diverse in its arts and culture. So that the practice of *soft power* diplomacy is not only limited to the promotion of cultural diversity, but also to natural beauty, and food delicacy (*diversity, beauty, delicacy*).²¹ Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy should narrate certain foods that have symbolic values that project national identity and national character. For example, Rendang is believed to have three philosophical values in it, namely patience, wisdom, and persistence. Or like Nasi Tumpeng whose conical shape points upwards symbolizing our prayers to the Supreme Creator will reach Him. This is a symbol of the religious Indonesian nation.²²

Gastrodiplomacy observer, Anna Lipscomb in her research entitled *Culinary Relations: Gastrodiplomacy in Thailand, South Korea, and Taiwan* states that gastrodiplomacy is related to efforts to build a nation's image through food, it is in the aspect of a country's cultural diplomacy struggle to foster mutual understanding between nations. Based on research in the three countries, he concluded that each country seeks to connect its specialties with their respective 'national identity'.²³

This is reinforced by research conducted by Paul Rockower entitled *Recipes for gastrodiplomacy, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. He said that Gastrodiplomacy is

¹⁸ <https://kumparan.com/>, accessed on June 25, 2024 from the website <https://kumparan.com/adisty-variza/gastrodiplomasi-kekuatan-kuliner-indonesia-dalam-hubungan-internasional-22oqOLmLQGX/full>

¹⁹ A Trihartono, et al, The early stage of Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy: in the middle of nowhere?, *OP Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, doi:10.1088/1755-1315/485/1/01200, pp. 7.

²⁰ Anholt, S. (2003). *Brand New Justice. The Upside of Global Branding*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann, hlm.180

²¹ <https://www.goodnewsfromindonesia.id/>, accessed on July 1, 2024 from the site <https://www.goodnewsfromindonesia.id/2021/09/08/gastrodiplomasi-dan-mimpi-besar-nation-branding-indonesia>

²² *Ibid*

²³ Lipscomb, Anna. "Culinary Relations: Gastrodiplomacy in Thailand, South Korea, and Taiwan." *The Yale Review of International Studies* 1.1 (2019): hlm. 1-3.

a means of mixing cultural diplomacy, culinary diplomacy, and *nation branding* to make foreign culture tangible and touching.²⁴ Author can conclude that *nation branding* or the image of a nation is First, the *nation brand* is more related to the obvious reputation of a country, such as natural beauty, economic progress, technological achievements, and others. *Second*, national identity refers more to the character of the nation, its traditions, culture, and language.

The next reason why gastrodiplomacy is so important for Indonesia is because it is part of the country's economic improvement efforts. The Research Team of *Laboratory for Soft Power Diplomacy* from Sebelas Maret University Surakarta in their research revealed that gastrodiplomacy is very vital and useful to be used as the cornerstone of Indonesia's economic diplomacy. This is based on the reason that food is a basic need, and besides that based on communication theory, it is able to become a medium of cultural communication (*agent of mouth*).²⁵ Through the practice of gastrodiplomacy carried out by the Indonesian government through its representatives abroad, it becomes an *entry point* for economic diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu). This provides avenues and market opportunities for Indonesian food products and has provided offers and promotions of culinary products to potential buyers and investors abroad.²⁶

After recognizing the urgency of gastrodiplomacy for the Indonesian government, we need to outline the steps or strategies taken by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to ensure the success of this practice of gastrodiplomacy. According to Juyan Zhang's theory, Mapping and Comparing The Gastrodiplomacy Strategy, there are six strategies, namely product marketing strategy, coalition-building strategy, media relations strategy, food events strategy, the use of opinion leaders strategy, and education strategy.²⁷ To realize gastrodiplomacy, support and involvement from all parties are needed.

A marketing strategy is needed because, in practice, gastrodiplomacy also aims to promote domestic products that benefit the country's economy. Therefore, a targeted and efficient marketing strategy is essential. A coalition-building strategy can be understood as a group of diverse individuals, organizations, and stakeholders who come together to achieve a common goal. Coalition building is a powerful and indispensable tool in modern democratic governance. By bringing together diverse voices, expertise, and resources, coalitions can shape policy-making, drive change and progress in society. When members

²⁴ Paul S Rockower, Recipes for gastrodiplomacy, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 8.3 (2012): hlm. 235-246.

²⁵ Research Team of Laboratory for Soft Power Diplomacy, International Relations Study Program, Fisip- Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, *Gastrodiplomacy as a Cornerstone of Indonesia's Economic Diplomacy: Research Report*, Research Cooperation of the Policy Research and Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016, hlm.58.

²⁶ *Ibid*, hlm.60.

²⁷ Juyan Zhang, "The Foods of the Worlds: Mapping and Comparing Contemporary Gastrodiplomacy Campaigns", *International Journal of Communication* Vol. 9, (2015): hlm 568–591

collaborate on common goals, it is easier to foster sustainable cooperation and facilitate a quicker response to emerging challenges.²⁸

In addition, the use of media and the involvement of opinion leaders and important and popular figures is also essential. This strategy can be combined with organizing many important events such as exhibitions and culinary festivals that not only promote but also educate about the cuisine or food specialties of a country.

Regarding this strategy, the Indonesian government has long positioned the diaspora as the main actors of gastrodiplomacy. This diaspora holds the key to promoting Indonesian culture and cuisine abroad. They come from diverse backgrounds, ranging from businesspeople, chefs, academics, and other . Although this initially began as a personal initiative of the diaspora, the government is now paying more attention by involving them in agendas created by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.²⁹ One concrete example of the Indonesian government's seriousness in engaging with the diaspora is the practice of Diaspora Co-Branding in Australia. Several strategies have been implemented to popularize Indonesian cuisine, including: introducing Indonesia through its rich spices, increasing the number of Indonesian restaurants by partnering with investors from other countries, organizing Indonesian cultural performances, and forming an association of Indonesian restaurants in Sydney.³⁰ It can be seen that this strategy strongly supports Indonesia's foreign policy priorities as it can boost the economy, strengthen Indonesia's image in the eyes of the international public, and build relationships with the international community without political ties.³¹

The History of Sanger and Its Development in Aceh

One of the innovative variants of Sanger. In terms of taste and appearance, Sanger is very similar to the milk coffee that is widely known among Indonesians. Sanger coffee differs from regular milk coffee because it is a combination of Aceh black coffee with sweetened condensed milk and a little sugar. In addition to its delicious taste and aroma, the process of making sanger often attracts visitors who want to watch it. The black coffee is filtered through a cone-shaped strainer, typically made of cloth, and then pulled like making tea or pulled coffee.³²

Sanger coffee is a style of drinking coffee that combines a 3:1 ratio of coffee to milk in its blend. However, the taste of Sanger coffee from one coffee shop to another will vary. This is influenced by two factors: the level of coffee roasting and the different coffee

²⁸ <https://infieldstrategies.com>, accessed on July 3, 2024, from <https://infieldstrategies.com/the-power-of-coalition-building/>

²⁹ Agus Trihartono, et al., Leading Messengers: Diaspora in Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy, *Journal of Sociology Entities*, Volume 9, Number 1, February 2020, hlm 16-17.

³⁰ Putri Indah Diahtantri et al., Indonesia's Gastrodiplomacy Strategy Through the Diaspora Co-Branding Program in Australia 2018-2020, *Journal of International Relations (JoS)*, Vol. 1 September 2021, hlm.9

³¹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 10.

³² Muna Sungkar, Exploring the Western Tip of Indonesia: Banda Aceh, Sabang, Elex Media Komputindo: Jakarta, 2015, hlm.67.

recipes used by baristas. Nevertheless, this inconsistency in taste offers a unique alternative that caters to the preferences of Sanger enthusiasts. The word "Sanger" itself is actually quite unfamiliar to most Indonesians. Upon investigation, the term 'Sanger' turns out to be an abbreviation of 'sama-sama ngerti' (mutual understanding). Coffee shop owners were asked to understand that students had limited funds. So, they asked for coffee with milk at a very low price. From this, the expression 'sama-sama ngerti' was born, which later became more popularly abbreviated to 'sanger'.

Looking back at its brief history, it is believed that sanger originated in the city of Banda Aceh. It is believed that this coffee originated from the Acehnese word Sanggeng, which means stupid. It was called stupid because this coffee was ordered with an unclear measurement in terms of its composition. However, as it became more widely known, the term Sanggeng changed to Sanger.⁷⁵ At that time, this coffee blend was phenomenal among the 90s generation. Sanger is an abbreviation of "sama sama ngerti" (we both understand). When this coffee is ordered, the barista immediately understands that the customer wants coffee with a little milk, which at that time was considered "friendly" for the pockets of teenagers and students.

In terms of taste and characteristics, Sanger coffee is competitive despite its low price and smaller serving size. The first thing that stands out about this coffee is its appearance, which is usually frothy. The white foam on top of the coffee seems to indicate that Sanger Coffee is a type of Aceh Cappuccino. In terms of aroma, the fragrance of this coffee is already apparent when the coffee beans are poured over with hot water in a cloth filter. The taste is also unique, at first glance similar to milk coffee, but with a stronger coffee flavor. Although Sanger continues to evolve to this day, it remains a mystery who first coined the word Sanger. To this day, it has not been discovered who first came up with the idea of naming the coffee.

The process of making sanger coffee is very easy and can be done by anyone using simple and easily obtainable tools and ingredients. The equipment used is the same as for making regular coffee, except that it requires a cloth filter. The first thing to do to make sanger coffee is to put the coffee grounds into the cloth filter. Next, brew the coffee using hot water two to three times. After that, pour the coffee into the cup to be used from a slight distance, alternating between cups and doing so continuously. Do this in the same way as when making pulled tea. When it seems right, add sweetened condensed milk equal to one-eighth of the coffee portion. Then shake the sanger coffee with the sweetened condensed milk added. Shake continuously until foam or bubbles appear on the surface of the coffee.³³ The foam on the coffee is the key to the appearance of this sanger coffee.

Currently, Sanger coffee has become one of the most popular types of coffee. Each coffee shop offers a variety of Sanger coffee flavors with recipes created by baristas. Sanger coffee lovers now come from all walks of life, from young people to adults. It is no longer limited to students, as it was when it first originated. Although initially Sanger

³³ <https://kopikita.id>, accessed on July 10, 2024 from the website <https://kopikita.id/kopi-sanger-eksplorasi-kenikmatan-kopi-dari-serambi-mekkah/>

coffee was only popular among the people of Aceh, particularly in Banda Aceh and its surrounding areas, over time it began to gain recognition outside of Aceh, introduced by Acehnese migrants who opened coffee shops in other regions of Indonesia. Additionally, there are now many new flavors of sanger coffee, such as ginger milk sanger and filtered coffee sanger, using either Arabica or Robusta coffee beans.

As Sanger coffee became increasingly popular, the Aceh government held the Sanger Festival in 2017, which was attended by coffee lovers, enthusiasts, baristas, and various members of the community. Not only that, every October 12 is celebrated as World Sanger Day or International Sanger Day by the people of Aceh. This initiative began with the spontaneity of a man named Fahmi Yunis, who posted a call on his Twitter account to commemorate International Sanger Day. This simple idea was well-received by social media users at the time. In 2015, the first International Sanger Day celebration was held in front of Aceh Market in Banda Aceh. The initiator of this idea hopes that Sanger will gain broader recognition among the public.³⁴

For the people of Aceh, Sanger Coffee is not just a drink, but also a cultural heritage that reflects daily life and is part of a living tradition. Through a cup of coffee, values such as togetherness, hospitality, and kinship are introduced and passed on to the younger generation. In addition, this drink is also an important part of the social and economic life of the Acehnese people, making it more than just a drink, but also a symbol of identity and cultural heritage.³⁵ Sanger coffee can be said to support and popularize Aceh coffee even more widely. Even from an economic perspective, its presence contributes to the development of small businesses and the regional economy. Many business ideas have been inspired by the popularity of Sanger, such as the production of Sanger in sachets that are easy to carry and brew. If the popularity of Aceh Sanger continues to increase, it will greatly help the development of the economic and tourism sectors in Aceh.

Opportunities for Sanger as an Instrument of Gastrodiplomacy

Indonesia is known worldwide as one of the fourth largest producers and exporters of coffee beans in the world. As a country blessed with a wealth and diversity of coffee varieties, Indonesia has made coffee part of its soft diplomacy instrument through gastrodiplomacy. This practice is known as coffee diplomacy. Coffee diplomacy is a new style of diplomacy that uses coffee as its main instrument. This model of diplomacy has existed in various forms and with the use of various instruments. In line with the main objectives of diplomacy, which are to reach mutual agreements and achieve national goals, coffee diplomacy aims to increase exports and promote Indonesian coffee around the world.³⁶

³⁴<https://kumparan.com>. Accessed on July 10, 2024, from the website <https://kumparan.com/acehkini/sejarah-hari-sanger-yang-diperingati-setiap-12-oktober-di-aceh-1whrWwAeyyr/full>

³⁵ <https://www.viva.co.id>, accessed on July 4, 2024, from the website <https://www.viva.co.id/gaya-hidup/kuliner/966825-siap-siap-festival-kopi-sanger-2017-sajikan-kulier-khas-aceh>

³⁶ Rara Shertina, (2020). Coffee Diplomacy: Indonesia's Foreign Policy in Enhancing Coffee Export Cooperation with the United States. *Global and Policy Journal of International Relations*, 7 (2), hlm. 136–145.

As part of soft diplomacy practices, coffee diplomacy utilizes the role of non-state actors such as companies, educational institutions, community groups, and individuals. The use of diplomacy involving coffee commodities, which began in the 2000s, is considered a strategic step to establish and improve bilateral relations and boost the nation's economy. Some examples of the success of Indonesian coffee diplomacy include strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations between Indonesia and various other countries, such as the Indonesia-Sarawak Coffee Festival in Malaysia, which promotes Indonesian culture, traditions, and tourism. Coffee diplomacy efforts can also boost tourism and cultural promotion by showcasing specialty coffees and Indonesian coffee drinking culture.³⁷ The coffee drinking culture that spreads from west to east Indonesia is closely related to the culture of tolerance and the bonds of friendship between communities, which can be part of promoting national identity. This makes coffee diplomacy worthy of being the ambassador of Indonesia's unique and valuable national culture.

The administration of President Joko Widodo has integrated cultural diplomacy and economic diplomacy as inseparable and mutually supportive elements. Several important points can be drawn from the practice of coffee diplomacy. First, cultural diplomacy and economic diplomacy through commodities are aligned with the objectives to be achieved. second, the coffee approach in diplomacy is still very relevant in both bilateral and multilateral contexts; and third, coffee diplomacy actively involves non-state actors in their respective fields, such as companies, educational institutions, civil society groups, and individuals.³⁸

The above description explains the role of coffee as a significant instrument of gastrodiplomacy in political, economic, and social terms. As issues in international relations become increasingly complex, an effective and efficient approach is needed to enhance mutual understanding and trust between countries and communities. Cultural diplomacy through coffee is considered a means of building good communication between countries. One form of success in Indonesian coffee diplomacy is the high level of interest among Egyptians in Indonesian coffee products. This situation has prompted Indonesia to seize this opportunity to capture market share and further enhance its coffee diplomacy on various fronts. In addition, the Indonesian embassy in Egypt is also intensively providing guidance to coffee companies in Egypt to strengthen their cooperative relationships with Indonesian coffee exporters. This will certainly have an impact on Egypt's consistency in continuing to export coffee from Indonesia.

Simply put, we can understand that coffee diplomacy plays an important role in Indonesia's active and independent foreign policy. The first role is to strengthen Indonesia's positive image; Indonesian coffee diplomacy provides an opportunity to introduce its culture and positive values to other nations. By introducing high-quality coffee, Indonesia can build an image as a country that cares about the quality and sustainability of a product. The second

³⁷ [www.kompasiana.com](https://www.kompasiana.com/nurulannisa14/665601ee34777c28f46ad912/the-power-of-kopi-upaya-diplomasi-indonesia-untuk-meningkatkan-ekspor-kopi), accessed on July 6, 2024, from the website of-kopi-upaya-diplomasi-indonesia-untuk-meningkatkan-ekspor-kopi

³⁸ Anak Agung Mia Intentilia, Coffee Diplomacy in Jokowi's Era: The Strategy of Cultural and Economic Diplomacy in Indonesia's Foreign Policy, *Jurnal Ilmiah Dinamika Sosial*, Volume 4 Number 1 2020, hlm. 63-81.

role is to build sustainable partnerships; Indonesia has the opportunity to build long-term partnerships with other coffee-importing countries around the world. This creates positive and sustainable bilateral relations, which are certainly consistent with Indonesia's principle of free and active politics.³⁹

So far, the Indonesian government, through several of its representatives abroad, has introduced and popularized various types of coffee from different regions in Indonesia, such as Gayo coffee, Toraja coffee, Lampung coffee, and others. Most of these efforts are aimed primarily at opening up opportunities and overcoming challenges so that sustainable Indonesian coffee commodities can compete in foreign export markets. Regarding gastrodiplomacy more specifically, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, especially the Directorate General of Culture, has never specifically formulated requirements for the selection of food or beverages for gastrodiplomacy tools.⁴⁰ This means that basically any type of Indonesian food or drink has the opportunity to become an instrument of gastrodiplomacy. This means that Sanger coffee in this context also has the same opportunity to be used by the Indonesian government as a gastrodiplomacy tool. As the Indonesian government also includes other foods and drinks in foreign countries, Sanger coffee also has the same possibility.

It was stated earlier that the Indonesian government does not have written rules on the selection of gastrodiplomacy instruments, based on several cultural missions that have been carried out abroad, the government will bring Indonesian food that is considered *well-known* by the world community, and on average is easily found in various regions in Indonesia.⁴¹ Examples of foods introduced include Rendang, Satay, Fried Rice, Soto, Martabak, and so on. Although Sanger currently does not meet the qualifications of this Intangible Cultural Heritage, it can be said that in other conditions Sanger still has the potential to be appointed as one of the instruments of gastrodiplomacy. Other Indonesian culinary religions that have been introduced and promoted in the practice of gastrodiplomacy have also not all been designated as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Even so, the designation of these culinary types will place them in the country's priorities.

Although Aceh's Sanger coffee has so far not had the opportunity to become part of the tools in the practice of gastrodiplomacy, its potential can be taken into account at least in the future. So many excellent choices in various culinary archipelagos make the Indonesian government so selective in determining these options. It can be understood that the government is prioritizing certain commodities and products that are considered in accordance with the theme or demand of the destination country. This means that Sanger

³⁹ www.muhsor.ums.ac.id, accessed on July 7, 2024 from the website [https://muhsor.ums.ac.id/diplomasi-kopi-indonesia-upaya-menjaga-marwah-politik bebas-aktif-yang-produktif/](https://muhsor.ums.ac.id/diplomasi-kopi-indonesia-upaya-menjaga-marwah-politik-bebas-aktif-yang-produktif/)

⁴⁰ Interview with Mr. Wahyu Jatmiko, MA., Direktorat Jendral stuff Kebudayaan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan ministry, on July 10, 2024 via Online.

⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Wahyu Jatmiko, MA, Staff of the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture, July 10, 2024 via Online.

products will find the opportunity in their time, but more effort is needed to improve the excellence of Sanger coffee offerings.

The Challenges of Sanger as an Instrument of Gastrodiplomacy

As previously explained, coffee diplomacy is part of a work program initiated by President Joko Widodo's administration with the aim of boosting the country's economy. Indonesia, as one of the world's largest coffee producers, recognizes its strength and has begun to maximize its soft diplomacy potential by popularizing various types of Indonesian coffee. However, despite this, there are several general challenges that still face the practice of gastrodiplomacy, in addition to the challenges of sanger itself as a potential diplomatic instrument. One such challenge is determining Indonesia's signature culinary icons. As we all know, the rich culinary heritage of the archipelago is a valuable asset to the Indonesian people. However, the diversity of Indonesian cuisine makes it difficult to choose a single culinary icon. Therefore, in implementing gastrodiplomacy, the Indonesian government feels it is necessary to create a taste mapping to determine suitable culinary marketing areas and national culinary icons.⁴²

In fact, in 2012, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) attempted to summarize 30 potential culinary icons. However, the selection of these 30 culinary icons sparked controversy because they were considered inaccurate in representing the regions of origin of these cuisines. There was a perception that the selection of culinary icons should be based on taste, appearance, and should be regional specialty products. Some believe that culinary icons should be limited to one or two types of dishes but still be able to represent the entire spectrum of national cuisine. This is difficult to achieve given the diversity of Indonesian cuisine. Furthermore, this strategy has become less popular and difficult to remember in the international culinary world.⁴³

Another challenge that needs to be addressed by the government is the preparation of an Indonesian culinary database. This is necessary as evidence to prevent ownership claims by neighboring countries that have similarities due to their common Malay ancestry.⁴⁴ This documentation is absolutely necessary to prevent piracy and to introduce Indonesian cuisine to the world through a systematic documentation system that facilitates and supports the popularity of these dishes. On the other hand, the growth and development of Indonesian cuisine, which often starts from the lower and middle classes, including food stalls and street vendors, is often not well documented. The challenge that remains a shared task is synergy with all relevant elements. The current weakness of gastrodiplomacy is considered to be caused by each relevant party attempting to promote national cuisine with their own strategies and methods. Coordination and information sharing between relevant agencies in handling this issue is still lacking, so that gastrodiplomacy has not been implemented optimally.⁴⁵ A leading sector is needed in this regard so that this national interest can be comprehensively

⁴² Adirini Pujayanti, *Gastrodiplomacy – Efforts to Strengthen Indonesian Diplomacy*, *Politica Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 1 May 2017, hlm.50

⁴³ *Ibid.*, hlm. 50–51

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, hlm. 51

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, hlm. 52

implemented by involving all parties capable of promoting the implementation of gastrodiplomacy policies.

Sanger, despite its potential as an instrument of gastrodiplomacy, also has challenges, especially related to its potential in the future. Some of the challenges faced by sanger are also challenges in general for the Indonesian government in order to develop this gastrodiplomacy politics. Some of these challenges will be described in more detail below: One of the challenges faced by Sanger is the effort to increase popularity.⁴⁶ At the local level, especially in the capital city of Banda Aceh, the fame of sanger coffee is no longer in doubt. Sanger coffee is one of the most favorite variants by coffee lovers in coffee shops throughout Aceh. The taste of coffee combined with sweetened condensed milk cream is excellent, especially among Acehnese young people who want a lighter coffee taste. The popularity of this sanger coffee dish has increased since the commemoration of *Sanger Day* in 2014. The agenda, which is planned to be held annually, is intended to introduce sanger more massively and promote tourism in Aceh.

Based on local popularity, it can be said that sanger has been quite successfully recognized by the people of Aceh. However, this local popularity has not succeeded in introducing sanger at the national level or outside the Aceh region. Still, this sanger coffee variant still sounds unfamiliar to other people outside Aceh Province. This shows that its big name in the region has not succeeded in boosting it to national fame. Meanwhile, one of the government's considerations in choosing a gastrodiplomacy instrument is that the dish is well known by the public and easily found throughout Indonesia. The Aceh government through its agencies has made various efforts and found strategic steps to popularize sanger more widely. The Aceh coffee festival, which is an annual agenda of the Aceh government, is considered as one of the right steps to continue introducing sanger to the public. However, it must be recognized that this effort is not yet fully reliable. Other effective strategies and efforts are needed. Another challenge faced in addition to the lack of recognition of sanger outside Aceh is finding the importance of sanger for the social and cultural life of the people of Aceh.⁴⁷ As previously described, *Nation Branding* is one of the important aspects prioritized in gastrodiplomacy. *Nation Branding* that is carried out in conjunction with gastrodiplomacy refers to the identity of a nation. National identity refers to the character of the nation, its traditions, culture and language.

These socio-cultural values are needed to explain that sanger in this context has an important meaning for the cultural identity of the people of Aceh. These cultural values will then be able to help deliver sanger into an instrument that should be taken into account in the practice of gastrodiplomacy. The whole community and also the local government need to find and package these cultural identity values as part of the culinary wealth that helps preserve Acehnese culture. Instead of only being remembered as a culinary dish, sanger needs to show another side of its existence as Aceh's cultural wealth. Another challenge that

⁴⁶ Interview with Ms. Evi Mayasari, A.K.S., M.Si, Head of the History and Cultural Values Division of the Aceh Culture and Tourism Office, in Banda Aceh on May 28, 2024

⁴⁷ Interview with Ms. Evi Mayasari, A.K.S., M.Si, Head of the History and Cultural Values Division of the Aceh Culture and Tourism Office, in Banda Aceh on May 28, 2024

sanger will face in the future as part of gastrodiploamacy is becoming part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.⁴⁸ As previously described, although the Indonesian government in this case does not yet have specific requirements for the selection of gastrodiploamacy instruments, culinary delights that have been registered in the Intangible Cultural Heritage will be prioritized. While Aceh's culinary delights that are currently registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage are *Keumamah*, *Kuah Beulangong*, *Memek*, *Apam*, *Sie Reuboh*, *Ie Bu Peudah*, *Pisang Sale*, *Terasi Langsa*, and several other foods.⁴⁹

There are at least 3 things that must be considered to get the status as Intangible Cultural Heritage, namely, the way of presentation, the value formed, and the way it is made.⁵⁰ All three are one of the assessments to get the status as Intangible Cultural Heritage. The way of serving and the manufacturing process that is considered unique but still consistent is very essential in this case. Even though it has reached a long age, the process and presentation should not be eroded by time. And the most important thing is also to find the values formed from the culinary that correlate with the social and cultural life of the community.

Based on the criteria required for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), what sanger still lacks is a minimum existence of 50 years. This is certainly not something that can be forced quickly, but will be fulfilled in line with its development in the future. However, for other criteria, it requires the role of all parties, especially the Aceh regional government, to explore, promote, and introduce the philosophical and historical values that are important to the cultural identity of the Acehnese people. In this case, the author uses the term "challenge" rather than "obstacle." This is because the researcher sees that sanger has sufficient potential to become part of the Indonesian government's gastrodiploamacy toolkit. In addition, the researcher also sees that there are no significant obstacles in this context. Everything that Sanger has not yet fulfilled in this case becomes a challenge for all parties in Aceh, namely the Aceh Regional Government and the Acehnese community in general. This means that these challenges can be overcome by creating synergy with all parties involved in this matter.

Conclusion

The practice of *soft diplomacy* through gastrodiploamacy carried out by the government of the Republic of Indonesia has become one of the national strategic programs, especially during the presidency of Joko Widodo. One of the important missions to be achieved from this agenda is as an effort aimed at promoting a positive image of the nation at the global level. In addition, as part of introducing Indonesia's national identity through

⁴⁸ Interview with Ms. Evi Mayasari, A.K.S., M.Si, Head of the History and Cultural Values Division of the Aceh Culture and Tourism Office, in Banda Aceh on May 28, 2024

⁴⁹ Interview with Ms. Evi Mayasari, A.K.S., M.Si, Head of the History and Cultural Values Division of the Aceh Culture and Tourism Office, in Banda Aceh on May 28, 2024.

⁵⁰ Interview with Ms. Evi Mayasari, A.K.S., M.Si, Head of History and Cultural Values of the Aceh Culture and Tourism Office, in Banda Aceh on May 28, 2024.

culinary which can be the beginning of Indonesia's diplomacy and foreign policy agenda. Various types of Indonesian food and beverages have successfully become instruments of gastrodiplomacy so far in carrying out diplomacy agendas and cultural missions. And one that is quite popular abroad and has become a mainstay instrument in gastrodiplomacy is coffee from various regions in Indonesia. Indonesian-style coffee diplomacy has succeeded in building partnership cooperation in the political field and encouraging the growth and development of the coffee commodity in Indonesia so far.

All Indonesian food and beverages have the same opportunity and potential to become an instrument of gastrodiplomacy by the Government of Indonesia. This is because the government until now does not have specific requirements governing the selection of these instruments. Until indirectly it can be understood that Indonesian cuisine has the same opportunity. So does the sanger.

Sanger has challenges to face, especially in the future. These challenges require a quick and appropriate response from various parties, especially from the Aceh government. The first challenge is related to its popularity which is considered not widely known by people outside Aceh. *Well known* and easy to find and serve is one of the reasons for the government to determine the instrument. The popularity of sanger needs to expand at the national level which makes the government consider sanger as one of the icons of contemporary coffee concoctions that are easily accepted by the international community.

Another challenge that needs attention is finding the social and cultural values of sanger that can become part of the nation's identity. These essential values are considered to contribute to efforts to disseminate the *national identity* of the Indonesian nation which is expected to inspire and be adopted in the culture of the international community universally. For example, the value of establishing friendship, hospitality, or the value of tolerance that characterizes the Indonesian nation.

Becoming part of the *Intangible Cultural Heritage* or popularly known as the *intangible* cultural heritage is also a challenge for sanger that has not been successfully achieved. However, this is understandable given the age of sanger, which has not reached the minimum of 50 years to be registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Culinary delights that have been declared as intangible cultural heritage will have a greater potential to be included in gastrodiplomacy tools even though it is not an absolute requirement. Related to this, what can be done is only to wait for the next few years so that sanger can meet the age requirements to be registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage. We can understand then that the challenges faced by sanger in the context of gastrodiplomacy are practically the challenge of popularizing sanger more massively and widely and the challenge of finding the importance of sanger's existence in the form of noble values that are part of the identity of the people of Aceh and the Indonesian nation as a whole.

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