



GASTRONOMY IN MUSTIKARASA: EXPLORING SOFT-POWER RESOURCE IN SUKARNO'S GASTRODIPLOMACY

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Abstrak

Buku memasak Mustikarasa yang disusun oleh Presiden Sukarno menunjukkan potensi pentingnya gastronomi di dalam praktik gastrodiplomasi Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji mengapa Sukarno mendokumentasikan aset-aset gastronomi dalam bentuk buku Mustikarasa dan bagaimana posisi gastronomi dalam gastrodiplomasi presiden. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori soft power Joseph Nye dan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan penggunaan studi literatur. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Sukarno menyusun Mustikarasa karena memandang gastronomi Indonesia sebagai sumber soft power. Ia menilai bahwa gastronomi dapat menjadi sumber soft power karena mengandung nilai-nilai budaya, sejarah, dan filosofi yang dalam. Presiden ingin memanfaatkan nilai-nilai tersebut untuk membangun citra dan posisi bangsa Indonesia di dunia internasional. Bagi Sukarno, nilai-nilai tersebut penting karena merupakan bagian dari identitas Indonesia yang presiden ingin kenalkan dan promosikan secara global melalui gastrodiplomasi. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memperkaya literatur tentang Mustikarasa karena menunjukkan posisi penting buku masak ini dalam gastrodiplomasi pertama Indonesia dalam implementasi politik luar negeri Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: *gastrodiplomasi; gastronomi; kebijakan luar negeri Indonesia; Mustikarasa, Sukarno*

Abstract

The national cookbook Mustikarasa composed by President Sukarno shows the potential significance of Indonesian gastronomy in the practice of Indonesian gastrodiploacy. This study aims to examine gastronomic assets documented in Mustikarasa, exploring Sukarno's gastrodiploacy maneuver that led to the making of the cookbook. To that end, this study uses Joseph Nye's soft power theory, employing a qualitative method with study literature in place. This study finds that Sukarno composed Mustikarasa because he perceived Indonesian gastronomy as a soft power resource. He viewed gastronomy as a soft power resource for its rich cultural, historical, and philosophical values, which he sought to use to enhance Indonesia's global image and stature. For the president, those values were central to Indonesian identity, which he sought to promote globally through gastrodiploacy post-independence. This study contributes to enriching existing literature on Mustikarasa, positioning the cookbook as a pivotal element in Indonesia's first gastrodiploacy in the implementation of its foreign policy.

Keywords: *gastrodiploacy; gastronomy; Indonesian foreign policy; Mustikarasa, Sukarno*

Introduction

During President Sukarno's tenure, he met with the challenges of building political stability, maintaining national unity, and addressing a struggling post-independence economy (Wuryandari, 2008, p. 241). Amid such challenges, he rolled out a policy of documenting gastronomic assets and attractions across the archipelago, publishing it in a cookbook entitled *Buku Masakan Indonesia Mustikarasa* (Indonesian Cookbook of Mustikarasa). This cookbook marks President Sukarno's lasting contribution to Indonesian culinary heritage. Published in 1967, Mustikarasa remains the country's first and only national cookbook, encompassing 1,207 pages and featuring 1,300 recipes from various cities and regions across the archipelago. Beyond recipes, the book includes essays by nutritionists, architects, and other food industry professionals on topics such as nutrition, kitchen design, and cooking methods, including instructions for preparing *ketupat* (rice cake) and designing efficient kitchen layouts (Warianto, 2016).

The idea of composing Mustikarasa arose from Sukarno's recognition of Indonesia's abundant gastronomic resources. This realization inspired him to instruct his administration to document these assets in a comprehensive book. Sukarno aimed to raise public awareness about the richness of Indonesia's spices and culinary heritage, believing that such understanding could help combat hunger by teaching people how to utilize the country's diverse food resources. Consequently, Mustikarasa became a key component of his nationwide food security initiative (Warianto, 2016).

With Mustikarasa in place, Sukarno also intended to globally introduce and promote Indonesian cuisine. He sought to expose the wealth of Indonesian gastronomy assets in Mustikarasa, perceiving it as a soft power resource in its foreign policy. The president expected to use the soft power resource to internationally show the national identity of the country through gastrodiploamacy. In the implementation of his foreign policy, Sukarno produced Mustikarasa as part of his endeavor to do gastrodiploamacy, to showcase the identity of Indonesia, particularly the dimensions of history, philosophy, and cultural settings of its food.

Indonesia's extensive gastronomic wealth serves as a form of national branding, which Sukanro sought to promote through gastrodiploamacy. Rockower (2012) describes gastrodiploamacy as a nation-branding strategy that uses food to raise global awareness of a country's culinary and cultural heritage. In gastrodiploamacy, a country attempts to

communicate culinary culture to foreign publics (Rockower, 2012, p. 237). This paper, therefore, examines the culinary culture that President Sukarno sought to convey through Mustika Rasa, focusing on the cultural values embedded in the gastronomic assets featured in the cookbook.

This is the first research to examine Indonesian gastronomy in Mustikarasa as a soft power resource in Sukarno's foreign policy. According to Nye (2004), soft power means the ability to shape the preferences of others to achieve desired outcomes. To exercise soft power, a nation must possess resources, referred to as soft power resources, which include culture. Gastronomic assets, such as food, embody cultural values and are therefore a significant soft power resource. Sukarno's decision to compose Mustikarasa reflects his belief in the cultural importance of Indonesia's gastronomy and its potential as a soft power resource. His recognition of the cultural values embedded in the nation's diverse culinary assets underscores this perspective.

Employing soft power theory, this research contributes to the limited body of literature on Mustikarasa. While studies on this cookbook are scarce, Fadly Rahman is one of the few scholars who has thoroughly explored it. A historian at Universitas Padjajaran, Rahman examined Mustikarasa from a historical perspective in his research article, *Kuliner sebagai Identitas Keindonesiaan* (Culinary as Indonesian Identity). He argued that Sukarno created the cookbook to establish a national identity through food after Indonesia's independence. According to Rahman, the president sought to remove colonial influences from Dutch Indies cuisine and replace them with what the president termed *masakan Indonesia* (Indonesian cuisine) as part of his efforts to define the nation's identity (Rahman, 2018, p. 43). Although Mustikarasa has been referenced in studies about specific foods like sambal (Rahmah & Ansori, 2023; Surya & Tedjakusuma, 2022) and tempeh (Shurtleff & Aoyagi, 1984), these works provide only limited insights into the cookbook itself.

Unlike Fadly Rahman, Agus Trihartono, the co-founder of the Center for Gastrodiplomacy Studies, analyzed Mustikarasa through the lens of gastrodiplomacy. In his book *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy), the lecturer from the International Relations Department at Universitas Jember argued that the creation of Mustikarasa was an initial step in Sukarno's broader effort to catalog and inventory Indonesia's culinary assets. Trihartono highlighted the importance of this inventory in

Sukarno's gastrodiploamacy strategy and referred to the president's initiative as "Indonesian Gastrodiploamacy 1.0" (Trihartono et al., 2023). However, Trihartono's work did not delve deeply into the exploration of gastronomic assets in Mustikarasa for Sukarno's gastrodiploamacy. This study addresses that gap by examining Sukarno's gastrodiploamacy practices and exploring the representation of Indonesian gastronomy in Mustikarasa, including the nation's culinary assets that the president viewed as soft power resources to reach national interests for the implementation of Indonesian foreign policy.

This study raises a research question: why did Sukarno document Indonesian gastronomic assets in Mustikarasa? We argue that the president compiled the assets because he viewed gastronomy as a soft power resource for conducting gastrodiploamacy, which he considered crucial for gaining international recognition for Indonesia as a newly independent nation. To explore this, this study has two main sections. First, the literature review discusses the concepts of gastronomy, gastrodiploamacy, and soft power explaining their interconnections. Second, the analysis then focuses on Sukarno's emphasis on gastrodiploamacy within his foreign policy, his creation of Mustikarasa as a tool for this strategy, and his perception of Indonesian gastronomy as a significant soft power resource for the nation.

Literature Review

Sukarno made Mustikarasa to document Indonesian gastronomic assets across the archipelago. The inventory of Indonesian gastronomy was important because it captured the rich cultural and historical values embedded in Indonesia's cuisine. The depth of history, philosophy, and cultural setting associated with Indonesian gastronomy served as a soft power resource for Sukarno. He aimed to leverage this resource in his gastrodiploamacy endeavor to project Indonesia's identity on the global stage. To provide a framework for understanding this, this section explores gastronomy, gastrodiploamacy, and soft power.

Gastronomy

Gastronomy is commonly defined as the art of cooking and enjoying good food. However, gastronomy has a larger scope of definition because it also reflects the relationship between food and culture. In gastronomy, the relationship allows people not only to taste food, but also prepare, experience, experiment, research, discover, understand, and document it (Kivela & Crotts, 2006, p. 354). Thus, gastronomy encompasses more than just food – it represents the culture, traditions, heritage, and sense of community of different people. Gastronomy fosters cross-cultural understanding and strengthens connections between people and traditions. Jean Anthelme Brillat Savarin defines gastronomy as the knowledge of everything related to humans as they eat. Gastronomy aims to ensure survival through the best possible nourishment (Savarin, 1825).

Gastronomy has four major areas: practical gastronomy, theoretical gastronomy, technical gastronomy, and food gastronomy. Practical gastronomy focuses on the production, preparation, and service of food and beverages across the globe. Theoretical gastronomy supports practical gastronomy by providing recipes, cookery books, and written guidance to enhance culinary practices. Technical gastronomy bridges small-scale operations with mass production, evaluating aspects like food, equipment, and production methods. Food gastronomy delves into the origins of food and beverages (Gillespie & Cousins, 2001).

The term gastronomy derives from the words *gaster* (stomach) and *nomos* (rules), signifying the rules governing eating and drinking. Gastronomy encompasses not only how food is cooked, prepared, and served, but also about when, where, how, and with whom it is consumed. As such, gastronomy involves the entire process of food production, service, and consumption (Rojas-Rivas et al., 2020, p. 1).

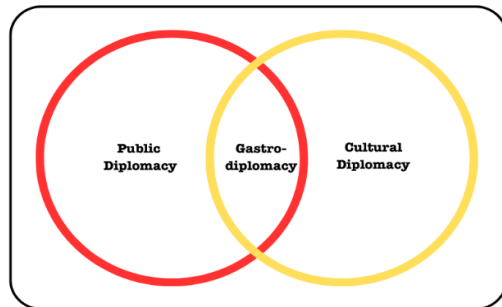
Gastrodiplomacy

For Rockower (2012), gastrodiplomacy involves winning hearts and minds through the stomach. Gastrodiplomacy lies at the intersection of food and foreign policy, meaning that a country uses food as a medium for gastrodiplomacy to enhance awareness of its national brand in the implementation of its foreign policy. As a form of public diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy blends elements of nation branding, cultural diplomacy, and culinary diplomacy to make foreign cultures appealing and tangible to others (Rockower, 2012, p. 235). Gastrodiplomacy functions as edible nation branding. For years, middle-power countries like Thailand and South Korea have utilized gastrodiplomacy to enhance their national image and promote cultural understanding. More recently, major powers like the United States have also adopted gastrodiplomacy, taking a different approach by emphasizing regional diversity and highlighting the unique characteristics of their cuisines (Sonenshine et al., 2016, p. 10).

Rockower described gastrodiplomacy as the intersection of food and foreign policy, explaining that gastrodiplomacy enables countries to use their cuisine to convey their culture. It involves sharing a nation's heritage, history, and traditions through food to connect with international audiences. The appeal of gastrodiplomacy lies in its ability to inspire people and enable diaspora communities to celebrate and share their cultural roots (Sonenshine et al., 2016, p. 10).

Trihartono & Rihandini (2017), meanwhile, view gastrodiplomacy as positioned at the crossroads of cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy. They argue that gastrodiplomacy intersects with cultural diplomacy by using food as a cultural asset to foster mutual understanding between nations. Gastrodiplomacy intersects with public diplomacy by targeting the public as both the audience and participants in its campaign. This dual engagement highlights how gastrodiplomacy integrates aspects of both public and cultural diplomacy (Trihartono & Rihandini, 2017, p. 39).

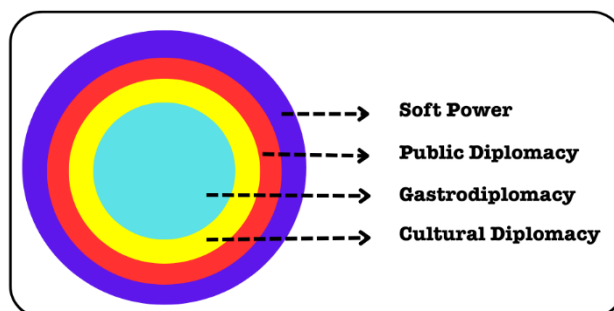
Figure 1 - The Intersection of Public Diplomacy, Gastrodiplomacy, and Cultural Diplomacy



Source: Trihartono & Rihandini, p. (2017, p. 39)

Ulung (2023) considers gastrodiplomacy to be a subset of cultural diplomacy, reasoning that gastronomic assets used in gastrodiplomacy are inherently cultural products. In cultural diplomacy, elements such as art, ideas, and other cultural artifacts are exchanged to foster mutual understanding among nations. Cultural diplomacy aims to win hearts and minds through culture and is itself a component of public diplomacy, as it also targets the public in transferring cultural values and practices from one country to another (Ulung, 2023, p. 8). Muljabar (2024) also opines that gastrodiplomacy is part of cultural diplomacy, arguing that gastrodiplomacy aims to increase awareness of a nation's image and form national identity through food. A country uses gastrodiplomacy to get better respect, have a stronger mutual understanding, and obtain a better national image in a subtle way (Muljabar, 2024, p. 86).

Figure 2 - The Position of Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy, and Gastrodiplomacy



Source: Ulung, p. (2023, p. 8)

Forman (2024), meanwhile, views gastrodiploamacy as a branch of public diplomacy. She argues that as a subset of public diplomacy, gastrodiploamacy leverages food to influence audiences by showcasing the power of cuisine in advancing specific foreign policy objectives. Similar to public diplomacy, gastrodiploamacy aims to reshape how a country is perceived internationally, working under the assumption that a nation's image or brand can be strategically managed to win favor with foreign audiences. By highlighting their culinary traditions, countries can foster cultural familiarity and understanding among outsiders, aligning with the broader goals of public diplomacy. Additionally, gastrodiploamacy supports economic growth by promoting food products and boosting tourism (Forman, 2024, p. 7).

Despite such varying perspectives, we argue that gastrodiploamacy is a form of soft power used by both state and non-state actors through food to help a country reach national interests or the objectives of its foreign policy. In practicing gastrodiploamacy, actors communicate the cultural and historical values of food to reach national interests, such as establishing a nation's brand and identity. In gastrodiploamacy, the actors include government and non-state actors, from citizens, chefs, and food corporations, to tourist agencies (Forman, 2024, p. 3). Gastrodiploamacy allows them to use food as the medium of communication. In gastrodiploamacy, they perceive food as an attraction, a major element in soft power. The use of food as an attraction shows that food can function as a key soft power resource.

Gastrodiploamacy enhances a country's soft power by leveraging its culinary heritage to influence international perceptions and foster cultural connections. Gastrodiploamacy uses food as a tool to promote national identity, cultural exchange, and economic opportunities, thereby strengthening a nation's global image. Various countries have successfully implemented gastrodiploamacy, showing the potential use of cuisine to become a bridge between cultures and a means of achieving foreign policy goals. Gastrodiploamacy contributes to a country's soft power by using cuisine to reshape foreign perceptions and promote specific foreign policy goals. By showcasing culinary traditions, a country can enhance its image and foster goodwill among the foreign public (Forman, 2024, p. 7)

Soft Power

According to Joseph Nye, soft power means the ability to get others to desire the outcomes you want, achieved through attraction rather than coercion. It involves shaping others' preferences through allure and persuasion, emphasizing the power of attraction, which often leads to compliance. Thus, soft power is fundamentally an attractive form of influence, and the elements that generate this appeal are referred to as soft-power resources (Nye, 2004, p. 6).

Nye identifies three soft-power resources: culture, political values, and foreign policies. Culture becomes soft-power when it appeals to others. Political values contribute to soft power when they resonate with people both domestically and internationally. Similarly, foreign policies gain soft power when perceived as legitimate and morally sound. In international politics, culture is a primary source of soft power (Nye, 2004, p. 8). Defined as a set of meaningful values and practices for society, culture is most effective when its values are universal, fostering a relationship of attraction and mutual obligation. Culture has two types, namely high culture and popular culture. High culture includes art, education, and literature, while popular culture focuses on mass entertainment (Nye, 2004, p. 11).

Unlike Nye, Lee (2009) calls culture a soft resource. Soft resources are symbolic assets that influence others. Examples of soft resources include ideas, images, traditions, education, and national or global symbols (Lee, 2009, p. 209). However, these soft resources must be actively used to generate soft power. Unused resources cannot exert influence. For instance, education is a soft resource, but it cannot produce soft power unless it is strategically employed to guide others toward specific outcomes (Lee, 2009, p. 210).

Food is increasingly recognized as a soft power resource in diplomacy, offering a way to express influence while showcasing culture and identity. It plays a vital role in public diplomacy, conveying messages of goodwill or discord, and strengthening a nation’s global image (Luša & Jakešević, 2017). As a key element of cultural diplomacy, food allows political entities, including governments and corporations, to promote their values and ideologies, enhancing their reputation on the world stage. Food can serve as a means of exerting influence and control in political and social contexts, making it an effective tool for building relationships and shaping perceptions on an international scale (Reynolds, 2012).

Former American President John F. Kennedy highlighted the importance of soft power, describing the ability to attract and shape opinions as a form of power (Nye, 2004, p. 9). A country’s ability to influence others lies in the appeal of its culture and values (Nye, 2004, p. 7). If a country possesses attractive cultural and ideological elements, others are more inclined to follow its lead. Furthermore, when a country aligns international norms with its interests and values, its actions are more likely to be perceived as legitimate (Nye, 2004, p. 11).

Table 1 - Soft Power Sources, Referees, and Receivers

Sources of Soft Power	Referees for Credibility or Legitimacy	Receivers of Soft Power
High Culture	Governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)	Foreign governments and the publics
Pop Culture	Media, markets	Foreign publics
Domestic values and policies	Media, NGOs, IGOs	Foreign governments and the publics
Foreign Policies	Governments, media, NGOs, IGOs	Foreign governments and the publics

Source: Nye, p. (2008, p. 107)

Trisni & Putri (2023) argue that public diplomacy can also generate soft power. Public diplomacy enables a country to gain soft power by understanding the preferences of its target audience and tailoring its efforts to appeal to them effectively. This approach ensures that public diplomacy is attractive to its intended audience (Trisni & Putri, 2023, p. 9). Soft power operates in two ways: directly and indirectly. Directly, it targets foreign governments to influence their behavior. Indirectly, it focuses on foreign publics, with the expectation that these publics will, in turn, influence their governments' behavior (Trisni & Putri, 2023, p. 6).

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative method to explain how gastronomy serves as a soft-power resource in the cookbook *Mustikarasa*, created by President Sukarno for his gastrodiploMACY initiatives. As defined by Hennink et al. (2020), qualitative research focuses on understanding people's experiences through methods such as interviews, observation, content analysis, and literature review. These methods enable researchers to grasp individual perspectives and interpretations of specific events, objects, and behaviors. As such, for this research, we utilize a literature review to examine the gastronomic assets in *Mustikarasa* and understand Sukarno's gastrodiploMACY. Data is collected, refined, and analyzed from various sources, including books, academic journals, and other writings related to *Mustikarasa* and Sukarno's gastrodiploMACY.

Discussion

This research focuses on explaining why Sukarno's administration documented Indonesian gastronomy in *Mustikarasa*. Using Nye's soft-power theory, we argue that the first president of Indonesia documented the inventory of gastronomic assets and attractions in Indonesia because he projected the country's gastronomy as a soft power resource. For Sukarno, the wealth of gastronomic assets across the archipelago is an attraction. He sought to use the attraction as a soft power resource to do gastrodiploMACY to raise international awareness that Indonesia was a force to be reckoned with.

Sukarno's Gastrodiplomacy in Indonesian Foreign Policy

When still in office, President Sukarno engaged in gastrodiplomacy long before the term was coined. Gastrodiplomacy took place in a way that the president promoted Indonesian cuisines at various international events, most notably during the Asia-Africa Conference (KAA) in Bandung, West Java, in 1955, to make foreign people aware of Indonesia's rich gastronomic assets and attractions. For Sukarno, their awareness mattered because it could enhance Indonesia's image on a global stage. At the KAA, Sukarno showcased traditional dishes to international delegates, such as *satay*, *soto* (chicken soup), *gado-gado* (peanut salad), and *gulai* (curry) (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 67). He selected the menu, particularly favoring *satay* and *gulai*. In the international events, Sukarno's involvement extended beyond menu selection as he also actively monitored the chefs in the kitchen during these events (Trihartono et al., 2023, p. 57).

When practicing gastrodiplomacy, Sukarno explained the cultural significance of the Indonesian food that he showcased. The president used gastrodiplomacy to make cultural and historical values behind the food tangible to the taste and touch of foreign people. *Gado-gado*, for example, symbolizes Indonesia's national motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which translates as unity in diversity. *Gado-gado*, which is made with ingredients like tofu, tempeh, potatoes, eggs, peanut sauce, and other vegetables, represents the harmony of diverse elements that come together in one dish. For Sukarno, this culinary delight embodied the unity of the country despite its many ethnicities, religions, and cultures, making it one of his favorites (Adams, 2020, p. 20). He saw food as a tool to build bridges between nations, highlight its cultural richness, and enhance its global image. Sukarno believed that by enriching local culture, Indonesia could withstand the influence of foreign cultures and preserve its identity (Hana, 2021).

In the implementation of his foreign policy, Sukarno sought to position Indonesia as a leader among newly independent nations confronting colonialism and imperialism (Anwar, 2013, p. 10). His foreign policy, therefore, emphasized anti-colonialism, decolonization, and the preservation of national sovereignty. He viewed imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism as adversaries of Indonesia. His foreign policy focused on eliminating these adversaries, as they conflicted with the two main objectives of the Indonesian revolution that he wanted to realize: establishing a unitary state and achieving a just and prosperous society (Sukma, 1995, p. 309). He prioritized

completing the decolonization process by strengthening Indonesia's independence against colonial and imperialist powers (Anwar, 2009, p. 16). From 1957 onward, anti-colonialism became a central theme in Sukarno's foreign policy (Batabyal, 2002, p. 32). For newly independent nations, safeguarding national sovereignty often becomes a key priority in their foreign policy (Anwar, 2003, p. 71). Sukarno's emphasis on anti-colonialism and decolonization in his foreign policy then influenced his approach to gastrodiploamacy. He advocated for the Indonesian government to showcase Indonesian cuisine to international audiences, particularly during international conferences held in Indonesia, as a reflection of national identity and pride. He saw these events as opportunities to highlight Indonesia's rich culinary heritage and enhance the country's image on the global stage through gastrodiploamacy.

Figure 1 — President Sukarno, Vice President Moh. Hatta, and Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo had a lunch with the delegates of KAA on April 18, 1955 at Savoy Homann Hotel in Bandung, West Java.



Source: The National Library of Indonesia

During the KAA, Indonesia also offered a selection of traditional snacks, such as *klepon* (mochi-like rice balls filled with palm sugar syrup), *pukis* (coconut milk cake), *bika ambon* (a Medanese specialty treat made from tapioca flour), *dawet* (sweet treat), *kue lapis* (layer cake), and *lemper* (savory glutinous rice snack). The Indonesian food and snacks served in the KAA closely resembled that of the 1954 Bogor Conference,

according to Foreign Affairs Minister Roeslan Abdulgani. Sukarno instructed the minister to do so (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 67; Utama, 2017, p. 96). Held in Bogor, West Java, the Bogor Conference was a percussor to the KAA. The KAA itself, attended by delegates from 29 countries, took place in Bandung, where the delegates united to confront imperialism (Eslava et al., 2017, p. 9).

Gastrodiplomacy carried out by Sukarno in the international conferences showed how he considered Indonesian gastronomy important in his foreign policy. He believed that promoting local cuisine on a global stage could instill pride among Indonesians in their rich culinary heritage. Sukarno took great pride in the variety of Indonesian dishes and wanted his fellow citizens to share this sentiment. He observed that many Indonesians lacked confidence in their traditional food, attributing this to a social perception that European cuisine was superior, a belief rooted in the colonial influence of the Netherlands. Viewing this mindset as a remnant of colonialism, Sukarno aimed to challenge and dismantle it through gastrodiplomacy (Trihartono et al., 2023, p. 55).

Sukarno would raise his eyebrows in disapproval if the palace served him foreign food. He once reprimanded the spouses of his ministers for presenting him European dishes, questioning why they did not offer Indonesian cuisine, despite the country's rich variety of delicious culinary delights. The president expressed embarrassment over the European dishes, suggesting they symbolized an unconscious sense of inferiority among Indonesians after gaining independence. He attributed this inferiority to Dutch colonial rule, which Sukarno explained, had belittled Indonesians for centuries. This colonial experience led to a loss of confidence in many aspects of their lives, including their culinary heritage. The president aimed to eradicate this sense of inferiority (Adams, 2020, p. 18).

Figure 2 – President Sukarno dan Vice President M. Hatta dine in with the delegates of KAA in a dinner in April 1955



Source: The National Library of Indonesia

Sukarno's emphasis on gastrodiploMACY was well understood by his prime minister, Ali Sastroamidjojo. At the KAA, Ali used luncheons and dinner parties as opportunities to conduct negotiations in response to security issues in Asia. This approach matters because Indonesian foreign policy, which holds the Free and Active principles, mandates the country to actively contribute to global peace. At the time, one major security concern revolved around the escalating tension between China and the United States over Taiwan. On April 23, 1955, the Indonesian prime minister hosted a "political" dinner in his bungalow in Ciumbuluit, inviting Chinese Prime Minister Chou En Lai to discuss the issue with the representatives of the conference's sponsoring countries. These included Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Sri Lankan Prime Minister John Kotelawala, Pakistani Prime Minister Moh. Ali Bogra, and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu. Ali also invited the representatives of Thailand and the Philippines to the dinner, namely Thai Foreign Minister Prince Wan Waithayakon and Filipino General Carlos P. Romulo (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 149).

Prime Minister Ali organized the political dinner to encourage Prime Minister Chou En Lai of China to openly share China's stance on the Taiwan issue. Before the dinner, Chou En Lai had privately stated in a closed meeting that China did not seek war with the US and aimed to solve all conflicts through peaceful means. Prime Minister Ali

wanted Chou En Lai's statement to be shared openly with the delegates of KAA and the public. For Ali, Chou En Lai's openness would dispel tensions surrounding the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. Ali viewed that the statement could enhance regional stability because it could reduce security dilemmas and ease security concerns across the Far East, Southeast Asia, and Southern Asia (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 150).

Ali's negotiation over the dining table worked, thanks to gastrodiploamacy. The Indonesian prime minister managed to persuade Chou En Lai to share China's position on the Taiwan dispute. The Chinese prime minister explained that the Taiwan dispute was a domestic matter for China, providing a historical context to emphasize that Taiwan was an integral part of mainland China. He stated that the Chinese government sought to resolve the matter with the government in exile of Chiang Kai Shek, but opposed any external interference. According to En Lai, the U.S. involvement complicated direct negotiations with the Chiang Kai Sek administration, as China viewed the U.S. presence in Taiwan, including the deployment of the American Seventh Fleet around the Islands of Quemoy and Matsu, as an occupation. En Lai told the delegates of KAA that China did not desire war with the US. While acknowledging the US's superior military power, he stressed that if war became unavoidable, China would defend itself with all its strength. However, China remained committed to peaceful negotiations to resolve the Taiwan issue (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 151). Prime Minister Ali also managed to persuade Chou En Lai to publicly share that statement with journalists, especially foreign correspondents and the American press. In a press conference, En Lai said:

"The Chinese people are friendly to the American people. The Chinese people do not want to have a war with the United States of America. The Chinese government is willing to sit down and enter into negotiations with the United States Government to discuss the question of relaxing tension in the Far East, and especially the question of relaxing tension in the Taiwan area (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 151)."

Chou En Lai's remark made global headlines, marking the first time the prime minister openly addressed the issue. The Chinese government, previously known to be tight-lipped about the issue, took a significant step by releasing that statement (Abdulgani, 1981, p. 152). It later contributed to paving the way for the normalization of the relations between China and the US in the 1970s, thanks to Indonesian gastrodiploamacy in the KAA.

Sukarno's gastrodiploamacy also frequently took place when the president hosted bilateral meetings. On one occasion, he presented *nasi goreng ayam* (Indonesian chicken fried rice) to the American Ambassador to Indonesia, Howard Jones, during a visit to Bogor Palace in West Java. Knowing the ambassador's fondness for the dish, Sukarno had his wife, Hartini, prepare it. Sukarno set up the meeting in a relaxed setting, with the president dressed casually in a t-shirt and shoeless (Adams, 2020, p. 8). Sukarno also ate the dish by hand, a well-known habit in Indonesia. For certain dishes, Indonesians like to devour food with their hands to get the strong smell of the cuisine's signature spices sticking to their hand and get a certain feeling of happiness. Jones understood the cultural importance of Indonesian food to Sukarno and reciprocated by serving *nasi goreng* when hosting the president at his official residence. Jones became the first ambassador to successfully invite Sukarno to visit the official residences of foreign ambassadors (Sitompul, 2018a).

For Sukarno, food reflects the image of a country. Food can support the implementation of foreign policy through gastrodiploamacy. Therefore, the presentation of food held significant importance for the president. In the 1950s, Sukarno instructed the committee of Dharma Wanita, an organization for the wives of Indonesian civil servants, to prepare and serve Indonesian dishes elegantly. He appreciated beautifully arranged dishes on the table, stating that he adored beauty in all its forms (Adams, 2020, p. 7). The delicacy of Indonesian dishes served to his state guests reportedly played a part in Sukarno's diplomatic successes at the palace. Sukarno enjoyed engaging in discussions at a dining table. He was renowned for his ability to impress his conversation partners during these interactions. When hosting official state guests, the president effectively used a dining table as a platform for his diplomacy (Trihartono et al., 2023, p. 56).

Figure 3 – President Sukarno uses a dining table for negotiation during the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference



Source: The National Library of Indonesia

Sukarno recorded successes in gastrodiploamacy on his dining table when serving foreign leaders at the State Palace and Bogor Palace. Sukarno utilized the dining moments to create a warm and friendly atmosphere, leveraging traditional Indonesian dishes as a medium to introduce the nation's culture while establishing personal relationships with his guests. For example, Soviet Union Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev said that various culinary delights served by Sukarno during his visit to Indonesia had opened his eyes that Indonesia was rich not only in natural resources but also in culture and tradition (Sitompul, 2018b). At that time, to win Khrushchev's favor during his visit to Merdeka Palace in Jakarta on February 18, 1960, Sukarno served an array of Indonesian dishes at the banquet. Khrushchev expressed his appreciation for the meal, remarking that it contributed to strengthening the bond between the two leaders. Khrushchev also acknowledged that his visit to Indonesia deepened his understanding of Indonesia's rich culture and tradition, a message that Sukarno intentionally conveyed through his gastrodiploamacy (Sitompul, 2018b). Khrushchev's recognition of Indonesia's rich culture shows Sukarno's success in enhancing Indonesia's image through gastrodiploamacy.

Sukarno's gastrodiploamacy strengthened his bonds not only with Khrushchev but also with other world leaders, such as Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Yugoslavian leader Josip Broz Tito. His friendship with Nehru and Tito then contributed

to laying the groundwork for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), a coalition of third-world countries seeking an alternative to the dominant power blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union. NAM aimed to promote universal values, such as equality and freedom, in the polarized global politics during the Cold War (Aliyeva, 2023, p. 26). Sukarno demonstrated that diplomacy did not solely take place in formal meeting rooms but was also successfully carried out at the dining table by using culinary culture as an effective medium of communication, thanks to gastrodiplomacy.

When practicing gastrodiplomacy, Sukarno also involved local culinary players. Restaurant Madrawi, for example, was invited by the president to attend KAA in 1955 to cook satay and *gulai* for the lunch of its delegates. The dishes impressed the delegates, from Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Fadli Bajuri, the owner of the restaurant, recalled that Sukarno had been his regular customer since his days as a student at Technische Hoogeschool te Bandoeng, now Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). He particularly enjoyed eating satay at the restaurant (Miftah, 2018). Local snacks served in KAA were also made by local culinary players. For example, *colenak* (fermented cassava covered with liquid palm sugar and shredded coconut), was prepared by snack seller Murdi Putra. Murdi, who had been selling the Sundanese snack since 1930, was chosen by Sukarno to participate in KAA to introduce *colenak* during the conference due to its popularity and delicious taste (Azgara, 2023). Supiah, the daughter of Murdi, recounted that the government purchased 100 pieces of *colenak* for the conference, noting that each was sold Rp 7.5 at that time. She said that her family was astonished to learn that the snack had been served to the delegates of KAA from across the world (Tempo, 2019, p. 66).

Local culinary players who participated in the conference to serve the delegates were selected by Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo. Fadli Bajuri, the owner of the restaurant Madrawi, vividly recalled the moment when the prime minister asked him to cook for the event. For lunch, they walked from the conference venue to his restaurant. He still remembered that Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia ordered *gulai* (lamb curry) and *sate kambing* (lamb satay). While most delegates ate with spoons and forks, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Jawaharlal Nehru of India opted to eat with hands, following Indonesian custom. Gamal and Nehru amusingly drank water from the finger bowls that the restaurant provided for handwashing, prompting laughter when

they were gently corrected (Tempo, 2019, p. 71). The delegates dined at the restaurant almost daily during the conference. Bajuri shared that his restaurant was also tasked with serving dinner at Savoy Homann Hotel and Preanger Hotel (Tempo, 2019, p. 72).

President Sukarno also invited locals to volunteer for the KAA, helping him practice gastrodiploamacy during the conference. He tasked the volunteers to assist the international delegates of KAA and share the cultural significance of Indonesian dishes served at the event. Among the volunteers was Popong Otje Djunjunan, now a lawmaker, who was a high school student at the time. She recalled that her dormitory owner, Memed Sastrahadiprawira, informed her and her female friends about the government's recruitment of English-speaking female volunteers for the KAA. Djunjunan applied and was accepted. She remembered introducing the delegates to various Indonesian culinary delights, including *colenak*, *bajigur* (coffee with sugar and coconut milk), and *bandrek* (traditional drink made from spices, such as ginger and cinnamon) among others (Pangestu, 2023, p. 181).

Sukarno often expressed his fondness for Indonesian cuisines in various ways. After being sworn in as the Indonesian president, he marked the occasion by indulging in one of his favorite dishes, satay, and purchasing 50 skewers to celebrate (Wulan et al., 2021). Satay, however, was not Sukarno's only favorite dish. According to his granddaughter, Puti Guntur Soekarno, he also relished *opor ayam* (chicken curry), *sayur lodeh* (mixed vegetable cooked in coconut milk), and *sambal terasi* (stir-fried chili paste mixed with shrimp paste). Puti shared that Sukarno took great pride in local dishes and even tasked the spouses of regional leaders with recording signature foods in each city and then reporting them to the president. He was eager to explore the diversity of Indonesian gastronomic assets across the archipelago, believing that each city certainly had delicious specialties (Pandu, 2021).

During his international travels, Sukarno also actively promoted Indonesia's gastronomic assets through gastrodiploamacy. For example, when visiting Iraq in 1960, he introduced carp, a fish commonly consumed in Indonesia. Sukarno brought carp seeds and then released them into the Tigris River, where they thrived. Over time, the fish then became widely popular in Iraq, where locals began grilling the fish to make *Masgouf*. The grilled carp *Masgouf* eventually became Iraq's national dish. Recognizing

the fish's connection to Sukarno, the Iraqi people refer to Masgouf as "Sukarno fish" (Hakim, 2022).

The Making of Mustikarasa for Sukarno's Gastrodiplomacy

President Sukarno's promotion of Indonesia's rich culinary heritage at international events demonstrated his gastrodiplomacy in the implementation of Indonesian foreign policy. The practice of his gastrodiplomacy highlighted the significance of Indonesian gastronomy in his foreign policy. Recognizing the importance of documenting Indonesia's diverse gastronomic assets, Sukarno initiated the making of Mustikarasa cookbook. Sukarno needed the cookbook not only to boost national pride and address the nation's food security challenges but also to use it as a soft power resource to do gastrodiplomacy to showcase the country's culinary wealth on the global stage.

President Sukarno had great pride in Indonesian culinary assets as they were part of Indonesian identity. He believed that Indonesian cuisine was not inferior to European food. However, he noticed a lack of confidence among his people in culinary traditions. He attributed the lack of confidence to colonial-era perceptions that undermined Indonesian food. To dismantle this colonial legacy, Sukarno sought to uplift national pride in local cuisine (Trihartono et al., 2023, p. 55). The president was deeply disappointed by this lack of self-assurance, especially given Indonesia's wealth of gastronomic treasures. This situation was further exacerbated by a food shortage that Indonesia faced. In 1958, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that Indonesia's food stock was insufficient, a revelation that deeply concerned Sukarno. The shortage was caused by two key factors: political instability in the aftermath of independence and rapid population growth that outpaced rice production (Rahman, 2018).

The food shortage in Indonesia led to widespread famine, prompting both local and international news agencies to report the issue and question the country's food security. These news reports allegedly frustrated Sukarno because they tarnished Indonesia's international reputation. The president even dismissed the reports as false. This negative publicity allegedly played a part in motivating Sukarno to compose Mustikarasa. He intended to use the cookbook to counter the narratives in the 1960s (Rahman, 2016, p. 258). Over time, Sukarno took action against foreign journalists who

continued reporting on the famine, including Peter Arnett of the Associated Press. In his report, Arnett attributed the famine to the central government's mismanagement, which infuriated Sukarno and led to his deportation (Rahman, 2016, p. 264).

Sukarno believed that Indonesia needed a national cookbook to document its abundant gastronomic treasures from across the archipelago. In December 1960, the president instructed the Food Technology Agency (LTM) to make the cookbook, according to Azis Saleh, the Minister of Agriculture. After meeting the president, the minister followed up his instruction by assigning his staff member, Harsono Hardjohutomo, to oversee the project. Sukarno envisioned the cookbook as a practical guide for Indonesians to prepare nutritious and flavorful meals, tailored to their local resources (Rahman, 2018, p. 52). Saleh said:

“[Sukarno wanted] the cookbook to serve as a manual for Indonesians to transform food ingredients into delicious dishes wherever they are. People in Central Java, for example, should know how to cook cassava leaves, those in West Kalimantan should know how to cook *genjer* leaves, people in West Java should know how to cook corn, and those in East Java know how to cook goat milk (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. xxiv).”

Hardjohutomo began working on the cookbook in 1961, compiling recipes from across the archipelago, from Sabang in Aceh to Merauke in Papua. He hoped to create a comprehensive collection of Indonesian dishes for future generations. Despite the availability of cookbooks at the time, Hardjohutomo observed that many of their recipes were incomplete. Consequently, he decided not to involve existing cookbook authors or use their works as references for *Mustikarasa* (Rahman, 2018, p. 53).

Hardjohutomo did not regard the authors of existing cookbooks as true gastronomists because they lacked comprehensive knowledge of the dishes across the archipelago. Moreover, their works also failed to document all the diverse culinary traditions. Despite being written by prominent foodwriters in the country, these cookbooks were excluded from the process of creating *Mustikarasa*. The project represented the Indonesian government's effort to establish itself as a true gastronomist, aligning with Hardjohutomo's vision.

Hardjohutomo met with challenges in gathering and documenting Indonesian dishes. To address these challenges, he distributed questionnaires, hoping they would provide his team with comprehensive data on Indonesian cuisine. He planned to classify the information into two categories: popular dishes and lesser-known ones. From 1961

to 1962, the questionnaires were distributed with the help of public order agencies and women's organizations.

It turned out that the questionnaire method failed to meet Hardjohutomo's expectations due to three reasons. First, many questionnaires were not returned. Second, most of the responses focused on popular dishes. Third, the majority of the data collected came from Java, leaving little information on lesser-known dishes from other regions. Hardjohutomo valued information about lesser-known dishes as a critical starting point for discovering and documenting their recipes.

Despite such challenges, Hardjohutomo continued using the questionnaire method but worked to improve communication with public order agencies and local governments in the hope of getting better responses. Nevertheless, the issue persisted. As a result, Hardjohutomo instructed his team to travel across the country from 1962 to 1964 to collect recipes directly. During their travels, the team not only gathered and documented recipes but also conducted cooking demonstrations with locals. These cooking tests involved observing and verifying the preparation process to ensure the recipes were authentic and the flavors were true to their origins (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. xxvi).

The Mustikarasa cookbook project continued even after Azis Saleh was replaced by Sadjarwo as the Coordinating Agriculture and Agrarian Affairs Minister. Sadjarwo explained that the making of Mustikarasa was part of Sukarno's bold and revolutionary strategy to shift Indonesia's focus from rice self-sufficiency to overall food self-sufficiency.

Sukarno envisioned a nation that was self-reliant in its food supply, not solely dependent on rice. He believed that reliance on rice as the primary food source would hinder the realization of food security, especially with the country's rapidly growing population. Even with increased rice production, it would be insufficient to meet the rising demand. Sukarno encouraged Indonesians to embrace the country's diverse food resources, including corn and tubers, instead of viewing rice as the only essential staple (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. xxv). Sadjarwo said:

"Indonesia had 103 million people in 1964, and the population would rise to 105 million in 1965. Despite efforts to boost rice production, it would still be insufficient

to meet the consumption needs of the Indonesian people (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. xxv)”

For Sukarno, food diversity was key to food security and sovereignty. He intended to reduce the nation's dependence on rice by educating people about Indonesia's abundant food resources. By documenting the country's gastronomic assets in *Mustikarasa*, Sukarno hoped to promote awareness of alternative food resources. During the inauguration of IPB University in 1963, he emphasized that food security could not be achieved by solely encouraging people to eat rice (Lukman, 2021). Sadjarwo, therefore, encouraged the Food Technology Agency (LTM) to explore and create new dishes from the diverse ingredients listed in *Mustikarasa*. He believed that just as other countries could develop foods from ingredients like seaweed and lotus, Indonesia, with its greater variety of food resources, could innovate even more (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. xxv).

Hardjohutomo managed to complete the making of *Mustikarasa*, shortly before Sukarno was ousted by Suharto on Feb. 20, 1967. The cookbook was published on Feb. 8, 1967, amid a period of severe economic and political instability. Among other factors, widespread food shortages that happened from 1965 to 1967 contributed to this instability. Sukarno's policy on food diversification failed to achieve its intended impact, leading to famines in many regions during this time (Rahman, 2018, p. 56)

The Soft Power Resource of Gastronomy in Mustikarasa

Mustikarasa is more than just a collection of Indonesia's diverse recipes because the cookbook serves into every aspect of food, including its production, distribution, and consumption. It not only documents the culinary wealth of Indonesia but also captures the culture, traditions, and history behind the dishes. In this sense, *Mustikarasa* serves as an inventory of Indonesian gastronomy. Sukarno recognized that Indonesia's gastronomic assets could be soft power resources. This awareness drove him to document the country's culinary resources in the cookbook because he sought to use the book as a soft power resource to do gastrodiploamacy to reach the country's national interests. By doing so, Sukarno demonstrated the importance of soft power in his foreign policy. As a soft power resource, the gastronomy documented in *Mustikarasa* reflects the art of selecting, preparing, cooking, serving, and enjoying Indonesian dishes across the archipelago.

Mustikarasa contained around 1,600 recipes, divided into four main categories: main dishes, side dishes, snacks, and beverages. Of these, over 900 recipes feature local dishes, with the majority originating from Java – 440 recipes in total. Other regions also contributed to the cookbook, such as Sumatra, which provided 184 recipes, making it the second-largest contributor after Java, as well as Sulawesi, Bali, and Kalimantan (Rahman, 2018, p. 58). These recipes describe Indonesian identity that President Sukarno intended to showcase to the international communities through gastrodiploamacy.

With gastrodiploamacy in place, Sukarno sought to use Mustikarasa to highlight Indonesia as a paradise for delicious food while emphasizing its rich diversity. Mustikarasa highlights the diversity of staple foods and culinary traditions across Indonesia, reflecting the country's rich food culture. For instance, sweet potato is a staple in regions like Nias Island and West Papua, while taro is commonly consumed in Maluku. Although both are root vegetables, preferences for these staples vary by region, catering to local tastes (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 14). Milk also plays a role in regional diversity, with buffalo milk being commonly consumed in eastern Sumatra, while goat milk is more popular in West and Central Java (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 44).

Figure 4 – Cookbook Mustikarasa



Source: The National Library of Indonesia

Corn is another key staple in certain areas, such as Madura and North Sulawesi (Sufi, 2005). In Madura, corn is a fundamental ingredient in many dishes, including *nasi jagung* (corn rice). Mustikarasa features various recipes for *nasi jagung*, such as *nasi jagung gaplek* (corn rice with dried cassava root), *nasi jagung nangka muda* (corn rice with young jackfruit), and *nasi jagung ubi kayu* (corn rice with cassava). To prepare *nasi jagung gaplek*, corn kernels and casava roots are pounded into a rice-like texture, mixed, and steamed. Saltwater is added halfway through cooking, and the mixture is steamed again until fully cooked. Madurese people typically pair *nasi jagung gaplek* with side dishes like *urap daun singkong* (cassava leaf salad) or *pepes ikan laut dalam daun singkong* (fish wrapped in cassava leaf) as its side dishes (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 190).

Indonesia's cities often put unique spins on similar dishes. For example, *brongkos* (Javanese spicy stew), originates from Surakarta in Central Java but takes on different forms in nearby areas. Surakarta's version uses diced meat stewed in coconut milk, while other cities substitute vegetables. In Wonosobo, *brongkos kacang merah* (red bean stew) is popular: Banyumas is known for *brongkos tahu* (tofu stew); and Purwokerto features *brongkos waluh jipang* (chayote stew) (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 211).

In Mustikarasa, other examples of authentic Indonesian dishes include *pecel* (boiled vegetables with coconut salad), *rawon* (black beef soup), and *papeda* (sago congee). However, the cookbook also presents dishes influenced by foreign cultures such as Arab, Chinese, and European cuisines, showing the diversity of culinary delights across the archipelago. This diversity is evident in the variety of dishes it catalogs. Dishes with foreign influences included *gulai* (curry) from Indian traditions; *briyani* rice from Arab traditions; *cap cay* (stir-fried vegetables) and *fu yung hai* (chicken and shrimp omelet) from Chinese cuisine; and *bolu* (sponge cake) and croquette from Europe. Dutch influences are also present, with 50 food-related terms derived from Dutch, such as *buncis* (string bean) from the word boontjes, and *lapis* (sliced cake) from lapjes (Grijns, 1999, p. 59).

Mustikarasa shows that many foreign dishes were adapted and redefined as Indonesian cuisine in the early years of independence. This move was related to Sukarno's anti-colonial stance that significantly shaped the process of decolonizing colonial culinary traditions. After gaining independence, Sukarno worked to establish a

culinary identity for the country through policies focused on food security, resilience, and diversification, including the Mustikarasa project. He viewed food as a critical factor in determining a nation's "life and death" and a key resource for safeguarding Indonesia's culinary heritage (Rahman, 2023, p. 10). He, therefore, adopted foreign food, redefining it as Indonesian dishes in Mustikarasa, such as *soto* and *gulai*.

Gulai (curry) is not originally native to Indonesia. This dish is an adaptation of Indian curry, introduced to the region in the 16th century by Indian traders who traveled to West Sumatra via the Malacca Strait during the spice trade era (Khairunnisa & Aisyah, 2020). *Gulai* showcases regional variety throughout Indonesia. Examples include *gulai korma kambing* (goat curry) in Medan, *gulai manis rebung* (sweet bamboo shoot curry) in Padang, *gulai bebek* (duck curry) in Kotagadang, *gulai katak* (frog curry) in Madiun, and *gulai lemak telur itik* (duck egg curry) in Banjarmasin. In Padang alone, Mustikarasa documents 24 types of *gulai*. The abundance of curry variations demonstrates the richness of Indonesian cuisine.

Like *gulai*, *rendang* (beef simmered in coconut and spices) is also not a native cuisine of Indonesia. The slow cooking method used to make *rendang* was reportedly introduced by Portuguese people during their colonialization in the 16th century. The Portuguese also have a slow cooking method called *bafado*. When practicing *bafado*, they slowly cook meat, coconut milk, and other ingredients in a pot or frying pan over low heat until the liquid evaporates, allowing the meat to be preserved for weeks. This method helped them carry packable meals on their colonial expeditions. When arriving in Indonesia, they introduced *bafado* to locals. The locals adopted the word *bafado*, modifying it into *balado*, which describes their signature method of sautéing chili with spices in oil (Ulung, 2017).

According to Mustikarasa, *rendang* in West Sumatra has some variations, from *rendang*, *rendang telur* (egg *rendang*), and *rendang daun singkong* (cassava leaf *rendang*). In *rendang telur*, beef is replaced with boiled duck eggs, which are cooked in coconut milk mixed with spices like garlics, shallots, and turmeric. The dish is simmered until the liquid evaporates and the color turns black (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 687). In Purwokerto, a variation called *rendang jengkol* (dogfruit *rendang*) replaces beef with boiled dogfruit, which is cooked with coconut milk, red chili, ginger, and other spices (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 686). By the early 19th century, dogfruit had

become a significant commodity in Indonesia, widely loved by the general population. However, local elites often consumed it discreetly, as it was considered a food for the common people (Ulung, 2018).

Cooking methods and recipes in *Mustikarasa* not only emphasize the art of cooking but also reveal the diversity of Indonesia's culinary traditions. For example, while Javanese cooks shred coconut to extract its milk, Sumatran cooks scrape it (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 110). The cookbook goes beyond recipes to stress the importance of planning and preparing meals. *Mustikarasa* highlights the need for high-quality ingredients and balanced menus that provide nutritious, safe, and satisfying meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For instance, it suggests green bean porridge with tea or coffee for breakfast, rice with fried salted fish, *sayur asam* (sour soup), and a banana for lunch, and rice with fried tempeh and *sayur kangkung* (stir-fried water spinach) for dinner (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 110). The cookbook also underscores the significance of color combinations in food presentation, as this can impact appetite.

Mustikarasa sheds some light on selecting quality ingredients. In choosing rice, for example, readers are suggested to observe its colors. Grey rice indicates exposure to seawater, green rice suggests the crop was harvested prematurely, and white rice represents the best quality. Blue rice is considered the worst (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 5). Similarly, corn quality can also be assessed by color. Yellow corn kernels contain carotene, which can produce vitamin A when cooked, while white and purple kernels lack carotene (Departemen Pertanian, 1967, p. 8).

The emphasis on planning, preparing, and cooking dishes in *Mustikarasa* reflects Indonesia's gastronomic identity. Sukarno viewed this culinary wealth as a form of soft power. He instructed the Ministry of Agriculture to document Indonesia's gastronomic assets in *Mustikarasa*, intending to use the cookbook as a soft power resource for gastrodiploamacy. Sukarno believed that the use of gastrodiploamacy to showcase Indonesia's gastronomic assets on the global stage in the implementation of its foreign policy would enhance the nation's image.

Conclusion

This research investigates why President Sukarno composed *Mustikarasa* during his

presidency. It found that Sukarno created the cookbook because he recognized Indonesian gastronomic assets as a soft power resource. He aimed to document these assets in the cookbook as part of his strategy for gastrodiplomacy, using them to achieve Indonesia's foreign policy objective: enhancing the nation's image internationally after independence. Sukarno employed gastrodiplomacy during bilateral meetings and international events, including the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, West Java. This research sheds light on the cultural significance of Indonesian cuisine in Mustikarasa and Sukarno's gastrodiplomacy during KAA, contributing to the literature on Mustikarasa and his gastrodiplomacy maneuvers through the lens of soft-power theory. However, this research does not delve deeply into Sukarno's gastrodiplomacy during his state visits abroad and other international events hosted by Indonesia, such as the 1962 Asian Games and the 1963 Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO). This limitation, caused by difficulties in data collection, represents a research gap that we expect future research to address to further explore Sukarno's gastrodiplomacy in the implementation of Indonesian foreign policy.

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