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**Preservation Of Local Traditions As An Effort To Strengthen The Character  
Of Citizen Social Care  
(Case Study Of *Basalwir* Tradition In Dofa Village, Sula Islands)**

**Pelestarian Tradisi Lokal Sebagai Upaya Penguatan Karakter Peduli Sosial  
Warga Negara (Studi Kasus Tradisi *Basalwir* Di Desa Dofa Kepulauan Sula)**

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**Abstract**

*Basalwir* is a tradition of cooperation of the Sula tribe in every celebration event, whether it is a wedding, circumcision, tasyakuran departure of Hajj, or Italian, to foster the social care character of the community. However, this tradition has experienced a shift in value and meaning due to the modern lifestyle of the community, who tend to carry out celebrations practically and economically, such as using catering services. This research aims to describe the efforts of the people of Dofa Village, West Mangoli District, Sula Islands Regency, North Maluku Province, in preserving the *Basalwir* tradition as an effort to strengthen the social care character of citizens. This research is qualitative research with an ethnographic study method. The results illustrate that most of the Dofa community still preserves the *Basalwir* tradition, but its existence is starting to be threatened by changes in people's behavior that follow modern lifestyles. The values contained in *Basalwir* are togetherness, unity, and responsibility, which can shape citizens' social care character and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood of the Dofa village community. Supporting factors for the preservation of the *Basalwir* tradition because: a) the support and commitment of the community in maintaining the *Basalwir* tradition, and b) the enactment of customary laws that residents still uphold. The inhibiting factor in preserving the *Basalwir* tradition is the need for greater public awareness of its values and meanings as local *community wisdom*.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Local traditions are community customs passed down from generation to generation so that they become an integral part of community identity. One of the regional traditions still preserved by the people of the Sula Islands of North Maluku is '*Basalwir*.' *Basalwir* is a tradition that involves the community in

cooperation in every celebration event to help the family celebrate so that the event runs smoothly and successfully. For the community, this involvement can increase the sense of *belonging* and social care character to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among residents. In the term, 'the character of a community is not created based on instant formulations and conditions, but according to the needs of the community by paying attention to community activities that have been fostered for generations.'

Dofa Village, West Mangoli District, Sula Islands Regency, North Maluku Province, is one of the villages whose people still preserve the *Basalwir* tradition. The *Basalwir* tradition is maintained at every community celebration, including weddings, circumcisions, tasyakuran for pilgrimage departures, and Italian. The implementation of the *Basalwir* tradition can be seen from the activities of residents who work together to take care of all the needs of the event, especially those related to the consumption of the family organizing the celebration, such as cooking, washing food, and drink utensils, slaughtering animals, serving food, etc. which are carried out together with intimacy. The presence of the community can help ease the burden on the host party in carrying out the event. In Fromm's term, it is called '*relatedness*,' meaning that the *Basalwir* tradition is a cultural expression of residents who see rationally and objectively where everyone's existence is part of a community that must be maintained together. Residents are very enthusiastic about welcoming the moment of the *Basalwir* tradition because it can build interaction and communication between residents.

However, over time, the advancement of information and technology towards modernization has impacted the implementation of the *Basalwir* tradition. The existence of the *Basalwir* tradition has gradually shifted in value and meaning. One example is related to the provision of consumption, where previously families who held celebrations used community labor (non-material) carried out in cooperation by residents. Still, some residents have begun using catering services or materials managed directly by the *event organizer* (EO). Even though, looking back where catering services usually occur in urban areas, it has penetrated rural areas. *Catering* services are seen as an activity carried out practically and hassle-free for both the celebrating family and the villagers.

However, this view has threatened the *Basalwir* tradition as a local village identity. In Effendi's terms, 'recently the social interaction of Indonesian society has experienced social shifts, community relations have weakened, values and common goals have faded, and lost the grip of norms and moral frameworks, both collectively and individually.'

There are several studies related to the tradition of community mutual assistance in the implementation of celebration events that have experienced a shift in values and meanings in several regions of Indonesia, such as the *Rewang* tradition in the Javanese community in Kadisono Sleman, Yogyakarta Special Region, has begun to disappear due to the low value of community social solidarity. Furthermore, the *Haridesi* tradition in Wumbuburo village, East Kabaena sub-district, Bombana district, has experienced a shift in value due to the community's view that everything is valued in terms of money alone as a result of the individualistic and materialistic view of the community. Similarly, the marriage tradition of the Dompu community in Fo'o Mpongi hamlet, Bara village, Dompu district, West Nusa Tenggara, has experienced a shift in the value of gotong royong due to the social changes of modernization and globalization, as well as the individualistic attitude of the community, and several other studies.

Therefore, the researcher sees the importance of studying the shifting values and meanings of gotong royong in local communities, especially the *Basalwir* tradition in Dofa village. The research questions relate to the extent of the Dofa village community's role in preserving the *Basalwir* tradition and their response to the shifting values of *Basalwir*, what values are contained in *Basalwir*, and what are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the preservation of these local traditions.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research occurred in Dofa Village, West Mangoli District, Kepulauan Sula Regency, North Maluku Province. Dofa Village was chosen as the research location, considering the *Basalwir* tradition is still strong. The research approach used is qualitative with ethnographic study method. The research subjects consisted of the Village Government and Community Leaders such as Traditional

Leaders, Educational Leaders, Youth Leaders, and several community members who were considered competent in providing the necessary information.

Data were collected using observation, interview, and documentation study techniques. The observation technique was used to see firsthand the mechanism for implementing the *Basalwir* tradition carried out by the Dofa community. The interview technique was used to obtain broad and in-depth information from several informants regarding the problem under study. The documentation study is intended to collect various documentation in the form of videos and images to support and strengthen the research data.

After the data was collected, it was analyzed using ethnographic techniques: description, analysis, and interpretation. The data is described objectively based on events found in the field. Then, the data was analyzed by sorting it based on the research objectives. Then interpret the data by concluding the results of the previous analysis elaborated with various literature such as journal articles and books in analyzing the research data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Dofa village is in the West Mangoli sub-district, South Halmahera district, North Maluku province. The residents of Dofa village are natives of Sanana with the Sapsuha and Umaternate surnames who migrated to Dofa village. The name Dofa is derived from 'Dofa Gamana', which means 'sorong kasana (slide there)' with the aim that this village will become a large village in the future. Dofa Village has a population of 2,150, consisting of 1,067 men and 1,083 women. The community's livelihoods are generally fishermen and garden farmers, such as coconut, cloves, and nutmeg (source: Dofa village data in 2024). Etymologically, *Basalwir* means cooperation. *Basalwir* is a tradition of the Sula community by directly involving themselves to help each other in every community celebration activity. *Basalwir* is seen as a value-laden activity to foster the social care character of the community to strengthen the bond of brotherhood. More details will be described as follows:

## 1. Implementation of the *Basalwir* Tradition in Dofa Village, West Mangoli District, Sula Islands Regency

The *Basalwir* tradition is still preserved by the people of Dofa village, which can be witnessed during the celebration of residents in the event of marriage, circumcision, tasyakuran, or tahlilan. The implementation of the *Basalwir* tradition begins with the family who will organise the celebration informing the residents of the plan to invite residents to help in the success of the event jointly. Residents who accept the invitation (invitation) have a moral obligation to attend. Usually, people do not come empty-handed but bring some provisions or 'alms' to be given to the family organizing the celebration, either in the form of money or goods (for example, rice, eggs, fish). The community and the family work together to organize the event. Some are in charge of the kitchen about the processing of consumption intended for guests. Generally this work is done by mothers with their respective duties as cooks, washing food and drink utensils, and serving food to invitees (see Figure 1). In addition, fathers are also involved in participating in the event, such as setting up tents, organizing tables and chairs, slaughtering animals, and doing other physical work.



Picture 1. Implementation of *Basalwir* in Dofa village

The atmosphere of implementing the *Basalwir* tradition, which is carried out in cooperation, provides happiness for residents, not just helping each other and sharing work experience but can be used as a moment to build intimacy and affection among residents by sharing stories and laughter but not eliminating the seriousness of completing each job. The term 'loyalty to preserve a certain culture should affirm

collective actions in the form of love for the nation.' Residents love and enjoy the work done so that activities can run smoothly and work is completed more quickly. Therefore, the villagers look forward to this moment by not wasting it. Meanwhile, for the family organizing the celebration, the presence of the villagers can reduce the burden, both psychologically, energy, and materially. Voluntary mutual assistance due to the sense of *belonging* and high tolerance of the Dofa villagers is a driving factor in the creation of unity in the community; as stated by Soerjono Soekanto, 'the intensification of group cooperation in a society facing common events influences the increase in social solidarity.

But over time, there is a problem that arises among the people of Dofa village where the advancement of information and technology that leads residents to modernization behavior has great potential to damage the *Basalwir* tradition that has long been preserved by the community, where the emergence of *catering* (*catering* services) whose system is managed directly by the *event organizer* (EO). The EO manages everything related to the event, including consumption, tents, passman tables, chairs, stages, and decorations. According to the views of residents who organize celebrations by using *catering*, event management will be more practical and less troublesome for the community. However, this threatens the *Basalwir* tradition as a local entity of Dofa villagers who have experienced a shift in values and meanings from activities carried out in cooperation, togetherness, and a sense of community to become more individualistic and materialistic. This is as stated by Marni Umaternate, an educational figure in Dofa village:

'The Dofa community believes in the values contained in *Basalwir*, such as togetherness and unity that must be carried out continuously and passed down to the current generation, although it does not rule out the possibility of experiencing cultural shifts. In the current era, everything can be done practically. For example, the presence of catering services that serve large-scale drink and meal orders is challenging the *Basalwir* tradition. This erodes the opportunity for the community to gather together to build interactions when working in the kitchen for mothers. As a result, people only eat the dishes the host provided and then return home.

According to the general view of Dofa villagers, the use of *catering* is usually done in urban areas because city residents are busy with routine work that is done every day from morning to evening, such as office employees, State Civil Apparatus

(ASN), entrepreneurs/traders, factory workers, or other jobs that produce goods and services, but this condition is different from people in the village. Given that the people of Dafa, who generally work as garden farmers and fishermen, certainly have more flexible time to respond to invitations to community celebrations. They can spare their time to help the family organize the festival so that the *Basalwir* tradition remains sustainable and can be preserved continuously by residents across generations.

Therefore, the Dofa community responds to the existence of *catering* as a serious threat to the *Basalwir* tradition. There needs to be attention from the government and village community leaders in the form of socialization/counseling as a concrete effort to build understanding and awareness of residents about the importance of preserving local *wisdom*, such as *Basalwir*, which contains positive values in both economic and psychological aspects. According to him, "Local wisdom produces norms of behavior that can guide local action, both in the context of daily life and maintaining their culture."

The government and community leaders are at the forefront of encouraging and motivating the community to preserve the *Basalwir* tradition. As for the community, there needs to be a commitment based on a family attitude to protecting the *Basalwir* tradition. The importance of instilling *Basalwir* values in every citizen will form a caring character as social capital in building cooperation and unity in the Dofa village community.

## 2. Values Contained in the *Basalwir* Tradition

Local traditions are customs that develop in the community from generation to generation, passed down to the next generation. Local traditions are full of values that can foster the social care character of citizens. In Reynolds and terms, "*ritual is a particularly interesting category of meaningful activity; ritual increases social cohesion, orders social relations, and provides a structure through which actors organize their perceptions of the world.*" In other words, the formation of social care character. It can be achieved by preserving local traditions. Still, it is more important to understand the values and meanings contained in these traditions to strengthen the bonds of community brotherhood.

Such are the values contained in *Basalwir* in the Dofa village community, such as the value of togetherness, unity and unity, and responsibility. *The value of togetherness* in *Basalwir* can be seen from the involvement of residents in helping families who organise celebrations and start activities simultaneously a day or two before the celebration event and support each other until the work is completed. Then, the *value of unity* can be seen from the residents who are involved in activities driven by volunteerism to put the interests of the community ahead of personal interests (not selfish), mingle with each other in activities regardless of differences in the social status of residents, appreciate the role of each job, create an atmosphere of harmony and peace in carrying out work, share knowledge and experience in work, and try to resolve shortcomings or obstacles in deliberation. Meanwhile, the *value of responsibility* can be reflected in the seriousness of residents when carrying out their roles in the preparation or celebration process, oriented towards maximum service, discipline in completing their respective jobs and sacrificing in the form of energy and material to reduce the burden on families who are celebrating. *Basalwir* values have been imprinted into the good *character* of the residents to establish harmonious relationships. This reflects the character of social care as one of the values of national character as stated by Karliana that "indicators of national awareness for rural communities usually include community involvement, social empathy and sympathy for cooperation and responsibility for preserving culture" Therefore, every member of the community actualizes the values of *Basalwir* in every celebration, because the essence is to preserve tradition or culture as an effort to unite the community.

The values contained in *Basalwir* can be seen in the table below:

**Table 1. Implementation of *Basalwir* Values**

No.	Value	<i>Basalwir</i> Value Implementation Indicator
1.	Togetherness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jointly engage in helping activities;</li> <li>2. Starting activities simultaneously one or two days before the celebration</li> <li>3. Helping each other until the job is done</li> </ol>
2.	Unity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Voluntarily prioritising the interests of the community over individual interests (not selfish);</li> <li>2. Blending together in activities regardless of differences in social status;</li> <li>3. Appreciating each other's job roles;</li> </ol>



		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Creating an atmosphere of harmony and peace at work;</li> <li>5. Sharing knowledge and experience in work;</li> <li>6. Resolving shortcomings/obstacles in a deliberative manner.</li> </ol>
3.	Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Service-orientated;</li> <li>2. Discipline in completing work;</li> <li>3. Sacrificing labour and material for others.</li> </ol>

The *Basalwir* tradition is the social capital of the Dofa community that continues to be preserved by understanding, appreciating, living and caring for it. The value of *Basalwir* has become a guideline for people's lives that inspires and motivates them to behave and act daily, especially when organising celebrations. According to Koentjaraningrat, 'the cultural value system consists of conceptions that live in the minds of most members of society, regarding things that they should consider very valuable in life'. Therefore, the people involved in the *Basalwir* tradition voluntarily do so because they are driven by a high sense of concern with full sincerity and responsibility to help others, and there is no element of coercion from anyone. Everything is intended to strengthen the value of togetherness and unity of Dofa residents. According to Basal, '*in the social culture must have a moral standard so that every member of the society must have the sensitivity to follow it and treat others based on the standard*'.

Although it is undeniable that the values of *Basalwir* are currently starting to experience a shift due to the tendency of residents who prefer a modern lifestyle as seen from the emergence of *event organisers* (EO) offering *catering* services, of course this can threaten the tradition of mutual cooperation such as *Basalwir*. The values of the *Basalwir* tradition such as the value of togetherness, the value of unity, and the value of responsibility that form the social care character of the community began to be displaced and replaced with individualistic and materialistic values in every celebration.

### 3. Supporting and Hindering Factors for the Preservation of *Basalwir* Tradition

The successful preservation of the *Basalwir* tradition in the Dofa village community is supported by two factors, including: 1) the support and commitment of the community in maintaining the *Basalwir tradition*, and 2) the enactment of

customary laws that are still upheld by the community. More details will be described below.

a. Community support and commitment in maintaining the *Basalwir* tradition

The people of Dofa village have a high commitment to maintaining the *Basalwir* tradition. The community's commitment is in the form of support provided by the residents in organising celebrations. This commitment is born from a common desire and awareness to work together to make the *Basalwir* tradition a success. The implementation of the *Basalwir* tradition prioritises a family attitude in order to realise a better community order. For their view, the spirit of gotong royong is based on the fact that everyone cannot live alone, but lives to help each other in every activity or business. The principle of life is a form of togetherness and unity of the Dofa community, otherwise if there is no effort from the community to preserve the inherited traditions, it is possible that local traditions will be eroded by the influence of modernisation. Therefore, the Dofa community affirms its commitment to the *Basalwir* tradition to be preserved so as not to be affected by new things both internal and external that can fade these values.

In essence, the principle of the *Basalwir* tradition is an activity that can ease the burden on people who are organising celebrations who experience challenges or obstacles during the process. Therefore, the *Basalwir* tradition provides an opportunity to jointly solve problems faced by the community. They help each other, not only with energy and thought but also in the form of provisions or 'alms' given to the family organising the celebration in the form of money or goods (for example: rice, eggs, fish, etc.). The sacrifice of energy and thought can be seen from the involvement of mothers and fathers who work together in managing all the needs of the event. Mothers are in charge of the kitchen to manage the consumption for the invited guests, such as cooking, washing eating and drinking utensils, and serving food, while the fathers play a role in setting up tents, arranging tables and chairs, slaughtering animals, and some other physical work.

b. The application of customary law that is still upheld by the community

One of the supporting factors that determine the strength of tradition in the Dafa community is the enactment of customary law in the community. According to the opinion that 'customary law is essentially a custom that has legal consequences'. Customary law is highly upheld and adhered to by Dofa residents in their daily lives, including participation in the implementation of the *Basalwir* tradition. When there are residents who are not involved in organising the celebration or deliberately ignore it, even against the *Basalwir* tradition, social sanctions will be received by the individual residents. Social sanctions are highly feared by Dofa residents because they can have a negative effect on the personal of the perpetrator, as stated that 'punishment in customary law is ridicule or ostracism from the community and a feeling of shame from the person concerned who violates or does not do what must be done according to many people in the community'. Therefore, Dofa residents try to avoid being sanctioned by customary law by maximising participation in enlivening the *Basalwir* tradition at every celebration event. Thus it can be concluded that the support and commitment of every level of society, especially the village government and community leaders together echo and maintain the *Basalwir* tradition, as well as the application of customary law as a basis for problem solving as a success factor for the preservation of the *Basalwir* tradition in Dofa village.

The inhibiting factor for the preservation of the *Basalwir* tradition is the lack of public awareness of the values and meanings contained in the *Basalwir* tradition as a local wisdom of the community. This can be seen from the existence of residents who are not involved in the implementation of the *Basalwir* tradition. Even if they participate, there are people who are inconsistent with work time or often come late to participate in the celebration. This has shown an individualistic attitude due to the impact of modernisation that affects the attitudes and behaviour of residents. Therefore, there are several efforts to minimise this impact, including: 1) the village government and community leaders contribute in socialising to residents so that they are inspired to maintain and preserve local traditions/culture, 2) build residents' awareness of the significance of culture as a local community identity, and 3) invite residents to actively participate in enlivening and succeeding every celebration event as a form of preserving the *Basalwir* tradition.

## CONCLUSIONS

*First, the people of Dofa village, West Mangoli sub-district, Sula Islands district still maintain and preserve the Basalwir tradition, but its existence is starting to be threatened by changes in people's behaviour that follow modern lifestyles. Second, the values contained in Basalwir are the value of togetherness, the value of unity, and the value of responsibility. These values have formed the social care character of the residents so as to strengthen the bond of brotherhood of the Dofa village community. Third, the supporting factors for the preservation of the Basalwir tradition are: a) the support and commitment of the community in maintaining the Basalwir tradition, and b) the enactment of customary laws that are still upheld by residents. The inhibiting factor for the preservation of the Basalwir tradition is the lack of public awareness of the value and meaning of Basalwir as a local wisdom, which can be seen from the use of catering services that are more practical and economical but can erode the community's mutual cooperation activities in the Basalwir tradition.*

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