

Warung Tegal: Business Unit based on Ethnicity

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Abstract: This paper describes the Warteg business, which is seen not only as a place to eat for city dwellers from the bottom to the top, but also discusses the history of the warteg, the warteg business itself, labor and village-city relations. This study uses a qualitative approach; with the method of data collection is an in-depth interview with 6 warteg owners. The conclusion of this paper is that warteg is a network of social relations and a strategy to adapt to the culture of the city. As a small business, the warteg business needs to get attention from the government. The theoretical contribution of this research is to deepen the study of the low-middle income group in an urban area who fulfill their meals from outside their house. This research also provides a contribution to urban anthropology and sociology as well as the ethnicity relationship. The practical contribution is to find a solution as in the one hand warteg is needed, but on the other hand warteg stands on the illegal land. Thus, this research will provide a description of what warteg is like in urban areas and can give a recommendation to the local government in order to make public policy for food providers.

1 INTRODUCTION

In Jakarta, who doesn't know Warung Tegal or abbreviated as "Warteg"? Residents of Jakarta and surrounding areas, especially the office workers or freelancers, are very familiar with a place to eat that category 'murmer' (cheap and fun), known as Warteg. Even though the name of Warteg initially does represent a certain region in Indonesia, but the name has become a national icon, and even an international one.

Warteg is an eating place that provides food and drinks. Its origin is from Tegal, or rather from two villages in Tegal Regency and one village in Tegal City, namely the villagers of Sidapurna, Sidakaton, Dukuh Turi District, Tegal Regency and Krandon (Zuhasmi, 2018).

The description of Warteg is closely related to the lower middle class in urban areas. The issue of this group is still an inexhaustible study among anthropologists and sociologists. One of the urban problems is meeting the food needs of city residents who are no longer able to fulfill it from their homes. Most of the fulfillment of city meals is obtained from sources outside the home. In that context the needs of the city residents are contributed by the warteg. How do the warteg adapt to the rules, norms and values of the city, for example adjusting the food to the tastes

of the city people, even the use of the name of the warteg is trusted because the city people are *familiar* with that name.

The main concern of this research is about what actually happened to the Warteg. The description and analysis of the Warteg are more on efforts to highlight the status of the warung as a symbol of social groups in the city. Warteg's story as a social unit will be the dominant concern in the description in this paper.

This paper will present the Warteg, not only as a place for breakfast, lunch and even evenings for city dwellers, but also wants to illustrate how the warteg can work, starting from its history, business, a workforce that has kinship relations, exchange of information and knowledge, and city-village relations. The series of Warteg activities can be seen as a process of adaptation in the city.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted from August to mid-December 2018, using a qualitative approach. The data collection method was carried out both through library research by utilizing internet facilities, online libraries, data retrieval through Google in addition to city governance regulations, especially those related to food stalls.

Primary data collection was conducted through interviews with several *key informants* (warteg's owners). Observation methods are carried out in the Warteg and around it. Non-structure interviews, or triangulation of data was conducted to the customers, workers, and relatives related to the daily warteg activities. The selected warteg locations were in Jakarta and around Cibubur. The selection of the warteg was *purposive*, for example it was chosen from the level of the incoming visitor, popularity, and access to public transportation (a distance from the researcher's house). The number of warteg visited for the purposes of this study were 6 units. Thus, there were 6 *key informants* who were the subjects of this study. They are the owners of the warteg.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

For office workers whom most of the time is spent outside the home, the provision of lunches usually obtained from places to eat around the office, for example from office canteen or other eating places such as street vendors, restaurants and food stalls/other rice stalls. One place to eat for workers is Warteg.

3.1 History of Warteg

Warteg is estimated to appear first in the 1950-1960s. At that time the infrastructure development in the capital city was being intensified. This work project was done simultaneously so it requires a lot of workers in each project. To make it easier for workers at lunch breaks, the workers set up a small place named '*bedeng*' (temporary buildings for rest) in locations around the project. Therefore, it was the beginning or the emergence of the Warteg, which could accommodate the food and drink of the workers.

Warteg which stands for Warung Tegal, is an eating place that sells rice and side dishes. Tegal is the name of a city in Central Java. As explained above, the name of the warteg itself came from two villages in Tegal Regency and one village in Tegal city, namely Sidapura village; Sidakaton District of Dukuh Turi, Tegal district; and Kradon (Zulazmi, 2018). Along with the times, the name of Tegal is more meaningful as a place to eat consume for the lower middle class. This is due to the fact that warteg has grown in big cities. But the name of the warteg is maintained because it has been known by many people, both nationally and internationally.

Warteg is a community livelihood option as a strategy to adapt to the city environment. The more successful the warteg, the easier is the adaptability of the warteg's owner from the rules, norms and culture of the city.

3.1.1 The Business of Warteg

The current owners of warteg in the capital city must have creativity, because there are many rivals in running the warteg business. Competition for creativity can no longer be avoided. Food menus such as in restaurants, healthy food but still delicious, home-cooked food at low prices are one of the many ideas that have already begun to be applied in the warteg business. These ideas are suitable for workers in the city where the majority of activities are outside the home, both lower class and upper class workers.

According to the results of research on the dietary needs of today's citizens, it is known that the food needs of city residents are filled with food outside the home. Some of the reasons given include; no one prepares food (24.1%); more outdoor activities (20.6%); and reasons for living alone (19.8%). Many other reasons are quite varied, such as not having the ability to cook, the taste of outside food is better, the menu choices are more varied, the atmosphere is supportive, and the reasons for practicality. These things make the owner of the warteg and other culinary establishments continue to open a food business.

Warteg now has many facilities to make its customers feel comfortable eating at the warteg. Even the warteg has promotion funds, cooperation funds and can take part in *events* held in the city. Therefore, Warteg customers are increasingly diverse. Warteg is no longer only serving construction workers or lower class people, but also for office workers and even middle-class people. This makes the expansion of the warteg to other places, no longer just in the yard. This expansion is supported by the many people who migrate and work in Jakarta. The more people who migrate, the more people will need a warteg to fulfill their food needs. The principle of *demand* and *supply* is the main principle in the development of warteg in the city (Jakarta).

A restaurant that provides simple home-cooked food is no longer the right definition for the warteg. Warteg now has many complex menus that adjust to the *demands* of the neighborhood where the warteg stands. Owners perceived the changes that consider warteg as a low class to become a high-class warteg, was as a result of their hard work. The owners of the

warteg acknowledge that profit does not come automatically, but through effort and hard work.

In the warteg there is no longer only a meeting relationship between the seller and the buyer, i.e the relationship between the owner of the warteg and the *supplier*, the owner of the warteg with other owners, the owner of the warteg with the consumer, and the consumer with the consumer. These meetings which make the discussions in the warteg never stop. Some talk about business, family, music, compliance, and even heavy topics such as religion, shamanism, and politics.

Today, warteg is growing rapidly in the city environment. This is due to the demands of the food needs of the environment. Residents who are considered frequently eat at the warteg are residents of the lower middle class in the city. The issue of this group still remains a study that has never been finished discussed by anthropologists and sociologists.

The real problem of this is that houses are no longer able to meet the food needs of city dwellers. Therefore, warteg is one of the solutions to meet the food needs of city residents. As compensation, the warteg must adjust the tastes of the customers it serves, even the usage of the name of warteg should be familiar to people.

The development of warteg helps the government to meet the food needs of its population. But on the other hand, the warteg is often considered as an "enemy" to the city government because warteg is considered illegal, polluting the sidewalks, and damaging the beauty of the city. There are also many warteg that stand in prohibited locations. This creates a dilemma for the government because it does not have the right solution for the problems of the warteg. That is why warteg owners are often charged security fees by those who control certain areas. One of the warteg owners said: "by paying for the security money, our stalls are safe, we can sleep well".

One of the pull factors of warteg as the fulfillment of the meal was the price is affordable to lower-middle class. According to the study, city people will not frequently eat in restaurants. The end of the month, are days when workers run out of money. Therefore, cheap food was subjected to city workers' lunches at those days. This has the consequence that people who come and eat at the warteg are people with middle-low economics. Warteg turned out to be not only a place to eat, but a status symbol for those who came there.

Warteg now continues to grow to be more modern. To attract high-end consumers, some Warteg owners began to display food menus like five-star

restaurants, but with prices that still could be reached by the warteg's customers. Warteg "Kharisma Bahari" became the pioneer of the clean warteg concept with a digital system for marketing and payment of food. Therefore, there is high competition between food stalls, the warteg will not hesitate to issue promotional funds through cooperation with partners. *Online media is* also one of the promotional tools that display warteg that are considered to be favorites, and provides an opportunity for customers to recommend which warteg they think is tasty and popular. With the increasingly popular and large potential of warteg as a promising business, the Warteg also expanded into a *franchise* business.

The food menu at the Warteg varies greatly. From the social media record, there are 279 food menus on the warteg. The number of food menus is caused by different cooking methods for the same food ingredients. For example, balado eggs have 11 variants depending on how they are cooked. Menu variations and affordable prices make Warteg a favorite place to eat for city residents, especially workers in the days before receiving a salary.

3.1.2 Human Labor

Warteg is managed by staff related to the family. Zaharani's writing (2013) states that all families are involved, both directly and indirectly for the sustainability of the warteg. Warteg owners will entrust their children to their parents, or sometimes their children come to warteg if their grandparents or grandmothers feel the need to prepare more food than usual. Some of these examples show a variety of city-village relations relating to the business of the warteg. The people in the village are a priority for labor recruitment for this warteg business. By using a spiral model, the workforce starts from an extended family, then to the larger neighboring relationship, then to the one who comes from the same village, and finally the recruitment of workers because they have the same ethnic group.

The priority of this employment model is not necessarily successful. Some Warteg owners must use the services of a labor agent because both blood relatives and marriages kins are not available to become a warteg worker. Changes in the structure of the village economy are also one of the factors causing scarcity of workers for the warteg. With the rapid growth of the industry, the workforce needs for the warteg are unable to compete with the industrial workforce. Village people feel that being a factory worker is more free and independent than being an employee in a family warteg.

In the warteg, human labor is generally divided into cooks and servants. The cashier is the person who is trusted by the owner, generally his own wife. If the owner is the wife, then the husband will be responsible for shopping for raw materials.

3.2 Urban-village Relations

The owners of the warteg and their workers are people who immigrate from village to city. They migrate to the city to "try their luck" or improve their welfare so that when they return to their villages their lives get better. Trying luck by coming to the city means that the person is looking for a place to settle, open a business, establish relationships with neighbors and people around his environment, learn menus that are liked by city people, and so on. By coming to the city, the village guidelines are no longer valid. The tools of knowledge, norms and values of the village cannot all be used to adapt in the city.

The owners and employees of the warteg are villagers who migrate to the city to survive. The requirement for survival is the fulfillment of biological needs, such as eating, and social needs, such as security, and psychological needs.

People who migrate need a process of adaptation to their new environment. They no longer depend on the life guidelines of the village people, and must follow the life guidelines in their new environment. Making warteg as a job choice is a strategy to adapt these migrants to the culture of the city they are coming to.

4 DISCUSSION

This writing about the warteg describes about social relations focussed on a place to eat known as Warteg. Social relations here are more appropriate towards social exchange. Mauss (1990,1922) sees the social exchange as an interaction based on reciprocity or mutually beneficial interactions. This interaction falls into the category of direct or face-to-face interaction. In this interaction, the people involved in it are governed by a norm/rule and the values that guide those people acting.

There are two types of social exchanges (Blau, 1964, Homans 1958). First, is a direct social exchange. In a social arena such as a warteg, direct social exchanges are consumers of the warteg who come to eat, then after that he pays the price of the food with a sum of money. Second, is an indirect

exchange. This can happen in the area if the consumers of the warteg after they finish eating do not directly pay the food with a sum of money, in other words they owed first. The debt will be paid when the consumer has the money to pay off his obligations. The point is that there is a balance between what is given and what is gained in the interaction. This means, there is a continuity of relationships that are maintained by both parties, and both feel benefited. Although there is a possibility that profits will not necessarily be balanced, the social relationship will continue to be maintained if no party decides to leave it.

The imbalance relationship can be seen in the social arena of the warteg when the warteg owner gives money to the hoodlums (*'preman'*) when the warteg location stands on illegal land, or on prohibited road sidewalks. Social relations here: between the owner of the warteg and the hoodlums look unbalanced; here hoodlums are the party that controls and can rule the owner of the warteg.

Thus, from this study of warteg it tells us about the social relationship that can be seen as social exchange. Social exchange here is based on reciprocity or mutual interaction that benefits among those who involved.

Although the Warteg originally came from Tegal, not all Warteg owners came from Tegal. The concept of warteg is seen as a social identity. This place to eat can be called a warteg because there is a reference to the characteristics of the menu, interior stalls, and a distinctive language *'ngapak'* articulated by the owner. These characteristics are what distinguish the warteg from other food stalls. The warteg's social identity is activated by the owners to create social boundaries with their rivals, namely Padang restaurants for example. The owner of the warteg will let consumers see the warteg as the warteg. They will not match the warteg menu with Padang restaurants. So, the owner of the Warteg believes that the consumers of the warteg and the consumers of Padang restaurants are indeed different. Some consumers can like Padang restaurants, but there are also those who like the warteg.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Warteg activities are basically a network of social relations. Warteg activities are not just displaying trading activities: the owner provides/gives products in the form of food and receives money from the consumers. The more important thing from this warteg business is establishing good relations

(between owners and consumers, between owners and hoodlums, between owners and suppliers of necessities, between owners of warteg and other warteg owners), and showing identity as warteg. In addition, the Warteg business activities show cultural contact: interactions that occur between owners and consumers and between consumers and consumers. They can exchange information, knowledge, and other issues that are being top news at the moment.

Warteg is a living livelihood option for migrant people. Village people who migrate to the city, need a process of adaptation or adjustment to the new environment. They can no longer use the acting guidelines from the village, but must develop a strategy to survive in urban areas, by meeting the biological needs of the urban population, namely providing food. Thus, the warteg as a job choice is a strategy of adaptation to the culture of the city.

Warteg business is a small business that is inclusive and based on ethnicity. Inclusive business is a sustainable business that benefits low-income communities. It is a business initiative that, keeping its for-profit nature, contributes to poverty reduction through low income communities in its value chain. In simple words inclusive business is all about the poor business process as producers or consumers (Wikipedia). In order for this small business to continue to live, the government must protect the owner of the warteg with policies such as the provision of land and clear taxation.

The theoretical contribution of this research is to deepen the study of the low-middle income group in an urban area who fulfill their meals from outside their house. This research also provides a contribution to urban anthropology and sociology as well as the ethnicity relationship. The practical contribution is to find a solution as in the one hand warteg is needed, but on the other hand warteg stands on the illegal land. Thus, this research will provide a description of what warteg is like in urban areas and can give a recommendation to the local government in order to make public policy for food providers.

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