

How middle class settlers in Surabaya from West Java blend in

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Abstract

Indonesia is a multicultural country. Thus, it is common for us to see the many different cultures in one place. The author performed this study to find out how the residents in Surabaya, East Java who come from or are native from West Java and around can survive and blend in with the surrounding community. Besides the fact that the author is a native West Javanese, the long history of Sundanese people with Javanese people is also interesting to study. This research is aimed to know their background of living in Surabaya, and their tips for blending in and adapting. Data collection method uses questionnaires.

Keywords: Surabaya, Javanese, Sundanese, multicultural, blend in

Introduction

Surabaya is the second largest city in Indonesia (Figures, n.d). As a big city, this city is populated by many residents with different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and religions. Therefore, Surabaya can be considered is a multicultural city. Meanwhile, the indigenous tribes that live in this city are Javanese.

Related to the existence of different cultures in this city and the dark history of the Majapahit empire with the Sunda kingdom in the past (Baihaqi&Bubat, 2015), the way the Sundanese settlers survive in Surabaya becomes unique as well.

The purpose of this article is to find out the struggle of Sundanese settlers in the city of Surabaya in surviving the harshness of life there. The author focuses the objects on traders and students. Another purpose is to make other settlers from Sundanese region can learn the way to blend in in Surabaya with this article. This study would like to know the tips of settlers from Sunda use to be able to adapt in the city of Surabaya, which has different cultures.

Research method

The author uses qualitative research methods, namely interview and free observation with several Sundanese traders who sell around the Gubeng Airlangga Street and with several UNAIR and ITS students. The data is obtained through unstructured interviews. The names of the interviewees are as follows: Pak Dd.A Bandung depot fried rice seller, Mang J., Tasikmalaya *rangin* cake seller, MZ, and Ddg. A Bandung wet seblak seller, MZ, and Ddg. A Bandung wet seblak seller, NK, Unair Student, 18 years old, from Tangerang, and MA, an ITS student, 18th, from Jakarta.

Results and discussion

History of Surabaya city

Surabaya is located on the north coast of East Java province. The region borders the Madura Strait in the North and East, Sidoarjo Regency in the South, and Gresik Regency in the West. Surabaya is in the lowlands the height of whom is between 3 - 6 m above sea level except in the southern part where there are 2 sloping hills, namely *Lidah* and *Gayungan* areas the height of whom is between 25 - 50 m above

Ma'ruf: "How middle class settlers in Surabaya from West Java blend in"

sea level and a little bumpy in the west. Surabaya has Kali Mas estuary, which is one of the two fragments of *Brantas* River.

Surabaya was once the gateway to the Majapahit Kingdom, which was at Kali Mas estuary. The anniversary of Surabaya City was set on 31 May 1293, based on the stipulation by the Mayor of the Level II Regional Office Surabaya, which was held by Mr. Soeparno, who issued Decree No. 64/WK/75 concerning the determination of Surabaya's anniversary. The date was determined by the agreement of a group of historians formed by the City Government stating that the name Surabaya derived from the word "*Suraing Bhaya*" which means "Courage to face danger" taken from the defeat of the Mongol troops of Kublai Khan by the Javanese troops led by Raden Wijaya on 31 May 1293. Mongol troops coming from the sea were described as SURO fish (sharks/courage) and Raden Wijaya's troops who came from land were described as BOYO (crocodiles/danger); hence, it is literally interpreted as courage to face the danger that comes threatening. Then, the victory day was commemorated as the anniversary of Surabaya (Soedarso & Nurif 2013).

In terms of the spread of religion, Islam has begun to spread since the 15th century. Islam even spread rapidly in Surabaya. One of the members of Wali Songo, Sunan Ampel, built a mosque and pesantren in Ampel area. In 1530, Surabaya became part of the Demak Kingdom. Following the collapse of Demak, Surabaya was subjected to the conquest of the Mataram Sultanate, invaded by Panembahan Senopati in 1598, heavily attacked by Panembahan Sedaing Krapyak in 1610, and attacked by Sultan Agung in 1614. The blocking of Brantas river by Sultan Agung finally forced Surabaya to surrender. A writing by VOC in 1620 described Surabaya as a rich and powerful region. The circumference was around 5 Dutch mijlen (around 37 km), surrounded by canals and reinforced by cannons. That year, to fight Mataram, the Surabaya army was 30,000 soldiers. In 1675, Trunojoyo from Madura seized Surabaya, but he was eventually ousted by the VOC in 1677. In the agreement between Pakubuwono II and VOC on 11 November 1743, Surabaya was given under the VOC control. Surabaya was officially under Dutch colonial sovereignty. The government was in the hands of the Dutch. During that colonial era, the Dutch divided the people into villages based on ethnicity; thus, there were Chinatown village, Arab village, Bumiputra village (inlanders or Javanese / Malay people), and European village (Handinoto 2007).

Surabaya today

According to the 2010 Population Census, Surabaya City had a population of 2,765,908 people. With an area of 333,063 km², the population density of Surabaya City was 8.304 million per km². The latest data shows that the population of Surabaya has reached 3,176,771 people. (Figures n.d.).

Javanese is the majority tribe in Surabaya. Compared to Javanese society in general, Javanese people in Surabaya have tougher and egalitarian temperament. One of the reasons is the far distance of Surabaya from the palace, which was seen as the center of Javanese culture (And & Thought, n.d.). Although Javanese is the majority tribe (83.68%), Surabaya is also the home to various ethnic groups in Indonesia, including Madurese (7.5%), Chinese (7.25%), Arabic (2.04%), and the rest are other ethnic groups such as Balinese, Batak, Bugis, Manado, Minangkabau, Dayak, Toraja, Ambon, Aceh, and foreigners. As an education center, Surabaya is also a place for students from various regions throughout Indonesia, some of whom even form a separate community forum. As a regional commercial center, many foreigners (expatriates) live in Surabaya, especially in western part of Surabaya. Islam is the religion of the majority of the population of Surabaya. Surabaya is one of the earliest centers of the spread of Islam in Java and is the basis of moderate Nahdatul Ulama people. Ampel Mosque was built in the 15th century by Sunan Ampel, one of the pioneers of Walisongo. Other religions practiced by Surabaya residents are Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism (Islam, Sunan, & Yogyakarta, 2009).

Sundanese tribe

Sundanese is an ethnic group originating from the western part of the Java Island, Indonesia, from Ujung Kulon on the western tip of the island of Java to around Brebes (covering the administrative regions of the provinces of West Java, Banten, parts of DKI Jakarta, and parts of Central Java). West Java is a province with the largest population in Indonesia. Because of its close location to the capital city of the country, almost all ethnic groups in Indonesia are available in this province. 65% of the population of West Java are Sundanese who are native to the province. Other tribes are Javanese who live in the northern part of West Java and Betawi Tribe who inhabits the western regions that are in contact with Jakarta (Report 2001). Minang and Batak tribes inhabit major cities in West Java, such as Bandung, Cimahi, Bogor, Bekasi, and Depok, while the Chinese are found in almost all regions of West Java.

Almost all Sundanese are Muslims. Only a small number are not Muslim, including Baduy people who live in Banten, but there are also Catholics, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists. Syncretism and mystical practices are still carried out. Basically, the entire life of the Sundanese is aimed at maintaining the balance of the universe.

Sundanese people generally make their living from farming. Most do not like to migrate or live apart from their relatives. The needs of the Sundanese are mainly things to improve the standard of living. According to data from Bappenas, in West Java, there are 75% of poor villages. In general, poverty in West Java is caused by the scarcity of human resources. Hence, what is needed is the development of human resources in the form of education, coaching, etc. (Yogyakarta, n.d.)

Bubat war

The Bubat War was a war that occurred between the Majapahit Kingdom and the Sunda Kingdom. This war took place in the Bubat sub-district, where the Sunda Kingdom's entourage coming to Majapahit stayed. This war occurred in 1279 or 1357 AD during the reign of King Hayam Wuruk in Majapahit. This war occurred due to a dispute between Gajah Mada, the regent of Majapahit, and Maharaja Linggabuana from the Sunda Kingdom which resulted in the death of the entire Sunda Kingdom's entourage in Bubat sub-district. In this war, there was also a suicide committed by the Sunda Royal Princess, Dyah Pitaloka, along with the wives of Sunda Kingdom's entourage to protect the honor of their kingdom. This event becomes quite a pros and cons issue among the people. The person who supported Gajah Mada will say that what he did was a way to unite the archipelago in accordance with his Palapa oath. On the other hand, there are those who think that what Gajah Mada did was an ambition to conquer the Kingdom of Sunda (Baihaqi & Bubat, 2015).

How do Sundanese settlers adapt and blend in in Surabaya

From the data that the authors collected, many immigrants from Sundanese came to Surabaya as an effort to make their living in the second largest city in Indonesia because going to Jakarta was already mainstream, said M, awet seblak seller. Likewise with J, who arrived in Surabaya 5 years ago with his friends, leaving his wife and children to earn a living in a city that was very strange to him, and went home with uncertainty. Now his friends who still live in Surabaya to sell *rangin* are only 4 people. This is different from the story of Mr. D., a fried rice seller who used to be a contractor. He said that the tiredness of being a contractor was one of the reasons he went to Surabaya. Another reason was he fell in love with a woman who had 2 children from Madiun. Meanwhile, K and A are fellow friends who came to Surabaya to study and get new experiences.

Then how can they blend in with Surabaya people? The key is to be always friendly and polite because Surabaya is other people's place, hence, settlers must be polite. The ability to speak Javanese, the regional language of Surabaya, is not really necessary because all Surabaya people definitely can speak

Ma'ruf: "How middle class settlers in Surabaya from West Java blend in"

Indonesian, but understanding even a little of Javanese language is also needed. Evidently, from all the informants that were interviewed, no one could speak Javanese but each understood enough of it. Another key to blending in is to try to keep the tone of voice so that it will not be too soft. "In Surabaya, you must not talk in a small voice because it will make you get bullied," said Mr. D. This opinion makes sense if you see the nature of Surabaya people, who are normally tough and rough. It might sound easy, but it is quite difficult in practice for Sundanese people who actually have quite soft speaking style.

The university life in Surabaya is quite different from that in other universities located in other areas of Java such as UB, UGM, and UNSOED because according to an informant, hanging out on campuses in Surabaya makes settlers forced to learn Javanese. Unlike the campuses outside Surabaya, the students have more varied ways of speaking. In Surabaya, the regional language, namely Javanese, is still more often used than Indonesian.

Conclusion

Surabaya as one of the biggest multiculturalism cities makes it a city that is not too difficult for settlers to blend in. In order to survive, for the informants it is useful to be polite but firm; and this city will be a beautiful and comfortable place to live.

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Photos of informants

1. Pak Dd.A Bandung depot fried rice seller.



2. Mang J., Tasikmalayarangin cake seller.



Ma'ruf: "How middle class settlers in Surabaya from West Java blend in"

3. MZ, and Ddg. A Bandung wet seblak seller



4. A pedicabdriver (AN)



5. N K, Unair Student, 18 years old, from Tangerang



6. M A, an ITS student, 18th, from Jakarta

Ma'ruf: "How middle class settlers in Surabaya from West Java blend in"

