



Popularization of Semarang Spring Rolls Outside the Chinese Community, 1963-1986

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Abstract: This study examined the popularization of Semarang lumpia outside the Chinese community during the period 1963-1968 by placing it within the socio-political context of the New Order. In the context of Semarang lumpia, it explains how this culinary dish, originating from Peranakan Chinese cuisine, was accepted across ethnic groups and became a symbol of the city's identity. This study used a qualitative method with a historical approach, encompassing heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results show that during the New Order era, the Chinese community's freedom of movement was restricted, but they still had their economic freedom to continue their business. Since the 1970s, the popularization of Semarang lumpia has gradually increased, involving production adaptations, expanded distribution, and the normalization of consumption in public spaces. Within the context of restrictions on Chinese cultural expression, lumpia remained relatively safe because they did not display specific identity symbols. Until the 1980s, the popularization of lumpia increased further following a shift in the narrative from ethnic cuisine to Semarang's signature cuisine.

Keywords: Chinese; lumpia; popularization

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji popularisasi lumpia Semarang di luar komunitas Tionghoa pada periode 1963-1968 dengan menempatkannya dalam konteks sosial-politik Orde Baru. Dalam konteks lumpia Semarang, menjelaskan kuliner yang berasal dari kuliner peranakan Tionghoa, dapat diterima oleh lintas etnis dan menjadi simbol identitas kota. Metode ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan sejarah, meliputi heuristik, kritik, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa memasuki masa Orde Baru, ruang gerak masyarakat Tionghoa dibatasi, tetapi dalam bidang ekonomi masih mendapat keleluasaan untuk tetap melakukan usahanya. Sejak tahun 1970-an, popularisasi lumpia Semarang bertahap meningkat yang melibatkan adaptasi produksi, perluasan distribusi, dan normalisasi konsumsi di ruang publik. Dalam konteks pembatasan ekspresi budaya Tionghoa, lumpia relatif aman karena tidak menampilkan simbol identitas secara spesifik. Hingga memasuki tahun 1980-an, popularisasi lumpia semakin meningkat setelah pergeseran narasi dari kuliner etnis menuju kuliner khas kota Semarang.

Kata Kunci: lumpia; popularisasi; Tionghoa



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Introduction

Indonesia has diverse ethnicities, languages, and cultures with a wealth of traditional, modern, and fusion cuisines (Ramadhani et al., 2024, p. 2). Culinary richness is a symbol of local, national, and hybrid cultural identity. Cuisine, which in Indonesian can be interpreted as

“cooking,” is also a symbol that reflects the historical journey of food and the dynamics of Indonesian society (Afni, 2025; “KBBI,” n.d.). One dish that is interesting in terms of its symbolic function is lumpia. In this context, Semarang developed as a maritime city through its bustling trade activities. This condition turned the city into a meeting point for diverse communities, including Chinese migrants who introduced their culinary traditions and eventually gave rise to lumpia. This condition provided the foundation for the potential development of the city's culinary sector and eventually a variety of cuisines that later became one of Semarang's signature dishes (Maria et al., 2022, p. 2; Putri, 2021).

As one of Semarang's signature dishes, lumpia reflects the city's cultural diversity, which was shaped by the interactions among various communities. This development cannot be separated from the role of the Chinese community, which had been present long before the VOC occupied the city. Their presence has not only influenced social and economic aspects but has also made a significant contribution to the development of local cuisine. The Chinese community, spread across various major cities in Indonesia, has been an important element in shaping the gastronomic identity of the archipelago (Sulistyawati & Prianta, 2024).

The Chinese community in Semarang and their role in the development of local cuisine, especially lumpia, reflects an important process of cultural acculturation in shaping the city's identity (Xinhua, 2025). As part of urban gastronomy, lumpia has also become part of the cultural experience for tourists. This has increased the visibility of lumpia in public spaces and cemented its status as a culinary specialty synonymous with the image of Semarang (Brahmanto, 2022). In the socio-political dimension, the popularity of lumpia cannot be separated from the context of the New Order's policies towards Chinese cultural expression. Thus, lumpia is a form of soft power cultural expression that demonstrates the presence of Chinese culture in public spaces without causing major conflict (Mutia & Archellie, 2023; Susanti & Purwaningsih, 2015).

At the same time, cultural expression through lumpia has not only survived symbolically, but has also become more widely popular. Lumpia began to gain widespread public attention since the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) were held in Jakarta in 1963 (Jeihan, 2022). The GANEFO event was important in increasing the popularity of lumpia. It is reported that there were lumpia vendors from Semarang who sold lumpia and introduced its taste to international visitors (Xinhua, 2025). The development of the lumpia culinary industry in Semarang cannot be separated from the ups and downs influenced by government policies (Lestari & Suharso, 2020, p. 2). During President Soeharto's administration, a number of regulations were issued that restricted cultural activities, including those of the Chinese community. However, in the economic sphere, the Chinese ethnic group was still given the freedom to develop their businesses. This situation caused lumpia culinary entrepreneurs to face difficulties in selling their products during Chinese cultural celebrations (Algemeen Dagblad, 1968).

The uniqueness of Semarang lumpia is reflected in its relatively larger size compared to other regions, as well as its distinctive taste. The existence of lumpia shows its role in enriching local culture, even when faced with discrimination by the government against the Chinese community. The development of lumpia experienced ups and downs due to restrictions on Chinese cultural activities during the New Order regime. Nevertheless, the lumpia industry in Semarang was able to survive by making various adaptations (Rabbani et al., 2025). State policies that encouraged cultural integration and restricted the expression of certain ethnic groups, especially the Chinese, were characteristic of the New Order era. Daily cultural practices, including language and naming, were changed by this assimilation strategy, which

ultimately influenced how the community positioned and promoted their culinary heritage (Wasino et al., 2019).

Between 1963 and 1968, the state made various efforts to build political and economic stability and national identity. The New Order government also implemented policies that affected ethnic groups, local traders, and minority cultural identities. These policies on identity, national integration, and cultural homogenization sometimes restricted the expression of ethnic minorities. The Peranakan Chinese community, which has faced discrimination throughout history, had limited social space to express their identity (Leeuwarder Courant, 1979; *Nederlands Dagblad*, 1985).

The government made various efforts to establish national stability, control expressions of cultural identity, and encourage modernization. Policies on identity, infrastructure development, food distribution, and control of the mass media were part of the state's strategy for national unity. Furthermore, the New Order had an impact on how people saw themselves in the national and local context, including aspects of everyday culture such as food (Saragih, 2016). The social, economic, and political forces influenced by the New Order regime's policies also had a major impact on the formation of local cultural identities. The social reality of urban communities, especially in Semarang, showed openness and diversity in responding to migration flows and interacting with the national identity constructed by the state. Therefore, urban life, consumption patterns, and culinary traditions in Semarang reflect how people understood themselves and their social environment during that period (Soenjaya et al., 2022). This condition shows that culinary practices do not stand alone, but they develop in line with historical processes, social relations, and political changes that shape urban spaces.

Throughout the 20th century, variations in recipes, serving methods, and sales locations indicate a continuous process of cultural acculturation. Thus, it is part of the formation of the city's culinary identity. The combination of Chinese and local Javanese elements in lumpia not only reflects a taste adaptation, but also a cultural strategy to maintain existence amid social changes and state policies that restricted Chinese cultural expression (Onck, 1979; Xinhua, 2025). In this context, cuisine functions as a relatively safe symbolic medium for negotiating identity and collective memory in the public sphere.

This study aims to understand how Semarang lumpia has progressed in shaping its image as a local culinary identity in the social, political, and cultural context of the New Order era. Using analysis of primary sources such as newspapers and archival documents, this study seeks to reveal the influence of narratives of nationalism and development on public perceptions, in which lumpia is seen as a symbol of regional pride. In addition, the study also explains the link between New Order cultural programs and the process of forming a local identity that could adapt to the national political mainstream. The study also highlights the role of the economy, tourism, and the media in strengthening the status of lumpia as an icon of the city of Semarang. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will provide deeper insight into the function of traditional food as a tool for shaping cultural identity and social imagery in the modern Indonesian history.

Studies on Indonesian cuisine generally focus on aspects of gastronomy, economics, and tourism, such as in research on strategies for promoting traditional cuisine and its influence on the image of a region (Santoso et al., 2019). Several studies have discussed the acculturation of Chinese and Javanese cultures in Semarang cuisine, but these studies tend to focus on recipes and cooking techniques rather than the social and political image behind them (Soenjaya et al., 2022). Another study refers to Semarang lumpia as a regional tourism icon (Brahmanto, 2022), but does not relate it to the ideological-political context of the New Order. Therefore, there remains significant scope for analysis of how media, politics, culture, and social dynamics in shaping the image of lumpia during that period. This article aims to fill this research gap by

positioning Semarang lumpia not only as a culinary product but also as a cultural political symbol that reflects the negotiation between locality and nationalism. Using cultural history methods and primary source analysis, this study provides a new perspective on the role of cuisine as a space where identity and hegemony are formed throughout the course of Indonesia's contemporary history.

Research Method

This study used a cultural history perspective to explore the development of Semarang spring rolls as part of the city's culinary identity during the New Order era in Indonesia. In this approach, cuisine is not only viewed as an object of consumption, but also as a form of cultural expression that connects power, economy, and ideology. As explained by Kuntowijoyo (2003) in *Historical Methodology*, historical research goes through systematic stages (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). The initial steps in this research are the search for primary and secondary sources (heuristics), verification, interpretation, and historiography (Wijayati, 2009). During the heuristic stage, various primary and secondary sources related to the 1963-1986 period were collected.

These primary sources include newspapers such as *Suara Merdeka*, *Kompas*, and newspapers accessed through *Delpher*, which provides reports and advertisements about Semarang cuisine. Meanwhile, books, journals, and research results on culinary history and cultural politics serve as secondary sources that provide a theoretical basis for interpreting field data. Cross-verification was carried out between newspapers, government archives, and oral interview results. Kuntowijoyo (2013) emphasizes that this stage helps historians avoid bias from individual sources and instead understand the objective meaning of the events being studied (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). After verification, the contents of newspaper articles and official documents were interpreted using a qualitative analysis approach. As explained by Bengtsson (2016), this was done through theme categorization, context reading, and symbolic interpretation of the language and narratives used by the media to construct narratives about Semarang lumpia (Bengtsson, 2016). Finally, the historiography stage involves compiling the results of the interpretation into a scientific narrative that explains the process of forming the image of Semarang lumpia from a Chinese culinary specialty to a culinary identity in the New Order era.

Research Results

Lumpia is a culinary specialty of Semarang that was born from the acculturation of Chinese and Javanese cultures. It originated from the Chinese word *chun-juan* (春卷) or spring roll, which was then brought to Hokkian and called *lunpia* (潤餅). In Javanese pronunciation, the term became "lumpia," meaning spring pie, referring to its original form, which was not fried. Semarang lumpia is not just a food but also a socio-cultural symbol that incorporates Chinese culinary techniques. Local tastes and ingredients are also a concrete manifestation of the meeting of two culinary traditions. Over time, lumpia evolved from market food to souvenirs and was promoted in media coverage and city tourism activities. Eventually, it was formally recognized as part of the region's culinary cultural heritage. This recognition affirms the role of lumpia not only in gastronomy but also in shaping the city's identity and efforts to preserve local cultural heritage.

Semarang Spring Rolls in the Context of Social Politics and New Order Assimilation

The culinary development of Semarang spring rolls was pioneered by a married couple who established the business in the 19th century. It originated from a man from Fujian, China, named Tjoa Thay Joe. He migrated to Java and worked as a small food vendor next door to Wasih, a native who also ran a similar business (Xinhua, 2025). However, a contrasting situation arose when Wasih's food always sold out every day, while Tjoa Thay Joe's often remained unsold. This prompted him to ask Wasih about the reason. From their conversation, it became clear that the low interest in Tjoa Thay Joe's merchandise was due to his use of pork. Since then, the two interacted more frequently until they eventually developed feelings for each other. Their relationship led to marriage, which then created a new type of pastry named lumpia by Tjoa Thay Joe (Fiyani, 2019, p. 40). Initially, the production and consumption of lumpia were limited only to the Peranakan Chinese community. It used ingredients such as bamboo shoots combined with typical Chinese processing techniques.

Starting from a cultural practice that was initially limited to the internal environment of the Peranakan Chinese community, lumpia then entered a broader dynamic in line with political changes. In the 1960s, Soekarno aimed to assert political and cultural sovereignty through the idea of organizing a sporting event. The idea originated from his belief that the countries belonging to the New Emerging Forces (NEFO) had the capacity to hold international sporting events as a means of diplomacy (Bintang Timur, 1963). From this idea, the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFU) were born, held in Jakarta in 1963, which also served as a bilateral meeting space to discuss political, economic, and cultural cooperation among member countries (Dahlan, 2019, pp. 23–24). The People's Republic of China was among the countries participating in this event, and shows that before the political changes of 1965, symbolic expressions related to China still had a place in the national public sphere.

However, this dynamic underwent a significant shift afterwards, when the state began to implement policies that restricted the expression of Chinese culture in public spaces. This change prompted the Chinese community to adapt the way they preserved their cultural practices. They shifted their cultural expression from symbolic and explicit forms to more adaptive everyday practices. It was within this framework that cuisine, including Semarang spring rolls, became a relatively safe cultural medium for preserving cultural continuity while also enabling social acceptance outside the Chinese community. Then, in 1965, national political changes occurred that affected the space for cultural expression among the Chinese community in Indonesia. The assimilation policy that strengthened during the New Order limited their cultural representation in public spaces. However, at the same time, it opened opportunities for pragmatic cultural practices, such as culinary arts, to survive and adapt (Wasino et al., 2019).

During the New Order era, the ideology of development or developmentalism became the main basis of state policy. President Suharto positioned political stability and security as fundamental prerequisites for national development. The development was not only regarding the economic context, but also about the ideological project to shape a social order that was obedient to the state and Pancasila. In this case, Pancasila became a single hegemonic ideology, used to regulate political and cultural discourse through education, the media, and the bureaucracy (Pertiwi et al., 2023; Salam, 2021). Therefore, the development was a project of power legitimization that emphasized the importance of national unity under the control of the central government.

Political and economic stability became the main instruments for the New Order regime in strengthening the legitimacy of its power. Through the ABRI Dual Function doctrine, the military also played a role in civilian government, ensuring state control in every aspect of the

society (Suara Merdeka, 1974; Suryawan & Sumarjiana, 2020). In the economic sphere, the government succeeded in attracting foreign investment and accelerating growth through a centralized economic model (Suara Merdeka, 1966). However, behind this success lay social inequality, corruption, and the marginalization of certain ethnic groups, including the Chinese community, which was directed to assimilate completely for the sake of national integration (Nurhayati & Aksa, 2020). The gap was widened through violence against the Chinese community in Indonesia, which was carried out under the post-1965 military regime with the support of the security forces. The government's policy at that time deliberately reinforced ethnic separation and targeted the Chinese community, which played an important role in the trade sector. The resulting violence not only reflected racial conflict but was also a political and economic strategy that led to chaos and the destruction of national capital (De waarheid, September 9, 1966).

In the late 1970s to early 1980s, the Indonesian government planned a repatriation program for around one million Chinese descendants who still held Chinese citizenship. This plan was revealed by Lieutenant General Yoga Sugama from the state intelligence agency during a meeting of the House of Representatives' Defense and Foreign Affairs Commission. The government planned to relocate non-Indonesian citizens to designated areas while awaiting their deportation to China (Amigoe, 1979). The city of Semarang, as the commercial center of Central Java, has around 19,000 Chinese citizens, which is more than other cities such as Surakarta and Pekalongan (Suara Merdeka, June 24, 1969).

This situation created uncertainty for the Chinese communities in various cities, including Semarang, particularly in terms of citizenship status and space for social and cultural expression. From the 1960s to the 1980s, state policies toward ethnic Chinese residents not only impacted legal and political aspects but also influenced their daily cultural practices in public spaces (Wigarani et al., 2019). In this situation, many forms of symbolic cultural expression were restricted. This encouraged the Chinese community to adapt through activities that were considered safer, such as economic and culinary activities (Perdana, 2025).

In Semarang, which has long been recognized as a center of trade and cuisine, the food business has become an important space for the social sustainability of the Chinese community. Cuisine not only serves as a source of livelihood, but also as a medium for cross-ethnic interaction that is relatively accepted by the wider community. Therefore, the sustainability and popularization of Peranakan cuisine, including Semarang spring rolls, can be understood as part of a social adaptation strategy in the face of structural pressure on Chinese identity during that period (Bromokusumo, 2013). In this situation, Semarang spring rolls not only survived as a community cuisine, but also underwent a transformation through a process of production adaptation and distribution expansion.

Adaptation of Production and Expansion of Distribution of Semarang Spring Rolls

Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 created a socio-political context that significantly influenced the cultural practices of the Chinese community (Aryani, 2022). Restrictions on cultural expression in public spaces encouraged the adoption of survival strategies. Cuisine became a relatively safe medium for preserving cultural continuity while adapting to broader social demands (Chessiagi et al., 2018). As a result, Semarang lumpia was not only preserved as a culinary tradition of the community, but also adapted in various ways to be accepted by the wider community.

One form of adaptation was in the ingredients and flavor of lumpia. The use of local ingredients such as bamboo shoots, chicken, and shrimp has become increasingly dominant. Meanwhile, the taste has been adjusted to be more familiar to consumers' tastes. This adjustment

is not only aimed at improving market appeal, but also a cultural strategy to reduce the symbolic distance between lumpia as a Chinese-Indonesian product and the wider community (Xinhua, 2025). Under the New Order's assimilation policy, this strategy allowed lumpia to circulate more freely in public spaces without causing social resistance. Thus, flavor adaptation can be understood as a form of identity negotiation that allows lumpia to be accepted as a common food without having to emphasize the ethnic background of its makers.

Changes also occurred in the production patterns of lumpia. Previously, lumpia was produced on a limited scale for consumption by the Chinese community. In the mid to late 1970s, lumpia production began to increase in line with growing demand. This period was the notable phase when political stabilization and economic recovery began to drive the growth of urban economic activity, including small-scale culinary businesses. The number of enthusiasts grew along with the development of the domestic tourism sector and increased urban mobility. Spring rolls were no longer produced solely for consumption by the Chinese community, but began to be prepared in larger quantities to meet general market demand, especially in downtown Semarang and trade routes (Suara Merdeka, 1976). This expansion in distribution changed the position of lumpia from a communal food to part of the daily consumption of urban communities. Lumpia in these spaces marked a process of social normalization, in which Chinese Peranakan food began to be accepted as a common snack without emphasis on its cultural origins.

Lumpia production was still dominated by Chinese Peranakan family-based home businesses. However, increased social interaction in public spaces has encouraged adjustments in production orientation. This has led to a broader market and efforts to maintain consistency in taste and quality. Quality and quantity have become important because lumpia is now produced for consumers of different ethnicities with more diverse expectations. This transformation shows a shift from community-based production to semi-commercial production (Rabbani et al., 2025), positioning lumpia as both an economic commodity and a cultural product. In addition, distribution expansion is another important factor in the initial popularization of Semarang lumpia. Its presence in these spaces expanded its reach and increased the visibility as part of urban consumer culture.

The role of cross-ethnic traders also contributed to accelerating the distribution and social acceptance of lumpia, creating more pragmatic economic relations. The involvement of non-Chinese traders in the sale of lumpia marked a decline in ethnic exclusivity in production and distribution practices. Such relationships show that the adaptation of lumpia did not only occur at the product level, but also at the level of social practices that supported production and distribution. In the context of assimilation policies, this condition is in line with the state's efforts to obscure Chinese cultural identity in the public sphere. For this reason, cultural products such as cuisine are more easily accepted when they are stripped of explicit symbols.

Lumpia as an Expression of Cross-Ethnic Culture and Consolidation of Semarang City Identity

Entering the early 1980s, lumpia underwent a significant shift, no longer as a culinary product that could penetrate cross-ethnic markets, but as a cultural symbol representing the city's identity. This was the result of a long process of social, economic, and cultural adaptation that had been ongoing since the previous decade. Therefore, lumpia was increasingly detached from its exclusive association with the Chinese ethnic group and accepted as part of the collective local culture of Semarang. This process took place alongside increasing social mobility, growth in urban consumption, and the development of local cultural discourse within the framework of the New Order (Suryadinata, 2004). The popularization of lumpia across

ethnic groups began to appear in the late 1970s, when it was often found in public spaces. During this period, lumpia was consumed by non-Chinese communities without always being associated with the ethnic identity of its makers.

Lumpia began to be perceived as a typical city snack, rather than as a culinary item of a particular community anymore. This change in perception is a notable stage in the process of cross-ethnic social acceptance. By the 1980s, the popularization of lumpia experienced significant acceleration. This was due to the informal promotion of lumpia as a specialty of Semarang, mainly through the consumption practices of domestic tourists and migrants. The existence of lumpia as a souvenir marked a change in its social status from an everyday food to a representative symbol of the city. Lumpia also became an ethnically neutral reference point for local identity. Acceptance during this period was also reflected in the increasing involvement of actors outside the Chinese community in the lumpia production and distribution chain. Javanese traders and other ethnic groups not only acted as sellers but also as regular consumers. This condition shows that lumpia has undergone “social institutionalization” as a common food (Susanti & Purwaningsih, 2015).

Food that transcends ethnic boundaries and functions across different social contexts reflects a high level of cultural integration. In this case, lumpia functions as a relatively neutral medium for social encounters and is accepted without identity resistance. This process is also supported by changes in the narrative surrounding lumpia in the public sphere. Lumpia is more commonly referred to as a “Semarang specialty” than as a Chinese Peranakan food. This shift in narrative marks a change in meaning from ethnic identity to local identity. The labeling of cuisine as “regional specialty” is an important stage in the process of forming a city's cultural identity, especially during a time when certain ethnic expressions were politically restricted (Utami, 2018).

Cuisine as a form of soft cultural expression works subtly through consumption practices without explicitly highlighting symbols of identity. Thus, spring rolls are understood as part of the process of Chinese cultural continuity through non-confrontational mechanisms. Although the state did not directly promote Chinese cuisine, the social climate that blurred ethnic symbols encouraged Peranakan cuisine to take on a more local and neutral form. This policy allows Chinese cultural elements to survive in an adapted form, making them more easily accepted by the wider community (Xinhua, 2025).

In addition, spring rolls also reflect a complex process of soft power and cultural negotiation. In this context, soft power can be understood as the capacity of a cultural form to attract and influence the wider community through its appeal, rather than through coercion or symbolic domination. Cuisine acts as a subtle medium of cultural communication, simultaneously conveying the values and identity of the group that carries the culture without reducing ethnic change (Mutia & Archellie, 2023). This concept is relevant when Semarang spring rolls are accepted by cross-ethnic communities as part of the city's culinary identity. However, the origins of spring rolls are associated with the Chinese community. Given that cuisine can convey social meaning without emphasizing explicit symbols of ethnic identity, lumpia can be accepted by non-Chinese communities can accept lumpia as a city food without symbolic barriers.

In the mid-1980s, the acceptance of lumpia as a city identity can be said to have strengthened along with the development of domestic tourism discourse and regional promotion. Although not yet formalized on a large scale by local government policy, informal promotional practices by traders and the community played an important role in establishing the image of lumpia as an icon of Semarang (Suara Merdeka, 1976). Lumpia was accepted as part of the city's cuisine without questioning its ethnic origins. This created an identity that was not

exclusive but inclusive, uniting cross-ethnic experiences within the urban space of Semarang. With its representation as a product of which the city is proud, lumpia has symbolically united various ethnic groups under the same local identity. This shows how the cultural practices of minority groups can be transformed into shared symbols through a process of continuous social acceptance. The acceptance of lumpia across ethnic groups is also an example of soft power in the local sphere. Soft power is generally associated with cultural diplomacy on a national and international scale. However, its essence is the same when cuisine can attract sympathy and become the preference of a wider community (Mutia & Archellie, 2023; Xinhua, 2025).

The popularity of lumpia functions as a mechanism for symbolic social integration, where food becomes a medium for confrontational cross-ethnic encounters. Cuisine becomes a safe space for cultural interaction in the context of restrictions on identity expression. Furthermore, the increasing popularity of Semarang lumpia during this period does not merely reflect economic adaptation. Beyond that, it shows a process of cross-ethnic acceptance influenced by state policies, urban consumption dynamics, and cultural identity negotiations. Lumpia has transformed from a community cuisine into a widely accepted cultural symbol of the city. At the same time, it represents a form of Chinese cultural continuity within the social framework of the New Order. This process confirms the role of cuisine as an important medium in the formation of an inclusive local identity.

Conclusion

The popularization of Semarang spring rolls outside the Chinese community is a historical process involving social, political, and cultural dynamics. In 1963, GANEFO became the starting point for the popularization of lumpia. In the socio-political context of the New Order, which restricted Chinese cultural expression, lumpia actually gained continuity through pragmatic daily practices. This made the cuisine relatively safe and acceptable. Then, the production and distribution of lumpia underwent adaptations involving cross-ethnic communities, especially since the 1970s. This process encouraged the normalization of lumpia consumption in public spaces and expanded its acceptance outside its community of origin. These adaptations did not completely erase traces of Chinese culture, allowing lumpia to be accepted as part of urban consumption practices.

Overall, the adaptation of lumpia production and the expansion of its distribution in Semarang during the New Order era can be considered as a survival strategy as well as an initial popularization. The adjustments to ingredients, taste, production scale, and distribution networks created the social prerequisites for broader cross-ethnic acceptance. This indicates that the popularization of lumpia happened through stages of adaptation influenced by the political, economic, and social context of the time. It was this adaptation that paved the way for the change in the meaning of lumpia from a community cuisine to a popular cuisine and part of the identity of the city of Semarang.

By the 1980s, Semarang lumpia underwent a further shift in meaning. Its growing acceptance among different ethnic groups encouraged it to become a symbol of the city's local identity. In this phase, lumpia was no longer perceived as an ethnic cuisine, but as a representation of the city's inclusive culture. This process shows how cuisine can operate as soft power, working through its appeal and consumption habits to be accepted by the public without coercion. Cultural negotiation shows that food is an important medium in the formation of collective identity, especially in the context of a pluralistic society under political restrictions. Thus, lumpia is an example of how minority cultures can be transformed into local identities through a gradual and conceptual process.

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