I Dwell in [Im]possibility: Legitimating the Informal Economy around the Bus Terminal in Kampung Melayu, Jakarta

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This article challenges the dominant paradigm of legitimation as conceived through formal social structures. It argues that society is never mono-dimensional, and that in developing countries, especially, it is more typically characterized by duality. It has been widely observed by sociologists that each society has its own structure (as defined by Anthony Giddens), in which systems are organized according to sets of practices. Legitimation, as a process of making activities acceptable and normative, thus also can only be conceived as applying within each particular society. In this context, the possibility, or impossibility, of the informal economy to dwell in public urban space must be seen as subject to processes of *informal* legitimation according to communicative action. The article examines these issues with regard to the activities of ambulant traders around the bus terminal in Kampung Melayu, Jakarta.

The poem by Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) "I Dwell in Possibility," which was first published in 1929, has fascinated many scholars, especially with regard to its syntactic ambiguity.[1] Indeed, this quality makes it reasonable to assume and assert the alternative statement "I Dwell in [Im]possibility," as a reflection of a condition in which phenomena observed may enfold equally the reality of presence and absence.

"I Dwell," in the poem, may further be conceived as referring both to a tangible "I," living among (plural) humans (a group of individuals, a community, or a society), and the I of the self, which abides in the material and immaterial worlds. The word "dwell" in this context must be understood as originating from the Old English *dwellan*, "to wander, to linger, to tarry."[2] "I Dwell" thus connotes the act of wandering, of lingering in the world, as a reflection of the temporariness of human existence.

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According to these terms, it is the act of dwelling together that justifies the coexistence of human beings in urban environments. However, in this article, I wish particularly to consider how the resultant "we" who dwell also needs to encompass those engaged in the informal economy. My study considers the case of ambulant traders in the environs of the Kampung Malayu Bus Terminal in Jakarta, Indonesia. As I will show, it is in just such circumstances that the ambiguity of "I dwell in [im]possibility" may characterize a similar condition of "[il]legitimacy" — whether or not "we" are recognized and accepted by the community, or the public at large. In this sense, the article will make a distinction between the terms "dwell" and "settle," where the latter means to "seat," to stay permanently in space.

CONCEPTS OF DWELLING

For purposes of clarity, I need first to discuss differences in the way thinkers such as Martin Heidegger and Christian Norberg-Schultz have approached the concept of dwelling. For Heidegger, dwelling provided metaphysical justification for the experience of human life on earth (being-in-the-world). It also described how individuals live and condition themselves to the world. As Heidegger wrote, ". . . [the] way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be [a] human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell."[3]

Heidegger provided greater detail for these views through his idea of "dwelling fourfold." Thus, humans, as weak *mortals*, believe or have faith in *divinity*. For some humans, this means believing in a connection between heaven and earth (*axis mundi*). Humans, who live in the world, thus have to be grateful to the *sky* that gives light, air and water. They need also to be grateful to the *earth* that gives water, rivers, plants, woods and animals.

In such a worldview — as in Balinese culture — humans are imagined as living side by side with the environment, committed to preserving the earth and nature. As Heidegger emphasized:

> To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its nature. The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving. It pervades dwelling in its whole range. That range reveals itself to us as soon as we reflect that human being consists in dwelling and, indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth.[4]

Many have misunderstood the metaphysics of Heideggerian dwelling. But, in light of the passage above, my understanding is that it illuminates the basic, simple idea of a human place in nature's ecology.

A rather different conception of dwelling was, however, proposed by Norberg-Schultz, for whom dwelling implied both staying and wandering. Expanding on Heidegger's ideas, Norberg-Schultz examined the action of dwelling in a much more pragmatic way. Specifically, he referred to three aspects of the human condition related to it.[5] First, dwelling is a "means to meet others for exchange of products, ideas and feelings, that is, to experience life as a multitude of possibilities." Second, dwelling is a "means to come to an agreement with others" — that is, to accept a set of common values. And third, dwelling is being "oneself, in the sense of having a small chosen world of our own."

Within the framework of architecture, Norberg-Schultz argued that modes of dwelling thus encompass the private, public and collective spheres. It was within this structure that he defined the activity of dwelling as a guiding principal for architectural practice.

Heidegger and Norberg-Schultz were great scholars and noteworthy in their respective views. Yet neither was able to come to a better understanding of urban dwellers than that most of them were poor migrants. "They" were thus situated on the other side of a general duality within society. Yet, if we are to understand urban environments, we cannot simply consider "them" to be an objective concept, external to our mindset. "They" are far beyond any reductive empirical understanding we can hope to construct.

It is particularly within the condition of "dwelling in (im) possibility," as associated with the informal economy, that a dual structure in the constitution of society may be most readily apparent.

FORMAL/INFORMAL: ISSUES OF LEGITIMATION AND TRADITION

Etymologically, the word "legitimacy" is derived from the Latin lex — "law."[6] As a noun, this origin is typically used to emphasize a religious and governmental purpose; as an adjective, a legal one. However, I would like to focus here on the alternative social origins of legitimacy in communicative action.

Jurgen Habermas has argued that distorted communication can lead to counterfactual expectations. By contrast, acceptable, valid communication occurs,

> . . . only through legitimation of the ruling systems of norms and through the anchoring of the belief in legitimacy in systematic barriers to will-forming communication. The claim that our norms can be grounded is redeemed through legitimizing world-views.[7]

Social cooperation through communicative action thus implies the prior existence of legitimizing values, norms and worldviews. This condition applies both to formal and informal spheres of action.

It is thus the case today that poor, rural migrants from all over Indonesia "urbanize" themselves in big cities, such as Jakarta, without knowledge or understanding of how to live in urban areas according to much more complex notions of civil society (*civitas*). The migrants bring with them only the traditional values, norms, and rules and resources by which their previous social systems have been organized. These are, moreover, held within them, and are not external to individuals.

The sociologist Anthony Giddens has called such frames of knowledge "structures."[8] Such structures are both constraining and enabling. Giddens further asserted that the form of social relation he called "association,"

. . . occurs in and through the regularized conduct of knowledgeable agents. The settings of interaction in which routine encounters occur are reflexively monitored by their constituent actors in the reproduction of mutually linked role relationships. But while such monitoring is the condition of their reproduction, it does not take the form of an active attempt to control or alter the circumstances of reproduction. There tends to be a close connection between traditional modes of legitimacy and the prevalence of associations.[9]

The word "traditional" as it appears here is derived etymologically from the Latin *tradere*, "to hand over, to hand on, to deliver." It is thus that Nezar AlSayyad has asserted that it is typically defined as "the action of transmitting or handing down from one to another a variety of beliefs, rules, and customs."[10] However, this common definition may overlook a significant condition. This is that it necessitates a supporting ground of human relations. In other words, it involves more than simply an act of transmission; it requires a companion network or association of human beings.

This condition accords with Giddens's belief that "tradition is more than a particular form of experience of temporality; it represents the moral command of 'what went before' over the continuity of day-to-day life."[11] Thus, he stressed "societies" are social systems that are not uniform — but rather emerge from a range of other systemic relationships in which they are embedded. In this sense, they may embody structural principles that define particular forms of association, and which develop with regard to specific locales or territories. It is thus, in a context such as Jakarta, that migrants, coming from across the *nusantara* (the Indonesian archipelago), may constitute *their own* heterogeneous norms and values within the territories they occupy.

While legitimacy, according to Habermas, may derive from communicative action, tradition may emerge from the association of actors. In this sense, qualities of "formal," "informal," and "legitimate" are interrelated, especially since they are deeply concerned with the norms of community or society. As this process unfolds, norms are set and established, either formally or informally, in a group, community or institution. Yet, in order that these norms are agreed and accepted, members of the community must verify they are legitimate, especially through some form of agreement; otherwise, the norms cannot be enacted. It is thus that the actions of each member may accord with either formal or informal "established" rules, principles, or standards.

Seen in this light, the epistemological problem posed by a division between formal and informal activities only arises when they are conceived as separate, unconnected entities. Informality is then conceived strictly as a state of exception from the formal order of social formation in certain settings — such as urbanization.

Thus, Ananya Roy has argued that the quality of urban informality refers to the prior establishment of an organizing logic, a system of norms.[12] And from a different perspective, with regard to values of legal culture, Jane Larson has likewise asserted that "[informality] contradicts legality, and especially equality. . . . From within this tradition, informality is an abuse of law, as well as tolerance of exploitation and inequality."[13]

However, in an attempt to define the issue from a contrary perspective, Peter Herrle and Josefine Fokdal have argued that the standard concept of informality overlooks the complexity and importance of connectivity between sectors, levels, and actors.[14] It thus neglects the importance of power relations and the blurriness of constantly negotiated and readjusted boundaries between the acceptable and the nonacceptable, the legal and nonlegal. Instead of stressing the "informality" of certain actions, Herrle and Fokdal have thus described the distinction between formal and informal as reflecting processes of negotiation. And they have advocated viewing it as indicative of differing levels of access to power, legitimacy and resources.

QUALITIES OF INFORMAL ECONOMIES

There has been much written with regard to the informal economy, especially since the publication by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of its seminal *Employment, Incomes and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya* in 1972. In general, however, the informal urban economy has been conceived as a separate field of endeavor, discrete and detached from accepted formal standards.

In this regard, Martha Chen has identified four dominant schools of thought.[15] The "dualist" school sees the informal sector as comprising marginal activities, distinct from and unrelated to the formal sector, that provide income for the poor and a safety net in times of crisis.[16] The "structuralist" school sees the informal economy as composed of subordinated economic units (micro-enterprises) and workers that serve to reduce input and labor costs and, thereby, increase the competitiveness of large capitalist firms.[17] The "legalist" school sees the informal sector as comprised of "plucky" micro-en-

trepreneurs who choose to operate informally in order to avoid the costs, time and effort of formal registration, but who need property rights to convert their assets into legally recognized assets.[18] Finally, the "voluntarist" school also focuses on informal entrepreneurs who deliberately seek to avoid regulations and taxation, but, unlike the legalist school, it does not blame this choice on cumbersome registration procedures.

Before proceeding further, I believe it is worthwhile to come to a better understanding of what "economy" means in this context. This requires going beyond the dominant paradigm — a rational model that is, first, classical, in that it promotes free markets, and, second, Keynesian, in that it sees the role of government as being to promote growth. According to this model, the economy is typically envisioned simply as an engine to achieve wealth. But it thus overlooks the reality that humans may exist (in Giddensian terms) either in very rigid or democratic structures.[19] In a rigid structure, the constitution of society will remain unchanged, and its economy will stringently discriminate against outsiders. In this regard, the economy simply justifies a mechanical model of production-consumption.

Etymologically, the word "economy" derives from the Greek *oiko-nomia*, meaning "household management."[20] At a larger scale, the "house" may come to refer to the state, within which the affairs of a larger population are encompassed. The goal of the state would therefore be to manage its activities so as to assure prosperity for this larger group. But what happens when the people can no longer be assumed to be homogenous in socio-political background and cultural traditions? This is precisely the case when modernization forces different groups together in urban areas. The new traditions of urbanization that result there may be especially unfamiliar to ongoing flows of migrants from rural areas. This is why the dual image of modernism/traditionalism may persevere in the city.

In such conditions the distinction between a formal and an informal economy is not clearly constructed in terms of opposition or dichotomy. Rather, it is a matter of managing the possibility/impossibility of urban dwelling that results from a dual image of human existence. Such dwelling will be impossible if the establishment of norms is fixed according to the activities of a particular group of people and denied to others. However, in a formal urban capitalist society, structures may be fixed in just such a way.

Across Indonesia, society is plural, and this plurality typically conceals imbalanced growth. Thus there is great disparity between social conditions in urban areas and in remote areas, especially in the country's east. Urbanization, itself, however, must also be seen as developing according to a mix of social structures, between the modern and the traditional. Thus, as migrants from rural areas carry their traditional structures with them to the city, their ignorance of the new norms they encounter there produces much of the apparent incongruity of urban life. The dual image within urban society then becomes a reality, and an informal economy is produced separate from a formal-rational model of production-consumption and market mechanisms.

Given such conditions, a dominant urban economy biased toward formal capitalist structures cannot escape the parallel existence of an informal economy. The adoption of entirely rational models of development likewise denies the reality of people's lives. Yet, despite these conditions, a bias toward a formal capitalist approach to economic growth may persist. Such strategies typically emerge from an academic community and from government bureaucracies that insist that relatively rapid economic development can only be achieved this way. But these policies clearly discriminate against other forms of exchange — what may be known as the grassroots or bazaar economy.

The Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, among others, has called for a review of this approach to development.[21] Yet, instead of supporting the dominant critique based on cultural difference, he has argued that the trouble with the capitalist development model actually stems from the legal structure of property and property rights. Indeed, he observed that every developed nation has gone through a transformation from a pattern of predominantly informal, extralegal ownership to a formal, unified legal property system. And in the West, scholars and politicians seem to have forgotten that it is precisely this transition that allows people to leverage property into wealth. Thus, Guy Routh has argued, "[We should] discard theories that have no basis in reality, or that give those that learn [from them] an illusion of understanding, which is worse that no understanding at all."[22]

In the end, however, we must recognize that, whether an economy exhibits a formal or informal state, it is dependent on a process of legitimation according to different traditions. And the process whereby traditions themselves, as acts or ideologies, become legitimate occurs by means of their attachment to particular norms and values within a community or society.

According to the sociologist Mark Suchman, legitimacy is socially constructed. Specifically, it represents ". . . a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions."[23] The sociologist Morris Zelditch has further argued that these normative aspects develop as a matter of "propriety."[24] As a form of "structure formation," this provides a basis for "authority" that does not depend on calculations of personal advantage. Zelditch asserted that legitimacy thus entails "structure" such as defined in Giddens's idea of "structuration." Emerging from norm formation, deviance and social control, and sentiments and emotions, propriety provides a basis for the acceptance of authority — a proper authority.

In the context of this investigation, this process may be conceived as emerging informally. And in the informal society and economy that has emerged in the environs of Jakarta's

Kampung Melayu Bus Terminal, it may even extend to the presence of *preman*, or thugs. The actions of such figures may, indeed, be perceived and endorsed as a proper authority by the community of informal traders that has come to dwell there.

THE KAMPUNG MELAYU BUS TERMINAL AND THE HABITUS OF TRANSPORT IN JAKARTA

Kampung Melayu Bus Terminal (**FIG. 1**) covers a relatively small area of about 0.5 hectares under the Jalan Casablanca flyover in South Jakarta. Despite its size, it functions as a relatively busy hub, connecting multiple destination points to the north, south, east and west in the city.

The terminal area accommodates various modes of formal transport, including big, medium and small buses and vans. Big buses are run by private or public companies, especially Trans-Jakarta; medium-sized buses, called *metrominis*, are run and operated by private individuals; and small buses or vans, called *mikrolets* or *angkots*, are operated by private individuals. A further level of service is offered by licensed motorized tricycles, called *bajaj*.

In addition to these formal transport options, the terminal area is a center for different modes of informal transport — principally *ojeks*, which are privately owned motorcycles. The latter are omnipresent, agile and swift. Finally, as a reflection of new information technologies, online paratransit services have also developed rapidly in recent years, with this type of service not only penetrating the market at the level of taxis, but extending down to the individual *ojek*, under the name "Gojek."

Except for the big buses, the traffic behavior of all these transport modes around the terminal is largely unmanaged.

Moreover, the oversupply of service at the medium and small end of the spectrum has created unfavorable conditions of competition. Individual vehicles thus speed (*ngebut*), and their great number causes serious traffic, making accidents inevitable. Because the operators of each type of vehicle are pushed to compete with each other, as well as with other modes of transport, they also pick up and drop off passengers at whatever points they choose outside the assigned bus stops. Their aim is typically to get to passengers before their rivals and to fill their vehicles with as many travelers as possible.

According to the concept developed by Pierre Bourdieu, the above conditions reflect the "habitus" of public transport in Jakarta. For Bourdieu, habitus designates a "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations," or a complex net of structured predispositions into which we are socialized at an early age. It is thus constituted in practice and "always oriented to practical functions."[25]

In Jakarta, the absence of a mass rapid transit (MRT) system, aggravated by the rapid increase in private-car ownership, has helped create such a habitus. Except for the big Trans-Jakarta buses, which have been accommodated in dedicated bus lanes on arterial roads, other types of transport must compete for ever more limited road space. The prevailing level of congestion has thus risen to a point where it rivals rush hour in other cities in developing countries. Such conditions are made even worse by the behavior of individual public transport operators, who may pick up and drop off passengers at any place along the city's main roads.

In the vicinity of the bus terminal, trip-makers are the triggers and generators of this entire muddled problem of congestion. Their habitus — in contravention of all traffic regulations — includes crossing busy streets, taking short-cuts from one place to another, erratically getting on or off

Fly-over Jalan Casablanca

Bus Terminal Kampung Melayu, Jakarta

North

FIGURE 1. *Cadastral map of the Kampung Melayu bus terminal.*

public transport, and eating and drinking on the street. The erratic behavior of trip-makers may also include spontaneous meetings for particular purposes that are mutually exclusive and in competition with one another. Frequently the crowds formed through such "consensual" acts may make it impossible for pedestrians to walk anywhere but in the road.

Residents of Jakarta call this everyday situation *semrawut*, or "chaos" (**FIGS. 2–5**). Yet, for the majority of the urban population — namely, its low-income residents — small vans and motorized vehicles (*angkot*, *bajaj* and *ojek*) remain their most viable transport option. Only such smaller vehicles can navigate the city's remote, small roads, especially in its urban *kampungs*. They thus provide real, affordable public transport, referred to as *angkutan rakyat*, or "transport for the commons." The system is also subsidized by the local government, which keeps fares as low as possible — about 5,000 rupiahs, or 50 U.S. cents, per trip (although fares vary according to the travel distance).

Such conditions have also benefited the development of a vibrant informal economy. People may "dwell" and informal activities may grow and proliferate in areas where crowds gather to get on and off public transport. Thus *ojek* drivers may "dwell" wherever they can park, especially in strategic points where passengers get off the bus and transfer to other means of transport. And the sidewalks in the area of the bus terminal are occupied by many different kinds of vendors.
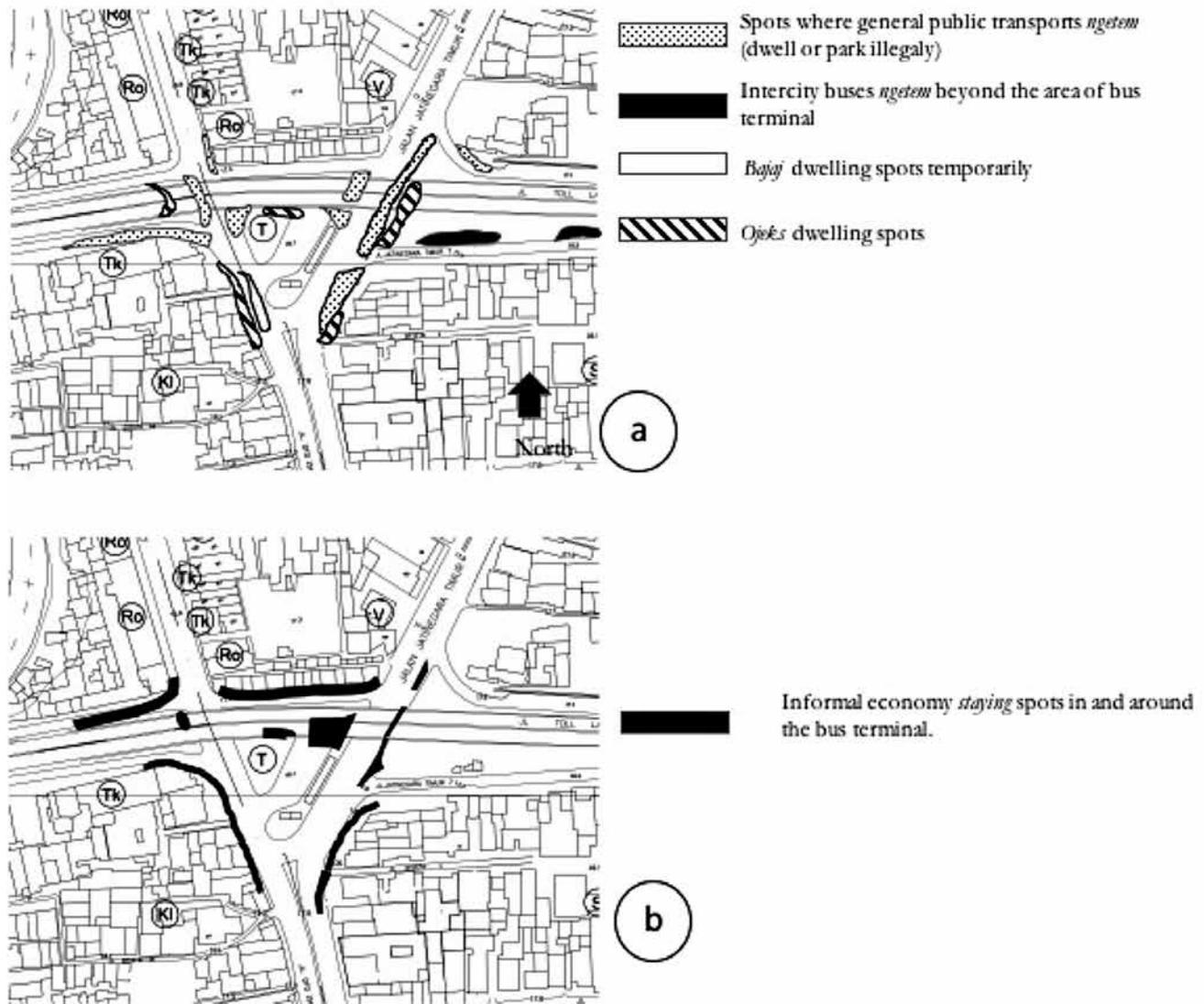

Spots where general public transports *ngetem* (dwell or park illegaly)

Intercity buses *ngetem* beyond the area of bus terminal

Bajaj dwelling spots temporarily

Ojeks dwelling spots

Informal economy *staying* spots in and around the bus terminal.

FIGURE 2. *Copresence between spots of* ngetem *and spatial formation (staying) of informal economy or* pedagang kakilimas.

FIGURE 3. *Modes of formal public transport. Upper Left:* bajaj. *Upper right:* metromini. *Lower Left:* angkot. *Lower right:* mikrolet.

FIGURE 4. Pedagang kakilima *dwelling as a wanderer.*

FIGURE 5. Pedagang kakilima *dwelling — staying in a group.*

Such informal practices extend to other, more "formal" modes of transport as well. Indeed, it is the strategic possibility of dwelling that largely allows these to flourish in the first place. Generally speaking, the activity of *angkutan rakyat* is concentrated during peak-hour periods. But in off-peak hours *mikrolets* and *angkots* may park (*ngetem*) waiting for passengers around the bus terminal — an activity made possible by *preman*, or thugs, who secure their places. Further, some *mikrolet* drivers will continue to operate during off-peak hours by exploiting substitute drivers called *supir tembak*. These activities, too, are secured and protected by *preman*. Thus, the existence of *mikrolets*, *angkots* and *ojeks* all over the place throughout the day and night both facilitates and is facilitated by patterns of dwelling that sustain the informal economy.

THE TACTICS OF *PEDAGANG KAKILIMA*

In light of these general conditions around the Kampung Melayu Bus Terminal, the research involved trying to understand the origins, behavior and tactics of different types of informal traders. Called *pedagang kakilima*, these individuals are largely ambulant traders, who may be found wandering across and around the area of bus terminal. Where and when possible, they may also try to find places to stay.

As they move and wander, *pedagang kakilima* trade their goods either simply, carrying them by hand, or using carts. Much of what they sell to busy trip-makers or passengers waiting for their next ride are fast foods and beverages. These are served almost around the clock. But traders also sell more durable goods, such as knick-knacks, particularly in the afternoon.

The research did not employ a standard ethnographic investigation mode of investigation to uncover the social and cultural context by which this informal economy is conducted. Rather, it aimed to understand the internal mindset of traders as related to their practices of wandering and staying. This effort sought particularly to understand their sense of metaspace. In philosophy, "metaspace" refers to a sense of space transcending ordinary physical space — such as cyberspace. Its investigation was deemed crucial here to understand the habitus of the traders.

As an example, two chess players may move pieces one at a time in physical space as they play against each other. But both players also maintain metaspatial images of chess boards in their minds that encompass possible strategies and tactics to advance their position and win the game.

What is important in this case, however, is the self-awareness of the traders, particularly their sense of the human, lifecycle space they occupy in pursuit their occupation. As the political theorist Herman van Gunsteren has observed:

> *Without self-awareness there cannot be free persons. Without a metaspace there cannot be self-awareness. One cannot be free when one is confined completely in one realm. In our modern political understanding the condition for the existence of free human beings, persons, is the maintenance of a boundary between the public and the private. The rules that [obtain] in the public realm should not govern the private realm as well, and vice versa. Only individual persons should be allowed to cross the boundary between the public and the private in either direction. This individual possibility of choosing either to stay within the rules of one realm or to move to the other realm (in order to refuel, or for whatever other reason) is essential.[26]*

Understanding metaspace is possible by means of thorough observation. However, the researchers involved in this investigation also conducted interviews at random with some of the traders to "uncover" their tactics. The main objective here was to understand the spatial formation of the informal economy and its means of development in support of its operation.

The following are excerpts from interviews with *pedagang kakilima,* who were selected at random by the researchers. The comments are followed by the interpretations of the author.

Question 1. Bagaimana anda melihat terminal bis Kampung Melayu? [What do you see in the bus terminal of Kampung Melayu?]

Answer 1. Terminal Kampung pusat ketemunya macam-macam angkutan umum. Cukup luas, di pagi hari banyak penumpang yang wara-wiri di sekitarnya. Banyak penumpang bergerombol di tepi jalan menunggu angkutan umum dengan tujuan tertentu. [The bus terminal of Kampung Melayu is a relatively big public place where people come and go, moving from one place to the other. Some trip-makers assemble in some spots of *ngetem* to catch public transport as early as possible.]

Banyak angkots, sama mikrolets ngetem di tempat-tempat tertentu. [There are significant numbers of *angkots; mikrolets* stay and wait (*ngetem*) in several strategic locations.]

Interpretation. Pedagang kakilima "see" the bus terminal of Kampung Melayu as a large public place. A large number of trip-makers come and go, especially during the morning peak hour. They crisscross the terminal. The phrase *banyak penumpang* is used to refer to trip-makers as "potential buyers."

Question 2. Apa pengalamana anda berdagang di sini? [What were your experiences when you wandered through the place for the first time to trade?]

Answer 2. Saya pertama kali nyoba-nyoba, untung-untungan berdagang sendirian di sini, mundar-mandir saja di sekitar terminal. Sampai pada suatu saat saya memilih tempat strategis di mana pembeli berkumpul, untuk nunggu. Tidak lama setelah itu, langsung datang seorang preman yang menegur siapa saya dan dari mana? Akhirnya, preman menawarkan jika mau dagang di sini kamu harus setor 2000 rupiahs setiap hari. Itu awal saya dapat berdiam di tempat ini secara aman. [The first time I tried to trade in the area of terminal, I simply moved around, wandering around the area, until at a certain strategic time I "felt like" stopping and staying. It was not long before somebody came up to me and asked, "Who are you?" and "Where are you from?" and "What are you doing here?" And then he made an offer: "If you want to stay here to trade, you have pay a levy of 2,000 rupiahs [about 20 U.S. cents] per day." It was then I came to realize that he was the *preman* in this spot. That was the first encounter I had with somebody who seemed to have authority in the area.]

Interpretation. Pedagang kakilima know that the bus terminal and the area surrounding it are *tempat umum* (a public place), but this is not the same as the idea of public space as developed in the West. Almost all rural migrants lack understanding (or do not recognize) places as being separated into private and public realms. However, as in rural areas, they recognize that some places are under the control of the owner of the land. And if they want to use some of the land, they must ask permission of the owner. Thus, one of their first realizations is that dwelling in an urban area is not as easy as in a rural area.

Pedagang kakilima further recognize the authority of *preman* in an area because it is he who is able to secure the space for usurpation or occupation. This recognition extends to *pedagang kakilima* with similar and different goods to trade.

Question 3. Apakah anda mengenal bagaimana para preman beroperasi di terminal ini? [Do you recognize the *premans* that operate in this terminal?]

Answer 3. Tidak semua. Mereka sebagian besar anak-anak pengangguran dari kampung sekitar terminal. Kira-kira

ada sepuluh orang, satu orang setiap lokasi pengawasan mereka. Mereka khusus mengawasi operasi pedagang kakilima di lapangan khususnya terkait dengan petugas kepolisian dan dinas perhubungan DKI Jakarta. [Not all. Most of them come from the neighboring *kampungs*. They are largely unemployed and particularly bad-tempered youngsters. They are about ten in number. Each has the responsibility to secure *pedagang kakilima* in his area of protection. Above them are two *preman* bosses who take care of everything related to the police officers and agents from the local government and Department of Transport.]

Interpretation. All *pedagang kakilima* respect the presence of *preman* because they are engaged in a mutual relationship where the *preman* provide security for those engaged in informal trading. This indicates that *preman* are required in the terminal area because they serve as an authority legitimating their right to space.

Question 4. Area mana saja yang strategis bagi pedagang kakilima untuk tinggal dan mengapa di situ? [Where are the strategic spots you should hold? Why stay there?]

Answer 4. Lokasi di mana angkot, mikrolet pada ngetem. [Almost all locations that serve public transport, because *angkot* and *mikrolets ngetem* all over the place around the terminal.]

Interpretation 4. Ngetem is the key word that signifies permissiveness of the formal authorities over informal activities and establishments. According to this practice, drivers may ignore formal laws to stop and wait for passengers at nearly any location in the vicinity of the station. Through this action, drivers and trip-makers cooperate in establishing a habitus of travel unregulated by formal structures. In effect, it signifies the acceptability of a dual order of space. It thus reflects the dual structure of society in the city, and in Indonesia.

THE USURPATION OF SPACE

As the comments above indicate and as can be readily observed on site, the practice of usurpation of public space — especially by *pedagang kakilima* on sidewalks and along the roadside — initially involves simply mingling with passing crowds and dwelling there temporarily. If no sign of prohibition emerges from the local authorities, actors in the informal economy may then attempt to stay and "claim a right" to that public space. This claim, however, may only be secured by the backing of the *preman* in the area. *Preman* levy charges of about 2,000 rupiahs or more per day for this service, depending on the size of the area occupied.

With regard to the concept of usurpation, the sociologist Frank Parkin has introduced the idea of social closure.[27] In a critique of rigid Marxist categories, he argued that social practices or actions operate regardless of social class. Referencing Max Weber, he suggested that social closure defines a process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities according to limited circles of the "eligible." This, however, entails singling out social or physical attributes to provide a justificatory basis for exclusion. Parkin then distinguished three types of social closure: exclusion, usurpation, and dual closure. In terms of spatiality, the legitimation of situated activities within an informal economy may signify the operation of such processes.

Of the three types identified by Parkin, the distinguishing feature of exclusionary closure is the attempt by one group to secure for itself a privileged position at the expense of some other group through a process of subordination. Social closure by usurpation, by contrast, is mounted by a group in response to its outsider status and a collective experience of exclusion.[28] Finally, dual closure refers to a usurping action against a higher opponent group (for example, against the state) combined with exclusionary activities, presumably against a lower or a less-organized group (for example, ethnic minorities or gender-identified groups).

Such notions of closure are not static and will intensify or diminish depending on the structuration process over time and space. Thus, the process of usurping space in Jakarta at the local level is secured by the support of *preman*. However, in reality, the usurpation process manifests in the form of clusters of informal economy.

The process of usurpation also entails a legitimating process. This is accomplished through the acquiescence of formal and informal authorities. This might emerge as an association between agents at the margins of the informal and formal economies. This might involve *preman* on the edge of the informal sector and low-level government officials in the formal sector.

Around the bus terminal there are also always authorities on duty, especially police and officials from Dinas Perhubungan, the Local Government Transport Department. While these figures may be performing their official duties, in fact, they may additionally be involved in clandestine relationships through bribery by the *preman*. This secretive network between *preman* and corrupt government officials is ultimately needed to legitimate the illegal acts at the heart of the informal economy in the area.

Within the organization of *preman* groups, there are, moreover, two levels of operation. The upper level is composed of covert actors, such as *preman* bosses, who are invisible and may seem to be untouchable. At the lower level are those employed by the "boss," who need work desperately and operate noticeably. On the ground, it is the latter who collect protection fees from informal traders to secure their right to usurp areas of public space. And it is the latter who collect fees from the operators of public transport vehicles, allowing them to *ngetem* temporarily in various places around the bus terminal (**FIG.6**).

FIGURE 6. *Left: a temporary shelter of the transport agency. Right: an officer from the Transport Agency taking an illegal levy from the* mikrolet *driver.*

LEGITIMATING INFORMAL TRADITION

The analysis above indicates how a hidden process of legitimation underlies the operation of the informal economy. This process has both spatial and social components. Spatially, it concerns processes of urban dwelling that create gray areas where informality and unlawful acts become possible. The density of vehicular traffic around the bus terminal and the mass human assemblage in the area, in particular, enable the infiltration of various informal as well as illegal activities (**FIGS.7,8**).

FIGURE 7. *Dwelling paradox: illegally parked* ojeks, *a "No-Stop" sign, and the police.*

FIGURE 8. *At night, a* preman *boss passes money to gang members.*

Socially, this process of legitimation concerns a certain blindness to the class status of people assembled in the surroundings of the bus terminal. Ordinarily, we might assume it would be possible to discern the difference between groups here. However, the gradual development of the informal economy *in situ* and the presence of crowds of people and busy traffic may make it difficult to notice people from the lower-income sector. In psychology, this problem might be identified as one of inattentional blindness, also known as perceptual blindness.[29] Clearly, there is a disguised poverty among informal traders in the vicinity of the bus terminal. But it is the activity of the informal economy that uncovers the operation of social categories, as it is the relative affluence of the trip-makers that attracts lower-income people to also dwell and seek to stay there.

Permissiveness is a further reason for the proliferation of illegal activities in the area, especially by means of corruption. Corruption may be seen at all social strata. However, it is important to understand how tradition in some regard always sanctions it.

In this regard, the political scientist Dean Hammer has argued that all human activities engender tradition. And he has written that "[social] life provides direction to the activity of desiring by approving and disapproving [the] actions. . . . Tradition can thus be understood as a concrete, coherent way of living which must be learned by living within the tradition."[30]

The ability to dwell is in part spatially implicated. However, the "spatial readiness" of urban spaces as places to dwell has little to do with any prior determination of formality or informality. Indeed, the latter may exist either in secret, in private places, or in chaotic, open public spaces. And in chaotic public places, unless individuals or groups choose to be explicitly present, they may possibly exist unnoticed — i.e., according to a prevailing condition of perceptual blindness.

However, the day-to-day transactions that make up the informal economy in such places also demand legitimation to warrant their sustainability. It is here that corruption may develop as a deviant habitus in a society, and this is particularly the case in Indonesia. In this regard, as the economist Laurence Cockcroft wrote in an article entitled "Global Corruption: An Untamed Hydra":

> Corruption manifests itself in many different ways — from the looting of major assets to small-scale bribery, to political and party finance, to corruption both by and within multinationals, and to the interface with organized crime. . . . But at the other end of the spectrum, even minor acts of corruption — like small personal bribes to police or bureaucrats — can eat away at the fabric of society. . . . The drivers of petty corruption — survival, greed, compulsion from above, or guanxi [Chinese for "connections"] — are substantially different from that of larger institutionalized graft. Taking "commissions" by semi-skilled and skilled

workers on extremely low incomes may be justified by those soliciting the bribe as a means of survival. . . . The Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, for example, explored the origins of corruption in India in the 1960s and concluded that it represented a heightened form of reciprocal systems present in rural society that had been distorted as rapid urbanization and a new form of politics emerged after independence.[31]

The sustainability of a dual society of formal and informal activities will depend on the structure (norms, rules and resources) in that society. This structure represents the property of its social system. However, in the interaction, actors need a "sign" that their activities are contained within this structure. According to Giddens, such structures of signification are grasped in connection with domination and legitimation.

It can thus be seen how tradition that involves a particular "structure" may be associated with legitimation. And it is worth reiterating Hammer's argument that all human activities engender tradition ". . . as a concrete, coherent way of living which must be learned by living within the tradition."

Nelson Graburn has argued that "a consciousness of tradition arose primarily only in those historical situations where people were aware of change. Tradition was the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost."[32] And Alice Horner has written that ". . . tradition refers both to *the process* of handing down from generation to generation, and some *thing*, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time."[33]

A question remains to be answered: "Do we need to legitimate tradition?" I would argue that the idea of legitimating tradition is redundant. By definition, social life and tradition implicate each other. Thus tradition can be understood as acted-out meaning that is legitimate in a community or society so long as the values and norms that underlie it remain acceptable.

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9. Ibid., p.199.

10. N. AlSayyad, "Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism: Manufacturing Heritage, Consuming Tradition," in N. AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p.2. In endnote 10, AlSayyad further explained that "According to the *OED*, the old French *tradicion* had by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries come to mean handing down, as in 'a saying handed down' or the handing over of a material object. It was also understood as the giving up or surrender of something, or even the oral delivery of information. By the seventeenth century, 'tradition' had been more substantially defined as 'the action of transmitting or handing down from one to another a variety of beliefs, rules, and customs'. But by the nineteenth century, tradition had again been more vaguely accepted as 'a long established and generally accepted custom or method of procedure, having almost the force of law'. Tradition became the corpus of experiences handed down by predecessors and widely observed."

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28. Ibid., p.74.

29. This concept refers to a psychological lack of attention unassociated with vision defects or deficits. It may further include instances in which a person fails to recognize an unexpected stimulus in plain sight. When it is simply impossible for a person to attend to all the stimuli in a given situation, a temporary blindness effect can take place. Individuals may thus fail to see objects or stimuli that are unexpected and quite often salient. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inattentional_blindness, accessed July 22, 2016.

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