Street Vending as Ethical Citizenship in Urban Indonesia

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Abstract: Street traders in many Indonesian cities face social and legal constraints because they are deemed to be hampering the city's order and cleanliness. I describe how a group of vendors adopted the state's concern over greenery and developed their own "green" project. They also called themselves the *rakyat kecil* (small people) and argued that they were the poor underdogs being mistreated by the corrupt government. This moral positioning is best seen as an expression of what I am calling "citizenship as ethics," in which the legitimacy of being in a public space is validated through discourses and actions deemed "good" or "right" in the local public imagination.

Keywords: citizenship, urban studies, street vending, ethics, Indonesia

Résumé : Les commerçants de rue de nombreuses villes indonésiennes font face à des contraintes légales et politiques, car ils sont considérés comme un obstacle à l'ordre et la propreté de la ville. Dans cet article, je décris comment un groupe de vendeurs a adopté la préoccupation de l'État sur les espaces verts et développé son propre « projet vert ». Se nommant les *rakyat kecil* (petites gens), ils se présentent comme des pauvres laissés pour compte qui sont maltraités par le gouvernement corrompu. Cette position morale illustre l'idée proposée de « citoyenneté éthique », soit le fait de valider l'occupation d'un espace public par des discours et actions jugés 'bons' dans l'imaginaire public local.

Mots-clés : citoyenneté, études urbaines, vente ambulante, éthique, Indonésie

On a busy street near a university in Sleman, Indonesia, a group of 20 street vendors belonging to the Abadi street vendor organisation hung a poster in protest of their eviction that read: "Greening Does Not Have to Clear Us" (*Tamanisasi Tidak Harus Gusur Kami*).[1] In 2007, during my fieldwork among street traders in Indonesia, Eko, an illegal street trader, became increasingly animated as he discussed how the government was more concerned with greening the streetscape than with ensuring the welfare of its own citizens, especially the *rakyat kecil* (the poor – literally, the "little people").[2] He explained:

> We are being moved because of the process of "greening." The government is clearing the place [of street vendors] so that it can be green. They don't think about how the little people will only be able to look at the trees, but won't be able to eat because they cannot sell here anymore. Are we being invited to eat the trees? If they are dazzled by gardens, we become goats. We do not need to eat rice and side dishes. Eat the trees instead! If they make this place green it is viewed as beautiful, but it is not beautiful for the stomachs of the sellers.[3]

Eko was a migrant from a nearby village and a vendor of eyeglasses and sunglasses (Figure 1). When I met Eko on the street one warm afternoon, he was 28 years old, and he was proud of all that he had achieved as a street vendor after growing up in poverty in a village on the outskirts of the city. Yet, as a street trader, he felt unwelcomed by the government. The municipal government argued that the 20 vendors on Colombo Street were "dirty" and caused traffic jams and floods and, therefore, must be relocated. As a result, the civil service police (Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja [Satpol PP]), who are responsible for upholding city bylaws, regularly gave the traders fines and confiscated their merchandise.[4] The government was determined to move these

Figure 1: Photo of sunglass kiosks on Jalan Colombo (photo by author)

traders from the high traffic area they occupied to an enclosed marketplace.

What surprised me, however, was that the traders rarely defended themselves against the municipal government with the language of human rights, justice, or democracy. Instead, they positioned themselves as "good" and "right" in the eyes of the government and the public.[5] For instance, the traders adopted the state's concern over greenery and developed their own "green" project that would involve renovating the street according to these state ideals. They also called themselves the *rakyat kecil* and argued that they were the poor underdogs being mistreated by the corrupt government. Their attempts to "belong" and survive on the street were thus entangled in performing locally salient ethical ways of being.[6]

The failure of the New Order authoritarian government (1965–98) to invest in public infrastructure and locations for the informal economy has meant that Indonesian street vendors densely occupy the streets to secure a living (Wilson 2015:64). For the post–New Order democratic government (1998–present), street vendors remain a concern because they are viewed not only as inhibiting development but also as a potential source of social unrest (64). While relationships with state actors remain important to survival and offer degrees of security, the vendors are faced with a shifting political landscape as Indonesia transitions to a democracy and undergoes decentralisation.[7] With a multitude of actors competing for resources, territory, and power, traders are trying to articulate claims as part of a city-wide struggle to belong.

In this article, I argue that the performance of citizenship embodies a certain kind of ethical practice. Since citizenship is performed under the watchful eye of others, it is always performed in anticipation of what others will think and do (Rutherford 2012). While citizenship is a political project, it is also an ethical one,

as citizens cultivate a particular kind of self and seek to perform a certain kind of "good" self in relation to different audiences (see Lambek 2010). Understanding citizenship as ethics allows us to broaden our conception of it, seeing how the practices of political participation and of political membership and exclusion are based on locally meaningful categories of what is "good" and "right." Legal definitions of citizenship or definitions based on rights fail to account for the subtle ways through which people, especially from marginal groups, seek to assert their belonging in sometimes less direct ways and through different discourses in order to manifest an ethical basis for their legitimacy as citizens (cf. Englund 2006; Lazar 2008).

In this article, I show how the Abadi street vendors portray themselves as worthy citizens by adopting the government's greening agenda, and by upholding this agenda as the *rakyat kecil*, as a way of maintaining their claims to urban space in relation to the moral landscape of street vending.[8] By adopting the state's discourses, the traders both reinforced and challenged these ideals and practices. They reaffirmed the criteria that being clean, orderly, and disciplined is "good," while challenging the state's monopoly over defining what constitutes "clean" and "green" and who has the right to design and maintain these spaces.

Using the self-definition of *rakyat kecil* or *rakyat* further reinforces the traders' solidarity as a specific social group and strengthens the growing public criteria that their government should listen to the poor, ordinary people who elected them. The vendors also occupy this social position in order to show how the government mistreats the poor and is engaged in corrupt behaviour. The traders take up these state discourses within a framework of autonomous citizen agency – they see themselves not as targets of order and cleanliness policies but, rather, as subjects capable of enacting the ideals of order and cleanliness as the basis for asserting their voice and staking claims to the public sphere. By adopting these discourses to challenge the state's position on vending, the traders show that what is considered right or good in the urban environment can no longer be closely controlled by state actors alone and is, in fact, under considerable public debate in the post-authoritarian Indonesian context.

This article is based on fieldwork conducted in the province of Yogyakarta between 2007 and 2013, with the majority of the data collected between 2007 and 2008, when I undertook interviews and participant observation with various street traders in Yogyakarta City and Sleman on the island of Java. I followed the lives and daily activities of 20 traders selling along Colombo Street in Sleman, who were under the threat of eviction by the local regent (*bupati*) from selling in that location.[9] The findings presented in this article are derived from in-depth interviews with these traders as well as from fieldwork in their selling locations and at their organisational meetings.

The article begins with a discussion of "citizenship as ethics," arguing that this approach helps move beyond a focus on rights and legality to include some of the more subtle ways citizens make claims on belonging in, and having entitlement to, space in the city based on locally meaningful discourses and agendas. I discuss the literature on street vendors in Indonesia and note that although several works have explored the changing relationships that street vendors have to the state in the post-authoritarian period, few have focused specifically on the ways that citizenship claims are made in both symbolic and material ways.

Following this discussion, the article provides a brief history of the moral landscape of Indonesian street vending, showing that street traders have long been characterised both as breaching the ethics of constructing clean, orderly, and disciplined urban environments and as deserving of sympathy because of their poverty. I argue, however, that the government's and citizens' perceptions of street vendors are far from uniform, although most people discuss them in relation to the state's discourses of cleanliness, order, and discipline.

In the next section, the article describes how the Abadi street traders must address the moral landscape in which they are constructed as an element of the dirt that needs to be greened. To do this, the traders have attempted to adopt the state's discourses of cleanliness, order, and discipline, but because the state actors have failed to recognise their efforts to do so, a conflict has ensued between the traders and the state actors over controlling the greening project on the street. Within this conflict, the traders have positioned themselves as the *rakyat kecil* to question the ethics of the government and to gain sympathy from the public. They have taken up this position (in a way that some might see as unethical) in order to accuse the government of morally criminal behaviour.

Citizenship as Ethics

Citizenship "refers to membership of a political community – the city, the nation, or other community" (Lazar 2014:65). James Holston (2009:25) argues that we can understand citizenship as involving both formal qualifications and "substantive distributions." By this he means that a gap exists between the formal definitions and the actual practices of citizenship (22). Citizenship

is not something that is possessed; rather, it is a form of recognition that must be worked for and asserted constantly.[10] It is not just a legal status but also a field of cultural engagement where citizens "accommodate inequitable power relations and structures of authority" (Mills 2012:87). Indeed, an increasing number of scholars claim that citizenship includes "social norms, which refers to loyalty, moral worthiness, and the contribution to the common good" (Nuijten 2013:11). Scholars also use terms such as "experienced citizenship, lived citizenship, or citizenship from below" to express how individuals live out these everyday citizenship practices (11).

Citizenship and belonging are like other forms of social action; they take place in relation to how others think and act (Rutherford 2012). As a result of this social dimension, citizenship is connected to questions of ethics and what is deemed "good" and "right" in specific social, economic, and cultural milieus. While citizenship is most often considered a political project, Michael Lambek (2010:1, 2) proposes the notion of "ordinary ethics," arguing that ethics is "part of the human condition" and that it is "relatively tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule, in practice rather than knowledge or belief, and happening without calling undue attention to itself." Lambek also argues, however, that ethics becomes explicit when it is breached; when the "right thing to do" is debated or contested; in movements of social or ethical renewal; and through processes of rationalisation or education (1, 2).

We can recognise the ethical aspects of citizenship particularly by focusing on the ways that states attempt to build "good" citizenry through welfare and education programs (Lazar and Nuijten 2013). These attempts are not only top down, but also bottom up as citizens become actively involved in cultivating themselves according to these collective ideals (Ong et al. 1996). Despite the recognition that ethics is related to practices of citizenship, few studies have explored the ethical–moral dimension of citizenship. Instead, changes in legal definitions of citizenship focusing on questions of rights are more prevalent in studies of democracy, partially because this is the dominant form of ethical–moral discourse in a democracy. Post-colonial scholars have recognised the need, however, to understand citizenship in ways that are not based on rights-claiming, autonomous individuals (Chatterjee 2004). Many citizens, especially marginal ones, seek to assert their belonging in sometimes less direct ways and through different languages (cf. Englund 2006; Lazar 2008). To reveal these more subtle practices and strategies, it is necessary to move beyond the legal framework of citizenship and to pay ethnographic attention to how individuals justify and present themselves in minute ways to different sets of actors during everyday interactions (see Lambek 2010:31).

Studies of citizenship practices in Indonesia are limited.[11] Ward Berenschot, Henk Schulte Nordholt, and Laurens Bakker (2016) argue, "While debates rage on about the nature of democracy, ideal political leadership or the need to raise political moral standards, there is relatively little discussion about what democratic citizenship in present-day Southeast Asia is or should entail." They note that there are relatively few studies of citizenship in Indonesia, which has a poorly institutionalised state and a predominately clientelistic political system, where the rights-claiming, autonomous citizen is largely absent (Aspinall and van Klinken 2010; Mietzner 2012). In this political context, the implementation of the law is often unpredictable and is influenced by personal connections, political influence peddling, and wealth (Lev 2000; Lindsey and Santosa 2008). Consequently, regular citizens often avoid the legal system in attempts to make claims and look for alternative routes to achieve their goals, such as through local businessmen, traditional leaders, or strongmen (Berenschot, Schulte Nordholt, and Bakker 2016). In this context, it is no surprise, then, that street vendors, as marginal citizens, often avoid the law and instead seek alternative means through which to secure the legitimacy of their presence in the urban landscape.

Scholarship on Indonesian street traders has recognised that this group is considerably marginalised (Collins 2007; Gibbings 2013a; Peters 2013; Rukmana and Purbadi 2012). But how do street vendors themselves navigate the material and social inequalities they face, particularly in the post-Suharto era? In 1977, Terence McGee and Yeu Man Yeung (1977) drew attention to the stereotypes hawkers encountered and the reflection of such negative stereotypes in the official policies enacted against them. They noted that many of these anti-hawker policies had their basis in the colonial period and had changed little since independence.[12] Lea Jellinek (1976:10) complemented this work by providing one of the first in-depth ethnographic examinations into the life of a trader. Jellinek drew attention to how street vendors secure their locations through their material exchanges with patrons, such as army officers and thugs. Alison Murray (1991) also argued that the security of the alleyside traders she studied was based on maintaining connections to elites. She writes: "The ruling elite invokes the patron-client model to foster an ideology of dependence, and justifies exploitation by encouraging alleyside people to think of themselves as the little people (*wong kecil*) who fatalistically accept that they are unenlightened (*masa bodoh*)" (24).

The work on street traders since the fall of Suharto has explored how they have negotiated their position on the street in relation to recent political and economic changes (Gibbings 2013a, 2013b; Peters 2013) and pays particular attention to how the patron–client relationships of street vendors are shifting (Gibbings 2013b; Gibbings, Lazuardi, and Marsanto 2014) and their different strategies of challenging the government (Gibbings 2013a).[13] This study contributes to this growing literature by focusing specifically on the claims made by street traders in relation to the state and how these are embedded in sets of criteria and judgments of what is "good." Understanding citizenship as ethics allows us to see the diverse ways that street vendors make claims that do not neatly fit into a rights discourse. These ethical discourses, actions, and strategies, however, take place in relation to how street venders are encountered and characterised by government actors and in the public sphere.

The Moral Landscape of Indonesian Street Vending

At the start of the 20th century, when Indonesia was known as the Dutch East Indies and was under colonial administration, cities were organised according to a logic designed to prevent urban radicalism, and street vendors were among those feared. At the time, vendors were largely itinerant (*keliling*) since travelling sales and services were common. In 1891, a bylaw on public order permitted street traders only if there was insufficient space in the designated marketplaces. According to this law, the hawkers had to clean up every day and were also prevented from selling particular goods during epidemics (Javasche Courant, February 3, 1891, cited in Colombijn 1994:317).

In 1910, a movement developed that challenged the colonial government's right to rule. Controversial newspaper articles were written, trade unions held strikes, and political parties started to organise the masses.[14] Wary of any subversive movements, the colonial rulers created a particular spatial and visual order that sought to prevent urban movements from arising (Kusno 2005:494). Part of this spatial organisation included the placement of street sellers in marketplaces to ensure a clear sightline down the street. Those who did their selling on the street were prevented from blocking the pavement, and from yelling loudly during sleeping hours, or excluded entirely from selling if they had open wounds (Sumatra Bode, 1925, cited in Colombijn 1994:317).

During the late colonial period, an era marked by stricter forms of social control, concerns for who was occupying the street became subsumed within a broader project of ordering urban space according to rational geometries of grids and lines (Kusno 2005:499). Abidin Kusno argues that this construction of urban space was not purely aesthetic or functional but also a technique used to create an obedient "public" (499). He states that "under the regime of order and visibility, the sight of unruliness would have to be removed or given a place in order to guarantee the presence of the 'proper' (Kusno 2010:189). From the 1930s until independence, the street vendors were viewed as properly belonging to an enclosed and stationary marketplace (189). If they did sell on the street, then certain areas had to be appointed, mobile traders were kept transient, and their shouting was to be prevented during sleeping hours (Soenario 1939, cited in Colombijn 1994:307). At this time, vendors were also suspected of being, or of becoming, a part of a radical movement, and city markets were built so there would be no crowds on the streets (Kusno 2005:505; 2010:190). Kusno (2010:191) argues that the city markets affected street vendors' and the public's perceptions of order and disorder and made the enclosed marketplace appear normal and right.[15]

After Indonesia's independence, rapid urbanisation took place, and attempts to control the street continued. According to Robbie Peters (2013:120), "In the 1960s, the street scene had changed into one of slow-moving becak and pedestrian traffic, overfilled tramcars and beggars." This period did not last long, however, before the New Order government took over and started to crack down on people congregating on the street (120). Peters describes how during the New Order (1965–98), the authoritarian government viewed traders in two different ways – not only as helping to address unemployment issues[16] but also as potentially threatening to politics and safety (12). Since street vendors were sometimes viewed as a threat, they had few formal rights. The public order laws criminalised the informal street economy and, as a result, created an environment where the traders needed to pay bureaucrats, the police, or gangsters for protection from eviction (Wilson 2015:27). It was common for street markets to be relocated to shopping complexes or indoor marketplaces, where spaces were prohibitively expensive to rent.[17] These efforts often failed, however, as traders would soon return to their outdoor selling locations, only to be met by the use of force or the mobilisation of thugs to prevent them from selling on the street (Wilson 2015:64).[18] Advocacy groups sometimes helped street vendors in recognition of their marginality and victimisation, but their actions were extremely limited due to the repression of the authoritarian regime toward civil society and progressive social forces.

In addition to being seen as a threat, traders were also viewed as lacking discipline, along with other kinds of citizens such as prostitutes and beggars. In 1995, President Suharto launched a nationwide movement which sought to discipline people in all aspects of their lives, from the proper use of the Indonesian language to behavioural matters such as throwing out garbage, lining up, and arriving to work on time. The values promoted during this discipline campaign included cleanliness (*kebersihan*), beauty (*keindahan*), order (*ketertiban*), comfort (*kenyamanan*), and safety (*keamanan*). There were massive operations against public disorder, such as one in September 1995 where 148 street vendors were arrested along with 20 *preman* (thugs), 412 squatters, 67 prostitutes, 14 transvestites, and 136 "three-in-one" children.[19] Alongside these campaigns, government and institutional studies were completed on topics such as how to "discipline communities," and street vendors were one group among others earmarked as needing to develop their own habits of self-discipline (Sumintarsih et al. 1992–93:3). The lack of discipline during the New Order was seen as a general problem of all citizens, but street vendors were represented as a particularly problematic group that was prone to disorderliness.

Since the discourse of discipline was so important during this period, street vendors did not often argue that they had "rights" (*hak*) to the street but, instead, promised to be more disciplined. Some street vendors, to receive recognition under the desired objective of the government, made extra efforts to publicly illustrate their commitment to being disciplined and orderly.[20] For example, in March 1992, Tri Dharma, an organisation of traders located on the main street of Yogyakarta City, created a special team responsible for order and cleanliness (Satuan Tugas Kebersihan, Ketertiban dan Keaman, or Security, Order and Hygiene Task Force) (Accountability Report 1992). Many of these efforts followed the new organising principle of Yogyakarta – "*Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman*" (Yogyakarta has a comfortable heart).[21] Another organisation, Pemalni, became officially recognised as a street-vending group on Malioboro Street and joined in the activities to illustrate their ethical belonging by participating in events such as Independence Day celebrations (August 17) and holding unpaid, public rituals of cleaning the street (*kerja bakti* or, literally, "work in voluntary service").[22] Many of these street organisations promised to take responsibility for upholding cleanliness, security, and order by developing their own teams responsible for cleaning the street, their own security units, and their own rules to ensure their members remained disciplined (Gibbings 2013b).[23]

In 1997 and 1998, the informal economy expanded substantially with the Asian financial crisis and the collapse of the New Order government (Peters 2013:13). Indonesia became a democracy, and power shifted from the capital city of Jakarta to the municipalities as Indonesia underwent a process of decentralisation (Schulte Nordholt 2011; Schulte Nordholt and van Klinken 2007). This "looseness of power from the centre" (Kusno 2010:31) marked the end of the New Order government's ability to maintain an "idealized absence" of disorder on the street (Pemberton 1994:6). During this time, thousands of individuals took up street trading alongside other activities in the informal economy, such as rickshaw-driving and scrap-picking, to make a living. Citizens no longer perceived the political elites as being concerned with improving the conditions of the majority, and, as a result, groups worked to protect their own spaces in the city (Kusno 2004:2384). The street had become a site of conflict among various actors, such as the poor, the middle class, the government, property developers, business, and other political forces (Wilson 2015:62). With these changes, there was an emerging perception that the *rakyat kecil*, no matter how small or poor, had some kind of rights to the city (see Kusno 2010:26).

In the first few years after the economic crisis in 1997 and the transition to democratic governance in 1998, municipal governments largely tolerated street vendors because they were viewed as helping people survive in this uncertain economic and transitional period (Jellinek 1999). Traders questioned the legitimacy of the government and their attempts to collect taxes or remove their stalls and argued that they were poor (*miskin*) because of the government's ineffectiveness (Peters 2013:122). The government, for fear of rioting and further instability, was relatively tolerant of street vendors but continued to physically modify space in ways that would prevent vendors from occupying certain areas (33).[24] For instance, the government placed fences around areas to protect these spaces from vendors[25] or located large flowerpots or plants on the sidewalk, effectively sidelining the traders (Pasar Minggu Flower Pots a Pedestrian Obstruction 2011). These modifications have been justified on the basis of the Suharto-era ideals of beauty, order, and safety, which continue to have a legacy today.

Several years after *Reformasi*, or Indonesia's democratic reform, many municipal governments, influenced by concepts of urban beautification, began campaigns to clear public spaces (Kusno 2010:31; Peters 2013:15, 177). Street vendors were identified as an obstacle to these campaigns, the antithesis to the ideals of beauty, cleanliness, and order. In accord with this view, new policies

were followed by actions to regulate, relocate, and order street vendors in an attempt to return the street to something more closely resembling the New Order's goal of "idealized absence" (Pemberton 1994; Peters 2013). The government also started to record identifying information about the traders as a means to control and organise them and to collect taxes from them (Peters 2013:187, 198).

In Yogyakarta and Sleman, temporary permits were given to some traders, but these had to be renewed yearly and could be revoked for various reasons, most commonly because the government wanted to develop the land or appropriate the space for other purposes. These new regulations did not have uniform effects. Some groups of traders were given the opportunity to obtain permits and a route to official (although temporary) status, allowing them to operate undisturbed. Others were not given such an opportunity and, indeed, were heavily policed. In addition to the increase in government documentation of street traders, the environment in which the traditional vendors were working became increasingly precarious with the rapid growth of mini-markets and hypermarkets during this time (Padawangi 2014; Peters 2013:178–179).

There are many examples where the government and public continue to speak about traders in relation to these New Order discourses of cleanliness, order, and security, although not everyone uniformly agrees with these discourses, and there are those who defend and support street traders (see Peters 2013).[26] Nevertheless, such discourses do not go uncontested. Even as new attempts to control the urban environment target street vendors as dirty and causing disorder, others see them as deserving of sympathy because of their poverty and the limited forms of employment available in Indonesia (see Peters 2013:122–123).[27]

In a newspaper article entitled, "Looking Dirty, Street Vendors in the Square Are Ordered," the civil service police in Sukoharjo, Central Java, are described as carrying out an operation against the street vendors: "The ordering is being done to guard the clean environment and the beauty of the city. The presence of the street vendors is viewed as seedy, dirty, and chaotic" (Terlihat Kumuh, PKL Alun-alun Ditata 2014). In another article, published in *Tribun Jogja*, the Head of the Department of Order (Kepala Dinas Ketertiban) in Yogyakarta City describes how the focus of an operation against street vendors selling at an illegal location was to "guard the comfort, and security of the visitors so that they were not disrupted by the burden of street vendors" (Pemkot Akui Razai PKL 2014).

Academics and city planners in Indonesia also commonly portray street traders as being disorderly. One faculty member from Ahmad Dahlan University in Yogyakarta writes on the university website:

> If there aren't facilities that support the accommodation and ordering of street vendors, then the environment can become dirty, the stalls are disorderly, and the walls and roof from the simple construction may become unsightly to the eyes.[28]

Primus, who is in his early thirties and works for a research centre at Gadjah Mada University, has a different opinion.[29] He does not think street vendors constitute a problem. For him, having street vendors is advantageous, especially for the large number of students living in boarding houses (*anak kos*), since street vendors provide affordable and convenient food. In his own neighbourhood, street vending also provides people with the opportunity to earn money. They are welcomed but have the obligation to keep the places clean and orderly. Primus sees the image of dirty street vendors as being false, created for the interests of a few people, especially bureaucrats. The government often uses the image of traders as being dirty to justify their relocations, which makes their land more attractive to investors.

Dita, another resident of Yogyakarta, wanted the traders to be treated fairly, but she did not disagree with the idea being disciplining them.[30] Dita studied French in university and works at a non-profit organisation. For Dita, the government should tightly regulate the traders, but she also believes it is important that they are managed in a humane way. In certain locations, the government could provide access to water, drainage, and a place for their garbage, for example.[31]

Unlike Primus and Dita, Siti is less sympathetic to the plight of street traders.[32] She is from a well-established business family in Yogyakarta and is married to a fourth-generation descendent of the Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII.[33] Siti disagrees with traders selling on the sidewalk because they disrupt the rights of landowners. In her opinion, street vendors who occupy spaces outside shops do not respect the fact that landowners had to purchase their land.[34]

The position of street vendors in the post-authoritarian context is still a fraught terrain in which multiple positions and opinions are expressed. However, the debates continue mainly to employ the New Order discourses of security, order, and cleanliness. Although the language of "rights" to the street, or rights as citizens, is sometimes included in these discussions, it is often framed in terms of the traders' obligations (*kewajiban*),

which go along with selling on the street. However, government actors and citizens also have a sympathetic view toward street vendors, recognising that they are merely trying to survive and also providing an essential source of cheap and readily available food and merchandise for the large poor population.[35] It is within this moral landscape that the Abadi street vendors have begun to address the dominant discourse about cleanliness and order by positioning themselves as part of the *rakyat* and as deserving citizens.

Ethical Citizenship Making: The Abadi Street Vendors

It was a warm Saturday afternoon, already a year into my fieldwork, when I was sitting with Eko at his stall selling sunglasses. On both sides of us were other men in their thirties and forties selling under tents they had constructed to protect themselves and the merchandise from the sun and rain.[36] When I arrived that morning, Eko had already set up his selling location and planned to remain open until nine in the evening if the weather held up. He kept these long hours because Colombo Street was busy, and he did not want to miss the steady stream of customers who came looking for sunglasses. Although Colombo Street was extremely busy with a high volume of traffic, it was not the easiest place to sell because of the open flood canal along the sidewalk. Eko and the Abadi traders sell just in front of a sports field (known as the stadium), which is owned by one of the state universities in Yogyakarta. Other than the university, Colombo Street also has clothing shops, photocopy centres, a convenience store (which is open 24 hours), a *warung* (street-side café), a hospital, a bank, and two Trans Jogja bus stops. It is a well-known student location in Yogyakarta, and behind the street the *kampung* (neighbourhood) hosts many boarding houses for students.

The Abadi traders are known across the city for selling eyeglasses and sunglasses, although a few also sell clothing, snacks, rat poison, and rabbits.[37] The vendors not only sell the eyeglass frames, but they also fill eyeglass prescriptions for clients, with just a one-day turnaround. These traders are popular with a wide range of citizens, young and old alike, because they sell brand-name eyeglasses and sunglasses at competitive rates. As a result, the traders on Colombo Street are relatively successful and have the money to pay employees, who help set up and dismantle their temporary kiosks and also sell items throughout the day.[38]

Despite their popularity with customers, the municipal government views the traders as dirty and causing traffic congestion. In a government regulation produced in 2004, the traders are described as "causing the disturbance of calm, community order, environmental cleanliness, and the flow of traffic."[39] Anwar, an official from the local district office, also explained in an interview that the traders on Colombo Street needed to move because their trading was having a negative effect on the area, and one of the reasons he gave was that the traders left garbage everywhere. Anwar argued that unlike the traders in Singapore, the traders in Indonesia lacked discipline.[40]

Anwar's comparison to Singapore is significant. In 2004, before the campaign for their clearance started, Rudi, the leader of the Abadi street vendors, was invited along with several other street vendors on a trip to Singapore with the regent of Sleman.[41] The aim was to conduct a comparative study (*studi banding*) so that the Indonesian street vendors could observe how street traders in Singapore operate and, hopefully, so they could learn to replicate the same level of cleanliness, order, and discipline back home.[42] Rudi later recounted in a newspaper article how he and the regent discussed and agreed that the traders of Abadi should work on cleaning up their selling location based on the principles of beauty, cleanliness, and order. Shortly after the trip, however, relations between the street vendors and the regent degenerated when the regent decided, in a sudden turn of events, that the traders should be removed from the area.

Rudi later interpreted this trip as the government's method to get "buy-in" from the street vendors in order to move them. The Abadi traders, however, felt that the alternative location was not equivalent to their current place and that in effect they were being excluded from the process of determining their own livelihoods. They also disagreed with the notion that they could not contribute to creating a green, clean, and orderly sidewalk (PPKLS Ajukan Konsep Alternatif 2005). As a result, they worked with a non-governmental organisation (NGO) called Uplink (Urban Poor Linkages) to redesign the layout of the sidewalk to incorporate green elements, while also continuing to trade there.[43]

The Uplink organiser who worked most closely with the street vendors was Hadi. A dedicated and passionate individual, Hadi spent several hours every day with the Abadi street vendors, trying to understand their situation and providing close guidance in challenging the government.[44] Hadi had attended college at the Universitas Islam Negara Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, where he became part of a group called Pegerakan

Figure 2 Design plans for Colombo Street (courtesy of Uplink).

Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, an Islamic university-based organisation with the mission of "seeking to make Indonesia a better country." At university, he studied Islamic criminal law and started helping out with the NGO Uplink in response to a friend's invitation in 2004. He then dropped out of school. As part of the initiation into Uplink, he received training in Jakarta, where he was taught about organising neighbourhoods targeted for government clearance. After several months in Jakarta, he came back to Yogyakarta and became an active member of Uplink, focusing on street vendors as his area of expertise.[45]

With the help of Hadi and Uplink, the main slogan of the Abadi street traders became "renovation not relocation." Uplink worked with the Department of Sociology at Atma Jaya University and the City Planning Department at the Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana. Research was done on several selling locations, their potential problems, and their positions in urban economic networks. The researchers also provided technical recommendations and suggestions as to how the existing trading area should be renovated. Colombo Street became one of the pilot projects for the first renovation.

"If relocations are done, it will not solve the problem but just create new problems," Abadi traders argued in the newspapers (Diharapkan Renovasi, Bukan Relokasi 2006). Their idea of renovation included not only improving their selling tools, such as tents and storage boxes, but also renovating and improving the surrounding environment.[46] The idea was that they could develop an urban plan that was "green" and pedestrian friendly while also including traders. It was called "Greenery Friendly Street Traders/Street Trader Friendly Greenery" (*PKL Ramah Taman/Taman Ramah PKL*). The idea was that each street vendor would be situated nicely between two red-painted pots of plants, they would have matching green and red tents, and the area would be kept clean and clear for pedestrians and traffic (Figure 2).

In their written requests, the traders attempted to make their plans official by gaining government approval for this project, but they were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the street traders went ahead with their plan; they contributed several hundred dollars each, reaching a combined total of 21 million rupiah – an extraordinary amount of money for street vendors to expend.[47] Much of the money was allocated for building wooden blocks 90 metres in length to cover the drainage system used to prevent flooding and to make the area a useable and visually pleasing pedestrian and selling zone.

The traders hoped that government officials and the public would be delighted by their actions, but they received a very different response from the government. In November 2007, the regent of Sleman announced that the street vendors would have to be cleared from the area in front of the university.[48] Moreover, he

Figure 3: Trader selling in front of a cement plant holder (photo by author)

declared that he would not create a special place for them but, rather, that they should enter into already-existing marketplaces or rest places. The street vendors stated their refusal in the newspaper: "We want to order *ourselves* so it doesn't look dirty." The regent made his decision final. He stated:

> I've already decided that street vendors who sell on the street are not allowed. It's to the point where they close up the drainage system even though it is a place where there is a control basin to guide the water that enters into the moat when it rains. So I'm not going to tolerate street vendors in front of UNY [the university]. If they continue there will be operations against them. ["Depan UNY Harus Bersih" 2007]

The Abadi street vendors argued that the government's claim that they were causing the flooding was ridiculous. As one vendor said to me, "It is not possible that our eyeglasses cause the street to be flooded! To overcome [us], street vendors are made into scapegoats."

The entire year that followed involved a series of intense encounters between the street vendors and the Satpol PP, who were responsible for implementing the municipal government's wish to remove the traders. Satpol PP officers were instructed to remove the street vendors and their greenery project from the street, but the street vendors continued to sell and to rebuild their greening project. On bad days, the Satpol PP would confiscate the goods and selling tools of the vendors. Most days involved a game of "hide and seek" (*kucing – kucingan*), and, at one point, the vendors paid a spy to be on the lookout for the Satpol PP truck and to warn of their approach through text messages.

There were several times when the conflict became more heated. On December 12, the Satpol PP removed the closures blocking the moat that the street vendors had built. The street vendors tried to stop the wood closures from being removed and started a spontaneous demonstration, refusing to move from the closures. On December 19, however, the Satpol PP came to the street at 3:00 a.m. and took away the closures as well as the vendors' tents and makeshift kiosks. In response, the street vendors reported the incident to the police as a case of theft.

On January 14, the Satpol PP gave the Abadi members a letter instructing them to remove themselves from the area. That night, over 100 Satpol PP and workers descended on the space around midnight and built a new green area. The workers wore helmets (so people could not see their faces), as they rebuilt the structure demolished the week before. They filled in the dirt and poured in cement where the blocks had been broken and worked until 4:00 in the morning to create a continuous cement plant holder. These holders created a barrier between the road and the sidewalk, making it impossible for customers (unless they were to climb over the plant holders) to come from the road to the kiosks on the sidewalk. As a result, the traders started to sell on the street in front of the plant holders (Figure 3).

Two days later, in an act of protest, the traders of Abadi lit a tire on fire in the middle of the street, blocking traffic for 10 minutes. They also held a banner across the street to stop the flow of traffic. The traders were careful to describe this action not as a type of anarchy but, rather, as a demonstration to receive attention from the government. At the heart of the problem was the fact that the government had suggested they relocate, even though the land proposed for their relocation was not available. The vendors were willing to clear the blocked street, but only once someone from the government was willing to meet and discuss potential solutions with them. During this protest, the street vendors destroyed some of the newly planted greenery. Shortly afterwards, the government issued a report to the police claiming that the street vendors had vandalised

the area. What began as an attempt by the vendors to resist their possible eviction by carrying out their own processes of ordering, greening, and beautifying the area – an action that could be seen as a performance of proper ethical conduct within society and a public space – ultimately deteriorated into a destructive conflict over who could control and legitimately modify this space.

The Little People

Alongside their attempt to be agents of greening the street, the traders engaged in the practice of embodying a certain moral social figure – the *rakyat kecil*. By drawing upon the idea of the poor *rakyat kecil*, they were able to evoke a different set of images – those of a mass of poor and working poor (beggars, vendors, garbage pickers, street cleaners, and so on) who are struggling for survival.[49] In the era of the first president of Indonesia after independence, Sukarno, the concept of the "little person" referred primarily to the lower classes: plentiful and poor but industrious. During the New Order period, however, the *rakyat* came to be associated with dangerous mobs that could not be controlled (Siegel 2001a:45–46). Since Suharto's fall from power, the signification of the term *rakyat* has changed again, conjuring up images of an honest, although marginalised, group of people in society (Gibbings 2013a).[50] As Ariel Heryanto (1999:162) states, the *rakyat* is "the innocent, morally superior, economically unprivileged but politically sovereign figures who often suffer injustice inflicted by the rich and powerful." By aligning themselves with this social–moral type and by enlisting the term *rakyat kecil*, the street vendors can mobilise all of the associated moral values of this term in defence of their claims to belonging to and working in their space on the street. As the *rakyat kecil*, the government ought to respect them and be grateful for them – they who take the initiative to carve out small economic niches in a struggling economy with little government support. As such, the government ought to facilitate, rather than obstruct, this group's access to the street.

"The government needs to protect the small people," Supri, a 40-year-old trader, said to me.[51] Supri spoke about Ambarukmo Mall Plaza (or Amplaz), a flashy seven-floor mall nearby in Sleman. Everyone knew Amplaz to be the site of major traffic jams, especially on Saturday nights. It was ironic for Supri that the government seemed to turn a blind eye to traffic jams caused by big new developments like malls. "Look at us on this street now here," he said. "Look how for one or two weeks, we have been creating no traffic jams." He also commented on the other mall, Saphir Square, where the street is used for parking as people wish. "Why is there silence?" he asked me rhetorically. "Because they have money. They can shut [the regent's] mouth. And because street vendors do not have money to shut the mouths, what is okay becomes not okay. What is right became wrong. What is wrong becomes right."[52]

This sentiment was reiterated by Hadi, who often evoked the idea of the *rakyat* during his public speeches. At a gathering that brought together all of the street vendors from Sleman to discuss a rumour that they all were to be relocated, Hadi closed the meeting by yelling into a megaphone:

> HADI: OK. Our meeting is finishing but before I will give an order … who chooses the leader?
>
> EVERYONE: The *rakyat*!
>
> HADI: Who pays him?
>
> EVERYONE: The *rakyat*!
>
> HADI: If he is chosen by the *rakyat* and paid by the *rakyat*, who does he have to serve?
>
> EVERYONE: *Rakyat*!
>
> HADI: If he is invited to come [to this meeting] and does not come, is that called serving or not?
>
> EVERYONE: No!
>
> HADI: This means that he is not serving![53]

By identifying themselves as the *rakyat*, the street vendors sought to position themselves as poor victims of the state and capital. In the years since the economic crisis and the fall of Suharto, there is more concern than ever before over fighting corruption and getting economic excess under control. The newspapers are full of stories about corruption, especially about higher-ranking officials, police officers, and businessmen being charged. Hundreds of students and citizens have taken to the streets protesting corruption, which is framed in terms of the elites stealing public funds and diverting money that should otherwise help the citizens (see Bubandt 2014).[54] By drawing on the discourses of the *rakyat*, this small group of street vendors is also part of a larger trend to hold the government accountable to serve the interests of the people, especially the poor.

The NGOs and traders took this one step further by trying to get the civil service police to beat up a few traders to evoke a reaction from the public. In a meeting, Hadi from Uplink suggested that two or three people should attempt to provoke (*memancing*) the civil servants to confiscate the sellers' goods. It would hopefully cause chaos (*membuat situasi ramai*). "Let's build up the emotions of the civil service officers so they punch us first," he said, looking around the group for

support. "Don't worry, if one of you are taken to the police station, we will all go to the police station," he reassured them. "Don't worry because you will only be in jail for one or two days, and the LBH [the legal team] will support you."[55]

Their plan worked, but not until several months later. On November 5, 2008, the headline of *Kedaulatan Rakyat* read: "Satpol PP Officers Mistreated Two Street Vendors." The story described how two street vendors in their mid-twenties had received bruises on their faces and legs and were being treated for their injuries at a nearby hospital (Dua PKL menyalahgunakan oleh Satpol PP 2008). The street vendors and Uplink also wrote a detailed report on the incident, which they posted on the Internet. On the website, they said that the Satpol PP officers "ganged up" on the street traders and they wrote:

> **11:45**
> One trader named Budi tried to calm down the Satpol PP officer by suggesting that he act nice, and he did not need to get angry, or bark at them. The officer did not take Budi's suggestion well and started to punch him, and then Satpol PP officers ganged up on him.
>
> Knowing that Budi was being mistreated (punched, kicked, and dragged), one other trader Santo, tried to break up the fight by screaming, but became the target of ganging up (*pengeroyokan*) by more than 10 Saptol PP Sleman officers. Santo was held by his two arms by two Satpol PP Sleman officers, and other Satpol PP officers punched him and kicked his face, body and legs from in front and behind. The two members of Satpol PP who did the ganging up are known to be named Harto and Nandi. After a while Santo was dragged to a place that was more spacious so he could be punched again. From this maltreatment, the face, body and legs of Santo were bruised and bloody.
>
> After finishing the maltreatment (*penganiayaan*) towards the two traders, Satpol PP Sleman and the police left the selling location.
>
> **12:17**
> After this event, the victims of the ganging up by Satpol PP Sleman who were hurt the most were taken to the Panti Rapih Hospital to receive care from a doctor. [Satpol PP Sleman Keroyok PKL Samirono 2008]

This incident had already been planned for, and it unfolded much like the street vendors and Uplink imagined. The exact time of the event was recorded, and the names of the actors involved were reported. Portraying the government as criminals was also about positioning the vendors as the *rakyat*, an identity they are able to connect with through the idea of suffering.

Although the vendors tried to make the regent appear unethical because of his violence, it was his corruption that also allowed the vendors to claim the moral high ground. During a meeting with the Regional Ombudsman Organization (*Lembaga Ombudsman Daerah*) in the fall of 2007, a rumour was leaked that the regent was under investigation for several criminal activities, including the illegal marking up of children's school textbook prices. After the meeting, Supri commented that he found it ironic that he had been asked to pay for his children's schoolbooks only to find out that this money had been stolen by the regent.[56] "The money the government receives from the *rakyat* should be for the people. Instead he takes care of his own interests," he said. There was a sense of relief when, in December 2009, the regent was sentenced to six years in prison for corruption (Bupati Sleman Dituntut Enam Tahun Penjara 2009). The conviction gave the regent and his administrators even less legitimacy in the eyes of the traders, and there seemed little reason why they should follow the orders of this corrupt bureaucracy (see Peters 2013:199–201). The traders were able to situate themselves even more comfortably as the *rakyat*, in opposition to a government that was corrupt.

Conclusion

When President Suharto stepped down and Indonesia became a democracy in 1998, it might have been expected that street vendors, marginalised by the government – sometimes attacked and intimidated – would band together and claim their rights to the street. In practice, however, these traders rarely use the discourses of civil or human rights, which are increasingly common in Indonesia. Although the street vendors do occasionally use rights discourses, they know these claims are weak since they do not own the property on which they sell their wares and their selling is often not supported by the law. Instead, as my research demonstrates, traders can be seen to engage in the public sphere through ordinary ethics, in which they seek to demonstrate the goodness inherent in their actions as the basis for their legitimate use of certain urban spaces.

Street vendors in Indonesia sometimes negotiate their position on the street through personal relations and norms of reciprocity, but in this case, the traders primarily adopted locally salient ethical positions. During the New Order, the traders were required to pledge their support and loyalty to the state by taking up discourses of cleanliness, order, and security. In the post-Suharto environment, the traders still try to pledge

their support to these New Order principles, but they "repackage" themselves as being able to both develop and implement the projects that uphold these ideologies. In other words, the traders show loyalty to the New Order ideology without pledging their support to the current government. The traders take up these ideologies from the New Order within a framework of autonomous citizen agency – they see themselves not as targets of an order and cleanliness policy but, rather, as subjects capable of enacting the ideals of order and cleanliness as the basis for asserting their voice and staking claims to the public sphere. The Abadi street vendors have tried to do the "right" thing in the eyes of the public by adopting a greening agenda and have sought to self-regulate by being clean and orderly. By adopting these discourses to challenge the state's position on vending, the traders have shown that what is considered right or good in the urban environment can no longer be as closely controlled by state actors and is, in fact, under considerable public debate in the post-authoritarian Indonesian context.

With Suharto's fall from power, the image of the government as all-powerful has dwindled (Barker and van Klinken 2009; Wilson 2015:38). The fragmentation and resulting "patchiness" of state control has resulted in the fracturing of social and political power and has led to the rise of new and different groups, all vying for legitimacy and influence. While street vendors might be able to benefit from these changing conditions, they have also been susceptible to the unpredictability of this new environment. These traders depend on the leadership of NGOs, whose political capacity derives from their ability to organise street vendors and to mediate between vendors and the state. Had a government official, strongman, or political party been available and willing to help, the traders might have sought them out.

The ability of traders to work with NGOs is connected to the recent expansion of civil society, but the traders' criticism of the government and their positioning of themselves as the *rakyat* is also related to their anger over the economic and social disparities stemming from the perceived corruption of the post-New Order state and its failure to provide the kind of support the small people had hoped for (see Wilson 2015:29). As such, ethical claims are articulated and staked out based upon national identity, or the *rakyat*. The traders position themselves as members of the *rakyat kecil*, the honest and poor underdogs who elected the leaders and helped to pay their salaries. Finally, they try to paint the government in opposition to the *rakyat kecil*, as morally questionable, because of their corruption and the mistreatment of the *rakyat*, including their violent actions, forceful evictions, and secretive midnight operations. Collectively, the performance of these ethical positions constitutes part of the moral landscape of street vending, but it is also the means through which this group gains recognition as "good" people in society, as citizens who are permitted space to take up their place in the city.

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Notes

1 The name of the group means "everlasting" or "eternal," which was particularly pertinent since their existence was constantly under threat.
2 All the names used in this article are pseudonyms.
3 Eko, interview with author, August 2007.
4 In the post-Suharto era, regents and mayors do not have control over the military or police and therefore look to the Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja (Satpol PP) to maintain "order."
5 I am not claiming that Indonesian street vendors never speak in terms of "rights." For instance, some claim that they have rights according to the constitution of 1945, where every citizen has the right to food, shelter, and a livelihood. Often, however, traders claim their belonging in different ways than through a "rights" framework.
6 Street vendors in Indonesia are not a uniform group politically or economically. Some traders make only enough money to survive, while others have multiple locations, employees, and considerable profits. In Yogyakarta, street vendors from other provinces are often less welcome because they are viewed as more capitalistic than the traders from Yogyakarta.
7 The decentralisation reforms started to take effect in 2001 and were meant to help develop local leadership and bring the government closer to the people. Scholars have noted that this policy has been met with mixed results, producing a new form of patronage and political authority (Wilson 2015:28).
8 Although some authors draw a distinction between morality and ethics (for example, Zigon 2008), for the purposes of this article, I follow Lambek (2010:8–9) and use the terms interchangeably.
9 The regency is a level of government under the province. A regent or *bupati* heads the regency.

10 It is important to note, however, that certain classes do indeed simply "possess" citizenship, depending on the way it is constituted within a particular socio-political order.

11 The literature on citizenship has focused, for example, on ethnic Chinese in Indonesia (Aguilar 2001; Purdey 2006; Suryadinata 2008; Willmott 2009), religious and ethnic identities (Hefner 2001; Schulte Nordholt 2008), women (Blackburn 1999), sexuality (Boellstorff 2004), and vigilantes (Telle 2013).

12 As a result, they recommended that governments try to integrate the traders into the public markets and that the work of many departments be consolidated into a single department.

13 Scholars of Indonesia have noted the development of "patronage democracies" (Simandjuntak 2012; van Klinken 2009).

14 In response to this movement, the colonial government developed its own political intelligence service (*politieke inlichtingendienst*), prisons, police units, and a colonial army. According to Takashi Shiraishi (1990), the movement (1912–28) was followed by a period of "normalcy" (1927–42), which entailed an extensive modern surveillance apparatus including police and the army.

15 Wilson (2015:26) describes how "urban policy has maintained a thread of continuity from the colonial administration, into the post-independence period and the present, with its overarching goal for private capital and the consumptive practices of elites and a middle class, whilst securing order and degrees of control amongst the vast underclass population."

16 During the 1980s, the *Jakarta Post* (a prominent English-language newspaper) produced a series of articles that featured the lives of street vendors. In general, these articles situated vendors as individuals who were struggling to survive in the overcrowded city of Jakarta (Too Proud to Be a Beggar 1983).

17 In 1988, the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Keteriban, Kopkamtib) was responsible for ensuring the country was secure after the September 30 movement to re-establish national security. It was also involved in cracking down on street traders at terminals and stations (McGlynn et al. 2007:150).

18 The New Order government was able to implement its idealised version of urban order after the mysterious shootings from 1983 to 1985. During this time, corpses of tattooed men who were members of gangs were killed (Barker 1998), and the bodies were left on the street as public spectacles (Kusno 2000:104; Siegel 1998; Wilson 2015:50–52). Through these mysterious shootings and by setting up a security system (*siskamling*), the government was able to take control over networks of power and security (Barker 1998).

19 Children who ride with commuters for a fee in order to avoid the restrictions on cars with less than three passengers (City Pledges All Out War on Vagrants, Beggars 1997).

20 In addition to taking up these discourses and practices of discipline, many street vendors looked to a variety of patrons, such as the police, thugs, and political parties, for protection (Gibbings 2013b).

21 *Berhati nyaman* was meant to stand for the following words: *bersih* (clean), *sehat* (healthy), *indah* (beautiful), and *nyaman* (comfortable, secure).

22 For a history of the terms *kerja bakti* and *gotong royong*, see Bowen (1986). *Kerja bakti* suggests an "ethos of selflessness and concern for the common good" (546).

23 Jan Newberry (2006:18) describes how the Indonesian national housewives organisation (Pembinaan Kesejahateraan Keluarga) was a form of "governmentality, an extension of government programs aimed at social welfare through the informal and formal labour of women and hence, the extension of a rationality of self-management in aid of producing self-regulating, moral communities that are modernising." The street vendor organisations were also part of this rationality of producing self-regulating bodies that upheld the state ideology of *pancasila.* It was through projects such as working together (*kerja bakti*) that street vendors drew on state ideologies to justify their right to the street.

24 During the May 1998 riots, there was very real fear on the government's part. James Siegel (2001b:120) describes how the underclass became particularly feared during this time, a fear that was cultivated by the New Order government.

25 The government placed a fence around Monas, the National Monument in Jakarta, in order to keep vendors out (Satpol PP Told to Stand Firm 2014).

26 There is a class dimension to how people view traders. Some aristocrats would not eat at street vendors because their food would be considered unclean. There are, however, individuals who are high class and still patronise vendors because they have good and cheap products or food and it is convenient. There are government employees who by day must officially inhibit traders, but on their lunch break nonetheless, go behind their office buildings and find a street vendor for affordable food.

27 "In 2012, 54 percent of 118.05 million workers were informal workers, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS)" (Govt Needs to Pay More Attention 2014).

28 Sukardi, "Menanti Kelahiran Perda Penataan PKL," Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, http://uad.ac.id/id/menanti-kelahiran-perda-penataan-pkl, accessed February 7, 2015.

29 Primus, interview with Elan Lazuardi (research assistant), February 2015.

30 Dita, interview with Khidir Marsanto (research assistant), February 2015.

31 According to Dita, it would be better if the government could find a specific location for them to sell that is accessible but does not disrupt the rights of others. She recognises, however, that street vendors should be accessible to poor people.

32 Siti, interview with Khidir Marsanto (research assistant), February 2015.

33 Yogyakarta is the only monarchical province in Indonesia. The Sultan is considered the spiritual leader of the region, and he is also the unelected governor of the province.

34 When street vendors are asked to move, Siti thinks that they are difficult and provide many reasons why they should not move. "Street vendors are only borrowing [the land], so they should not be allowed to revolt when they are asked to move," she explained. Another negative effect

is that street vendors often cause traffic congestion because their customers need places to park.

35 The World Bank estimates that 11.3 percent of people live in poverty in Indonesia. "Indonesia," World Bank, http://data.worldbank.org/country/indonesia, accessed April 24, 2015.

36 The majority of street vendors in Yogyakarta Province are men, while women vendors can be found typically selling food or batik. In some areas of the city, such as the central tourist street of Malioboro, women vendors are more commonly found than in other parts of the city. Women often work with their husbands in their vending activities.

37 Street vendors selling fruits, food, and footwear can also be found along the same street, a few hundred metres away from the eyewear vendors.

38 Most of the vendors on Colombo Street were proud of the fact that they were their own bosses and that they actually had employees. The young people who worked for them were in a relationship of mentorship rather than straightforward employment, the idea being that they would also become street vendors once they saved enough money.

39 Penjelasan Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Sleman 2004.

40 Anwar, interview with author, January 18, 2008.

41 Rudi spent most of his days sitting across the street from their selling locations, just hanging out and watching the street, while his employees sold his merchandise. He described himself as "naughty" during his youth; he used to go out with friends and at one point was using heroin. At the time, life for him was about having fun and nothing else. Then he had a motorbike accident, which shifted his thinking, and he stopped using drugs. He finished high school and worked in the purchasing department at Sari Husada, a company involved in the production of nutritional foods and beverages for babies, children, and adults. In 1999, after massive layoffs, he started to organise people in order to protest the layoffs. This had little effect, and he briefly worked as a masseur. Rudi became a street vendor for the first time on Colombo Street in 2002 after he was unable to find work in the formal sector.

42 Trips to examine other street vendors were common when I conducted my research in Indonesia – often before relocation trips were organised so that street vendors could observe the organisation of traders elsewhere. Typically, these trips were to Bandung or Bali. Critical vendors viewed these tours as bribes.

43 Uplink is a loose network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that became formalised in July 2002. The organisation focuses on issues of the urban poor with a goal of creating a "city for all." Uplink gets funding from Canadian and German NGOs as well as from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank.

44 Hadi explained that in comparison to other groups of street vendors, this group had a lower level of education and was smaller and thus easier to control. Some groups of street vendors had one or two hundred members. He said: "Here on Colombo Street there are fewer people and their thinking is the same. So when we hold meetings, there isn't lots of debate." This group was therefore easier to organise because they did not question things. Hadi could be understood to be a mediator who helped facilitate the vendors' interaction with the state.

45 Hadi, interview with author, January 30, 2008.

46 The Organization of Sleman Street Vendors (Persatuan Pedagang Kaki Lima Sleman) planned to hold a festival of street traders for Sleman that year. The idea was that they would renovate different street vendor locations.

47 This is equivalent to around Cdn $2,300. When I was living in Yogyakarta, most people working in offices had incomes of approximately Cdn $100–200 per month.

48 The street vendors went to the university asking for permission to sell on Colombo Street, but they were told that the government was taking care of this issue.

49 A large number of Youtube videos exist of the little people searching for a living (*rakyat kecil mencari nafkah*).

50 The *rakyat* also refers to a group of people that is not very well educated or socio-economically well off.

51 Supri was born in 1979 in Pemalang, Central Java, and finished high school before moving to Jakarta. Supri came from a family who were not poor farmers. He had plenty of family members who were civil servants, and as he explained, they did well for themselves because they were officials who were higher up (*berdasi*). His grandfather was a farmer but relatively wealthy because he was able to buy up land and have a business. In Jakarta, he was first an employee for a business that later went bankrupt. After that he started selling jackets on the street. With little hope to improve his life in Jakarta, he moved to Yogyakarta in 2003. At that time, there were around ten people selling remote-controlled cars on Colombo Street. When he arrived, he came with 6 *juta* (approximately Cdn $600) and opened five different trading locations in the city along different major streets. He started with 400 jackets. Each of his employees worked for him for about two years and then moved on to start selling jackets on their own.

52 Supri, interview with author, January 16, 2008.

53 The meeting took place on February 24, 2008.

54 Bubandt (2014:19) argues that "corruption is the evil spirit that haunts democratic Indonesia in much the same way that Communism was the ghost of the New Order Indonesia: at the same time politically useful and politically eerie."

55 The meeting took place on January 18, 2008.

56 Peters (2013:198) also describes how residents of a Dinoyo neighbourhood were disillusioned by the corruption and abuse of power of administrators. Unlike the administrations in Dinoyo, the regent was found guilty and punished for his corruption.

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