Voyoucracy is a corrupt and corrupting power of the street, an illegal and outlaw power that brings together into a voyoucratic regime, and thus into an organised and more or less clandestine form, into a virtual state, all those who represent a principle of disorder—a principle not of anarchic chaos but of structured disorder, so to speak, of plotting and conspiracy, of premeditated offensiveness or offenses against public order. Indeed, of terrorism, it will be said—whether national or international. Voyoucracy is a principle of disorder, to be sure, a threat against public order; but, as is a cracy, it represents something more than a collection of individual or individualistic voyous. It is the principle of disorder as a sort of substitute order. [...] The voyoucracy already constitutes, even institutes, a sort of counterpower or countercitizenship. It is what is called a milieu. This milieu, this environment, this world unto itself, gathers into a network all the people of the crime world or underworld, all the singular voyous. All individuals of questionable morals and dubious character whom decent, law-abiding people would like to combat and exclude under a series of more or less synonymous names: big man, bad boy, player, [...] rascal, hellion, good-for-nothing, ruffian, villain, crook, thug, gangster, shyster, [...] scoundrel, miscreat, hoodlum, hooligan [...]..

1 Research for this chapter was conducted with support from a KITLV Post-doctoral Fellowship and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Research Grant. I am grateful to Eka (Ebo) Chandra and other members of the AKATIGA Foundation for their invaluable assistance with the field work portion of the research. Thanks are also due to Gerry van Klinken for his editorial advice and support.

INTRODUCTION

In his recent book, *Planet of Slums*, Mike Davis argues that new patterns of urbanization have given rise to an immense and growing class of people living in urban slums. Citing statistics from the UN Human Settlements Programme report *The Challenge of Slums*, he notes that in 2001 there were about 924 million people living in slums worldwide and that slum dwellers constitute a third of the global urban population. At least half of the huge slum population is under twenty-five years old. Over the next several decades, almost all global population growth is projected to take place in cities, and almost all of this growth will take place in the slums of the less-developed world.

Historically, slum dwellers have generally been seen as part of the so-called lumpen proletariat: a class that, in Marx’s famous phrase, "cannot represent themselves, they must be represented." Whereas Marx saw this class as an undifferentiated mass of people unable to recognize themselves as part of a class, scholars increasingly have started to argue that the world’s slum dwellers may yet prove to be a potent political force. Mike Davis describes slum dwellers as overlapping with a vast “informal proletariat” and argues that this proletariat may prove to be the most potent mass political force of the twenty-first century.

A key theme of Davis’s argument, and one repeated in a number of other works, is the idea that the “informal proletariat” is a social class that has been left to its own devices by the modern state. Especially when it is found in slums, this class has been largely ignored by those who wield state power. Slums, the argument goes, exist outside the world of social security and healthcare; they are not provided with basic infrastructural services, such as running water, roads, and sewage systems; and they stand outside of the rule of law, since much of their land tenure is illegal and very often states do not invest the funds necessary to police them. Consequently, slum dwellers must find other ways to get these basic needs. As Žižek explains, “We are thus witnessing the fast growth of the population outside state control, living in conditions half outside the law, in terrible need of the minimal forms of self-organization.” The long-term political consequences of leaving this vast army of informal laborers without adequate systems of social support and political representation could be far-reaching. Davis notes that in some places groups not affiliated with the state—e.g., Pentecostal Christians in South Africa, Islamists in Morocco—are already stepping into the breach and are starting to become the de facto governmental agencies of the slums, providing inhabitants with medical and legal services, paying for their funerals, and so on. The growing authority of such groups in slums around the world could have profound implications for the scope and nature of the informal proletariat’s politics over the next several decades.

This chapter examines the “planet of slums” hypothesis through a case study of the changing dynamics of state authority in an Indonesian slum. The focus of my study is Cicadas, a densely populated neighborhood in the capital city of Bandung, West Java. In the first part of the chapter, I provide a brief description of Cicadas,

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followed by an historical overview of how the state has sought to intervene in, administer, and control slum life. This history shows that there has been a progressive deepening of bureaucratic state structures in urban life, and that slums have sometimes been a privileged site for the deployment of new governmental rationalities. However, the history also shows that state policy has often sought to shore up various kinds of supposedly preexisting forms of authority as a means to achieve social control on the cheap. These divergent strategies of rule have given rise to a peculiar situation whereby, on the one hand, slums have come to be thoroughly penetrated by quasi-bureaucratic state institutions and, on the other, just about everyone—including higher-ups in the bureaucratic apparatus itself—assumes that real local authority will be found in a relatively autonomous “informal” or “traditional” realm.

In the remainder of the chapter, I examine the changing dynamics of authority in this “informal” domain. While in other parts of Bandung such informal authority might lead one to examine the role of prominent religious or business leaders, in Cicadas, as in many Indonesian slums, the people who have emerged as respected and recognized informal leaders within the community have often been tough guys and criminals. This is reflected in the fact that people refer to the neighborhood as a negara beling, a term that could be loosely translated as “a rogues’ state” or simply as “a rough neighborhood.” The main rogues in Cicadas are a group of men variously referred to as jeger, jago, jawara, or preman. These men gained their status by virtue of their achievements in fighting and by demonstrating their capacity to mobilize a street-level following. Although locally famous, almost all of the Cicadas tough guys fall well under the radar of even the Bandung press. They operate at a level of urban politics that remains largely invisible to most observers.

An examination of the biographies of some of these men reveals a great deal of variation in how these informal leaders have related to state authority over time. The biographies also reveal an important historical rupture in the kind of figures that achieve informal leadership roles in Cicadas. The tough-guy figures who dominated the neighborhood from the 1970s up until the 1990s are still present, but alongside them a different kind of leader has emerged—still informal, but less tough, more entrepreneurial, and more political. I suggest that the causes for the rise of these new leaders were primarily political and economic. Reformasi gave rise to some important changes in governance and politics, with real effects on Cicadas, and these coincided with a shift in the center of gravity of the Cicadas street economy. The confluence of these factors was what elevated the new leaders to prominence.

Having examined these biographies, I then return to address the core questions raised by the “planet of slums” hypothesis. Given the Cicadas case, does it make sense to think of slums as “outside state control” and “in dire need of self-organization”? Is the idea of a rogues’ state merely a myth, or is it suggestive of the real dynamics of authority in a slum like Cicadas? Who are the leaders of the informal proletariat, and what is the nature of their politics?

**Cicadas: A Bandung Slum**

The area of Bandung widely known as “Cicadas” is located about three kilometers to the northeast of the city’s main square (alun-alun), near the intersection of Jalan Cikutra, Jalan Kiara Condong, and Jalan Jendral Ahmad Yani. The area does not pertain to any single administrative division; it is spread across portions of four
different subdistricts (Kecamatan Cibeunying Kidul, Batu Nunggal, Kiara Condong, and Cicadas) and several different urban villages (*kelurahan*). Our research focused on Kelurahan Cicadas and Cikutra, especially the latter. For most of the twentieth century the Cicadas Market was located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Jalan Cikutra and Jalan Jendral Ahmad Yani and acted as an anchor for the area. Although the market has now been moved across the street and a couple of hundred meters to the south, the area around where the old market used to stand is still generally known as Cicadas.

The part of Cicadas where we focused our field research was that of RW04, located north of Yani Street and west of Cikutra Street. Both streets are extremely crowded. Yani Street is a paved road lined with shops selling clothes, furniture, electronics, and sporting goods, along with a pharmacy and a bank. Most of the shops are owned by Chinese-Indonesians. The street has a wide sidewalk that, along this stretch, is lined by street-vendor stalls made out of wood and covered by

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7 The field research for this chapter was conducted in close collaboration with Eka (Ebo) Candra of the AKATIGA Foundation in Bandung. Ebo spent four months doing fieldwork in Cicadas prior to my arrival. I am extremely grateful to Ebo for his keen observations and ability to facilitate my ethnographic engagement from afar.
tarpaulins. The vendors have left enough space between their stalls and the storefronts to allow people to walk and they have closed off the back of their stalls from the street. The effect is almost like a homemade version of one of the Arcades described by Walter Benjamin. As one walks along the small pathway left open for shoppers and pedestrians, on one side are old-fashioned glass-window storefronts (toko) and on the other are street vendors surrounded by their commodities, which include clothing, CDs, DVDs, shoes, key chains, and snacks. Along this strip there are small pathways (gang) leading north into the kampungs (neighborhoods) of RW04.

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pancake), fire-grilled toast, fried and barbecued chicken, and fried vegetable snacks. Along this length of Cikutra Street there is a huge hospital complex set back from the road, and more pathways leading to Cicadas’s interior *kampungs*. At the point where each of these pathways meets the street, semi-permanent structures have been erected out of wood and bamboo, where motorcycle taxis (*ojeg*) gather while they wait for passengers. Each of the structures has a sign or a banner that names the *ojeg* group that is based there. One, for example, is called CIP II, a name inspired by the American TV show “CHiPs” (California Highway Patrol, produced and first broadcast in the late 1970s and early 1980s). In a few places there are also spots where pedicab drivers park their vehicles, this being the other mode of wheeled transport into the interior of *kampungs*. The overall impression given by Cikutra Street is of a rather chaotic and dusty street market, like one might find in a frontier town.

Cicadas has a reputation for being one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the world. The whole area north of Yani Street and west of Cikutra Street is crisscrossed by pathways. Some of these are wide enough to be plied by pedicabs, some are just wide enough for motorcycles to drive along, and some are so narrow that if one walks along them and meets someone coming the other way, one person will have to turn back to find a place for the other to pass. Along all of these pathways are houses, some of which also house small businesses, such as food stalls, cigarette kiosks, tailor shops, shoemaker stands, mobile-phone counters, and video arcades. The houses vary greatly in terms of their size and the quality of their construction. One of our interviewees, Nana Berlit, lived in a privately owned house located on a wide pathway; the land occupied by the house was probably about 160 square meters and the house itself about 140 square meters, with ceramic floors, a high-quality tiled roof, and a fenced yard. Another of our interviewees, Sumpena, lived with his family along a very narrow pathway in a rented pavilion, kind of like a miniature row house, where the bottom story was a single room about four meters by two meters and the upper loft area was half that size. It appeared to have no bathroom or running water, but it was clean and its floors were ceramic. Other buildings in the *kampung* had dirt or cement floors.

**States of Authority in Cicadas: Bureaucracy and Governmentality**

While I have been unable to track down any specific information about the history of Cicadas itself prior to the twentieth century, it is possible to surmise the general outlines of this history from what is known about the founding and development of the city of Bandung as a whole. Bandung city is located on a plateau in the highlands of West Java. During the eighteenth century, the Bandung plateau was an agricultural region with two main seats of government, one in the southwest and one in the northeast. These seats of government are still evident in the Bandung’s cityscape in the form of two old *alun-aluns*, one in Dayeuh Kolot and the other in Ujung Berung. Cicadas was located between these centers of power and in this period would probably have consisted of small village hamlets located along the banks of the Cidurian River. The beginnings of the urbanization of the Bandung plateau can be traced to the construction of the Great Post Road, the first cross-Java highway, which was built in the early nineteenth century under instruction from Governor-General Daendels. With the construction of the Post Road, Daendels ordered that the seat of government located in the south be moved north to the edge
of the highway. Bandung’s current main square has its origins in this move. While originally built for defensive purposes, this road became an important means of traffic between the fertile highland regions and the north coast. Cicadas was located just three kilometers east of Bandung’s main square, toward Sumedang regency along this main artery.

Bandung remained a small administrative outpost and market town until the 1880s and then began to grow more rapidly. In 1833, the settlement had only about five thousand inhabitants, and by 1846 it had grown to some 31,000 people. By the time it was inaugurated as a municipality in 1906, the town had been connected to the coast via a train link and the population had grown to almost fifty thousand. About a kilometer away from Cicadas, a large railway yard and warehouse had been built, and around those developments new settlements emerged to house migrant workers from central and eastern Java. The city continued to grow up until and beyond World War II. In 1920 the municipality registered a population of 94,800, in 1930 it registered 166,815, and in 1940 it registered nearly 230,000 inhabitants. By that time the city was home to several government departments, numerous schools, a technical college, several industries, and many shops.

Despite its proximity to Bandung’s center, Cicadas maintained a largely rural character until at least the 1930s. Maps of the city created during the 1920s and 1930s showing built-up areas are not entirely consistent with one another, but they all show that there was a concentration of settlements along the main roads and especially around the intersection of the Great Post Road and two other roads, one leading south to Dayeuh Kolot (Jalan Kiaracondong) and the other leading to the new suburbs in the north that were being built to house a burgeoning European population. One map published in 1940 shows three separate sets of hamlets with the name Tjitjadas located, respectively, northeast, northwest, and southeast of the main intersection. Some of the maps also show a few scattered unnamed hamlets situated along the river and among large swaths of green areas that were undoubtedly sawah (rice fields). These maps would seem to suggest that the area encompassing Cicadas was undergoing two main forms of urbanization in this period: “ribbon development,” in which the strips along the main roads were being built up; and a broader transitional pattern of urbanization, one in which development was taking place through the intensification of village settlement and the gradual takeover of agricultural land. This latter kind of development, which has been thought to leave village social structures more or less intact, leads to the creation of what some scholars refer to as “desa-kotas,” or village-cities.

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The creation of desa-kotas on the edges of Bandung should not be seen as a natural outcome of urban development, for it was at least partly the result of colonial administrative policies. One of the central features of Dutch municipal policy was the idea that preexisting villages incorporated into the city as it expanded should retain their status as autonomous villages rather than be administered directly by the municipal government. In 1906, the municipality of Bandung had a total of seventeen legal enclaves for indigenous villages within the city limits; by 1942, it had a total of forty-three. The idea that villages were autonomous territorial, social, and political units was itself the product of a misapprehension about how rural Javanese society was organized, but it was a notion that informed colonial administrative practice in rural Java for much of the colonial period and became something of a self-fulfilling prophesy. The application of this principle to urban villages amplified and elaborated upon a process that was already evident in Indies cities, whereby different ethnic groups—Europeans, Chinese, and various pribumi (indigenous or “native”) groups—were expected to settle in different camps, each of which was administered by one of its own. In Bandung, for instance, Europeans lived mostly in the northern suburbs, Chinese residents in a camp in the center of town, and pribumis mostly in the south of the city. Within the pribumi areas, in addition to incorporated desa (village) enclaves, there were also various camps where migrants from particular regions settled. Near Cicadas, for example, a Soerabaja camp and a Java camp housed people who had migrated to work in the state-run railway yards. Thus, while Bandung, at the end of the colonial period, was generally a city that followed the model of Furnivall’s “plural society,” a closer look at the pribumi sections of the city reveals that within these sections there was a further division into kampung enclaves, sometimes based on ethnicity, sometimes based on migrants’ place of origin, and sometimes based on the presence of a preexisting “village.”

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14 Ibid., p. 33.


16 From 1926, in order to mitigate the concentration of landholdings in European hands, Europeans were prohibited from buying land in the south of the city. This policy served to increase the segregation that was already evident between north and south. See Reerink, “Behind the Landmarks of a Metropolitan City,” p. 4. At the same time, such segregation was never complete. In the north, there remained village enclaves, and some Europeans (especially poorer ones) also resided in the center of town and the south. For an analysis of why such ethnic mixing often went unacknowledged in Indies towns, see Heather Sutherland, “Ethnicity, Wealth, and Power in Colonial Makassar: A Historiographical Reconsideration,” in The Indonesian City: Studies in Urban Development and Planning, ed. Peter J. M. Nas (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986), pp. 37–55.


18 According to the census of 1930, 42.93 percent of the pribumi population in Bandung had been born there while 14.4 percent had been born outside western Java, with the remainder being migrants from other parts of western Java. See Brand, The Struggle for a Higher Standard
Direct municipal involvement in the administration of *prabumi’s kampung* life was surprisingly minimal prior to the Japanese occupation. Village enclaves within the city and in the *desa-kota* regions outside the municipality were under the authority of a *lurah* (village head), who was assisted by a *jurutulis* (secretary), *lebe* (religious official), *kolot polite* (police agent), and *kepala selokan* (head of irrigation), and by heads of individual *kampungs*. These officials, who answered ultimately to the *bupati* (indigenous chief of the district), administered *kampungs* on a day-to-day basis.

There were some efforts on the part of the colonial government to bring the city and its *kampungs* under more direct bureaucratic rule. One realm where such efforts were evident was that of policing. The early twentieth century was a period when government officials were deeply concerned about crime levels and there were several attempts to modernize police departments. Bandung, along with Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya, was one of the few towns in the Indies to have its own modern police force. The force had a main headquarters, city-section headquarters, and a number of guard posts located at various points around the city. At the city headquarters, specialized divisions were set up for investigations, public surveillance, administration, and traffic policing. New technologies were employed that might be particularly useful for social control in urban areas, such as fingerprinting and photographic identification. Routine street patrols were conducted from the police posts, and these were overseen by agents from the sectional and city headquarters, who regularly inspected the posts to make sure patrols were taking place on schedule. In Bandung, this force answered to the assistant resident, and its upper echelon consisted almost entirely of Europeans. However, even this new system of policing did not ultimately penetrate very deeply into *prabumi kampungs*. The force was deployed primarily in European sections of the city, and patrols occurred almost exclusively along the main roads. While the advent of regular uniformed patrols did give the police greater visibility, *prabumi* areas continued to be policed by village agents whose main responsibilities were administering the local night watch and maintaining the *gardu* posts, where members of the night watch gathered. The agents answered to the village head rather than to the police bureaucracy. Thus, the modern police force only penetrated into the *prabumi* sections of the city as far as the main roads.

Where the municipal government did involve itself deeply in *kampung* life was in the domain of health and hygiene. In the nineteenth century the colonial government had started to work on developing methods for controlling the spread of disease.

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21 Frederick noted a similar phenomenon in Surabaya, where old people reported that the police just patrolled the asphalt around neighborhoods; residents thought of the police as a foreign presence. See William Hayward Frederick, “Indonesian Urban Society in Transition: Surabaya, 1926–1946” (PhD dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1978), cited in Bloembergen, “Between Public Safety and Political Control,” p. 14.
through vaccination, which in practical terms meant trying to vaccinate every last individual in a region. Up until then, it had never been necessary for the colonial state to identify and register individuals and to envision the population as a finite set of unique but comparable individuals (not even, for example, for the purposes of taxation and governance). But as scientists began to show how diseases spread, and how individuals’ everyday habits and living conditions affected the spread of disease, the colonial elite began to take more and more of an interest in trying to keep track of how individual members of the population lived and how they died, and then to make interventions to “improve” the welfare and health of the population as a whole.22

The discourse on hygiene had its origins in Europe, where it focused on the problems of poverty, dirt, and disease in the slums of industrial cities. When public-health issues were transported to the Indies context, city slums remained an object of concern, but there was less of a focus on the problems of industrialization and more on the problems associated with the habits and lifestyles of different racial groups, and with the health risks of living in a tropical climate. It was within the context of the discourse on hygiene that the city population as a whole, and the native kampungs in particular, became objects of colonial interest. It is notable in this regard that the first detailed accounts of kampung life in Javanese cities were those that appeared in the context of hygiene reports. Virtually all the instruments that we now rely on for knowing the city and its inhabitants—e.g., maps, census and statistical data, photographs—were first employed in the big cities of Java for the purposes of gathering data on health and hygiene. In the domain of hygiene, such data collection provided a scientific and evidentiary basis for justifying direct interventions by the colonial state in kampung life. As Joost Coté has shown, the discourse on hygiene asserted that resident Europeans’ health and welfare were ultimately dependent on overcoming problems of sanitation and disease in pribumi kampungs.23 By playing on Europeans’ fears for their own well-being, the discourse allowed urban elites, through their largely unfettered control of municipal governments, to assert an expansive, interventionist, and direct authority over the pribumi sections of cities.24 Whereas in the realm of political authority the central government made it clear that municipal governments “were not allowed to concern themselves with the kampung since that was seen as an intervention in the internal affairs of these ‘Indonesian authorities,’ [and thus] forbidden by law,”25 such was not the case with hygiene. Indeed, after a series of reports about the poor state of sanitation in urban slums and the risks this presented to the health of the entire city population, it had become commonplace, by 1920, for central-government officials to tour a “bad kampung” whenever they made a visit to a town.26

24 Ibid., p. 344.
Bandung represented something of a special case in the discourse on hygiene, as its highland climate was more temperate and thought to be healthier than other towns and cities on Java. As one hygiene official put it, “the worst kampung conditions in Bandung were like paradise compared to the coastal towns.” However, these conditions did not mean that the city government refrained from interventions to improve hygiene. Quite the contrary, in fact—the city’s elite wanted to turn Bandung into a prototype for what a modern tropical city could be. Making the city a beacon of cleanliness, orderliness, and healthfulness was one the main ways the municipal authorities sought to do this. Starting in 1920, the municipality began keeping a population register of the births and deaths of all inhabitants of the city, including “Natives” and “Chinese.” According to Brand, it was the only city in the Indies to do so (most kept such information only on Europeans). The municipal government also introduced a number of programs and ordinances aimed at improving hygiene conditions in the city. These included “kampung improvement” projects aimed at redesigning kampungs and dwellings to make them more hygienic and less susceptible to rat infestations; creating municipally regulated markets so as to eliminate street vending; introducing a waste-management system; opening new hospitals and care facilities; supervising and relocating cemeteries; and regulating slaughterhouses and food-production facilities. It is notable that all these projects were heavily oriented toward material infrastructure improvements rather than toward social welfare and economic support. It is also notable that when these efforts were focused on non-European parts of the city, as in the kampung improvement program, they took the form of a kind of retroactive urban planning. Such planning sought to reconfigure existing practices and environments to meet a new ideal of urban order and cleanliness rather than to establish a whole new living environment from scratch. The reason for this may have been that those who designed the programs had a lingering sense that “native” domains of urban life should remain more or less autonomous and that therefore they should not be eliminated or displaced, but simply “improved.”

In Cicadas, the two main remaining landmarks of the colonial period, other than the Great Post Road itself, are testimony to the importance of hygiene in transforming kampung life during the late-colonial period. One is the Saint Yusuf hospital, which was originally established by a Dutch pastor as a clinic for treating tuberculosis and soon grew into a full-fledged hospital. The other is the building that used to house the Cicadas market. This market, like other municipal markets in Bandung, was created as a means to centralize local commercial activity, subject the premises and trade to hygiene regulations, and ensure that the transactions were taxed.

Patterns of political authority in the kampungs of Bandung during the 1950s and 1960s do not appear to have changed very much from what they were before the revolution. From an administrative perspective, the main change was a deepening of bureaucratic authority through the creation of two additional layers of quasi-state officialdom (as described below) beneath that of the lurah: the head of the Roekoen

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28 Ibid., p. 227.
Kampoeng (RK, Village Association) and the head of the Roekoen Tetangga (RT, Neighborhood Association). This system was established during the Japanese Occupation and was modeled on the Japanese Tonari Gumi system, in which the supposed solidarity of small village communities was meant to provide social support and mobilization in the time of war against China. As applied in Indonesia, the RTs consisted of territorial groups of ten to twenty households that were under the authority of a head appointed by the members of the RT themselves. RKs consisted of a collection of several RTs and thus constituted a larger subsection of the village. Both groups were meant to hold monthly meetings of their members. According to Niessen, during the period of the Occupation, the RTs mainly functioned as a means for the state to mobilize people in cleaning operations and welfare activities, and to disseminate propaganda:

People who lived in the cities during the Japanese Occupation have reported about small offices of Ketoea Roekoen Tetangga that were built in every neighbourhood. From loudspeakers placed on top of these buildings music and announcements could be heard all day long.

The RK/RT system remained in place during the 1950s and the 1960s, but the actual RKs and RTs appear to have reverted to a more routine form of administrative activity. This is evident from Ismail’s late-1950s ethnographic study of Gang Warungmuntjang, a kampung in west Bandung. (This kampung would probably have been comparable to Cicadas since it, too, was located on the edge of the city along the Post Road, but in the opposite direction from the main square.) As Ismail describes it, the functions of the RT head in this period were various: he maintained records of births and deaths in the kampung as well as tracking the movement of people to and from the kampung; he provided official documentation for marriages, identity cards (kartu tanda penduduk, KTP), and burials, for which he received some small payments; and he mediated some disputes. He was also a member of the so-called Badan Keamanan Desa (Village Security Unit), which was under the authority of the lurah and was responsible for maintaining local security, working with the police to catch criminals, and performing night-watch duties. Under this system, RT heads collected a small monthly “ronda” fee (uang ronda; literally, neighborhood fee) from residents in their respective wards.

An interesting feature of Ismail’s account is that he makes it clear that the RT head of Gang Warungmuntjang was not necessarily the most important figure of authority in the kampung. Although the RT head was respected for his religiosity and experience, he was a person from the lower classes and did not have much actual clout. When there were problems in the kampung that he could not handle, he would

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32 Ibid., p. 17.


34 Ibid., pp. 51–54.
appeal to one of two people. The first would be a military man who could be counted on to deal with tough security problems, especially those involving weapons. The second would be a former policeman who was a skillful orator (pandai bicara) and had a reputation for possessing magical powers. As will be seen below, it was precisely these kinds of persons who would emerge as key figures within the informal authority structure in Cicadas in subsequent decades.

**CICADAS: NEGARA BELING**

In Cicadas, the idea that the slum could be a domain that stands outside the limits of modern state authority is expressed in the notion that Cicadas is a *negara beling*.

The Indonesian term “beling” literally means “shard of broken glass.” The term “negara” is the Indonesian term most frequently used to translate the English word “state,” but in this context “negara” is not synonymous with the term “state” as most English speakers understand it today. As Geertz noted in his analysis of nineteenth-century Bali, the term “negara” occupies a rather different semantic field than does “state.” In olden times, a town was defined by its position at the center of the realm and was itself centered around a palace, which was the seat of royal authority. In Bali, the term “negara” (a Sanskrit loan word that appears in many languages in the region) referred to all those things at once: palace, town, and realm. In nineteenth-century Bandung, this general understanding of negara was also evident, although in a rather more mundane form. The first known map of Bandung, dating back to the 1840s, refers to the then-small town as “Negorij Bandoeng” (negerij and negeri are words closely related to negara). However, in this context “negorij” signified realm in only a weak sense; moreover, Bandung had no royal palace as such. Off the main square there was a home for the resident (the highest European official in the region) and a residence for the *bupati*. Although the *bupati* was drawn from the indigenous aristocracy, or *menak*, he did not enjoy anything like the kind of spiritual and charismatic power associated with Balinese kings. Bandung was certainly a seat of state authority, but the authority was deeply dualistic and its potency rather limited.

The modern use of “negara” in reference to Cicadas is interesting partly because it does not refer to the city as a whole but just to a neighborhood. In the Balinese case described by Geertz, the *negara* was defined in opposition to village (*desa*), since although villages may have been part of the realm, they were the domains of commoners. Nowadays the village is not usually contrasted with state, but with city (*kota*). It is not entirely clear what the *negara* is set against in a semantic sense. In its common usage, the best candidates are probably society (*masyarakat*) and nation (*bangsa*). As in much recent social science, the idea of “state” often appears alongside “nation” (i.e., the nation-state) to indicate the distinct but conjoined aspects of a national society and its government. However, in the case of *negara beling*, this kind

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35 Some people say that Cicadas is called a *negara beling* because it houses so many *tukang beling*, people who collect broken glass and resell it (in the popular imagination, such people are often associated with illegal activities and the underworld). Others say it is because the area is dangerous, like broken glass. Both folk etymologies emphasize the criminal aspect of the neighborhood.


of association is not the relevant one. What the “negara” in negara beling brings to mind is not the society or nation, but the competing powers of other negaras, or, in this case, other neighborhoods. Insofar as we also understand it to be a rogues’ state, it also brings to mind the capital-N Negara: the modern Indonesian state whose supposed lack of authority in Cicadas makes the neighborhood appear as something of a state unto itself. Rather than the limits of state authority being imagined relative to “society,” they are imagined relative to another state—an outlaw state that exists within the territory of the modern state.

The idea of negara beling draws attention to an image of local authority that has been around in western Java for some time: a realm that takes shape around the leadership of a charismatic tough. As noted earlier, there are many names for such toughs, including jago, jeger, jawara, and preman. Writing about Bandung during the revolutionary period, John Smail describes what kind of power these figures had and the kind of social milieu that tended to produce them:

*Djago* literally means “fighting cock” and this expressive term conveys the essence of the type: he is boastful and pugnacious and carries a knife. The urban *djago*, particularly common in Djakarta, is a strong-arm man of a type familiar in the West and is not especially interesting. But cities are a comparatively recent phenomenon in Indonesia and the urban *djago* is historically a variation of a much more ancient rural type. [...]

[This type] is no more a simple rural criminal than the classical European bandit. The *djago* band is an accepted, though deviant, social institution; it has its justificatory myths and a collective mystique and is headed by a leader marked by strong charisma, though it is only parochial in scope. The individual *djago* characteristically carried an amulet (*djimat*) which usually conveyed invulnerability on him. He is often an adept at pentjat, a form of body control which, like related forms in the same East Asian family, such as jiu-jitsu in Japan and “boxing” in China, involves a great deal more than simple exercise or physical prowess.38

According to Ian Wilson, these kinds of figures have often emerged as leaders when there was a breakdown in law and order.39 At the end of Dutch rule, for instance, the assistant resident of Serang, D. H. Meyer, referred to large groups of *jawara* that had formed “a state within a state and paralyzed the village and local administration.”40 Smail,41 writing about the revolutionary struggles in Bandung that followed the defeat of Japan in World War II, described how the vacuum of state power in the city after Japan’s surrender was quickly filled by the emergence of “jago republics” in Bandung’s kampungs. These miniature zones of autonomy and sovereignty provided local inhabitants with some degree of protection from other

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jago republics and from the interventions of both the Japanese and Allied powers. In some cases, where the zone of sovereignty included warehouses, shops, factories, or markets, they also provided tough guys with control over valuable economic goods and resources. In some such jago republics, Smail notes, the criminal element often got the upper hand over the political element, as looting and scavenging became ends in themselves rather than means to pursue the revolutionary struggle. In these cases, such jago republics appear to approach what Derrida describes as “voyoucracy”: a regime consisting of an organized network of rascals, ruffians, thugs, and so on, which represents “a sort of competing power, a challenge to the power of the state, a criminal and transgressing sovereignty, […] a counter-sovereignty.”

In many respects, urban slum communities are the social spaces par excellence of voyoucracy. As Mike Davis points out, the first published definition of “slum,” from the year 1812, describes it as being synonymous with “racket” and “criminal trade.” It was only later that it came to refer to a more general setting of poor housing, overcrowding, poverty, and vice.

In Ismail’s account and in the accounts of Bandung’s jegers, one can get a sense of how the negara beling mythology played out in everyday kampung life in those years. Ismail describes a scene in which teenage boys hang out in the alleyway each night, playing their guitars and dreaming of the kind of romantic lives they were seeing in the movies. Other than that, the boys do not do much at all. I have heard a number of older jeger, all film buffs themselves, describe this period nostalgically in just those terms. In fact, some explain that they got into gang life or into crime precisely because they wanted to be like the cowboys they saw in the movies. This was a time when movies were all the rage in Bandung. In Cicadas, there were regular showings of movies in an outdoor cinema located in a nearby park (Taman Hiburan). Cinemas—both of the outdoor type and of the more fancy type located in the center of town—were one of the first places where jegers made their appearance in the public sphere, acting as calo (agents or scalpers) for tickets to shows, and sometimes demanding money outright from patrons.

In Bandung, there was a powerful, mutual influence between cinema-going culture and jeger culture that lasted at least until the 1970s. The main alternative term for jeger, one that tough guys use to describe what they themselves were like in the old days, is koboi (cowboy). The fact that they use this term—rather than jeger—to describe themselves suggests that it is closer to their fantasy of what their position was: that of a tough guy with a gang of loyal buddies. A more urban version of this self-image, also from Hollywood, can be seen in the photos such men have kept of themselves from their youths. Photos collected of men from Cicadas dating back to the early 1970s show carefully cultivated poses that are reminiscent of promotional

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42 Ibid., p. 89.
46 These cinemas are known as “misbar.” The joke about this name is that it is an acronym for “gerimis sedikit bubar” (it drizzles a little bit and people scatter).
47 This was true not just in Bandung but in other cities, too. An example from Jakarta can be found in Jérôme Tadie, “The Hidden Territories of Jakarta,” in *The Indonesian Town Revisited*, pp. 402–23.
In films like On the Waterfront and West Side Story. Some tough guys from Bandung even went on to become either the subject of gangster films or actors in such films. The most well-known example of the former in Bandung is Mat Peci, a gangster who used to hang out in Cicadas and eventually went on to become known for daring robberies. Eventually he killed a policeman in Bandung and was himself tracked down and killed, together with his henchmen. After his death, Mat Peci became the subject of a popular film, shot in Bandung, with Rahmat Hidayat in the leading role.

Informal Leaders in Cicadas

The extension of state administrative structures and governmental regimes into Bandung’s kampungs continued during the New Order. So, too, has the sense that the state is unable adequately to project its authority through these formal mechanisms alone. Nowhere is this more evident than in the practices and perceptions of low-echelon state officials, who are responsible for governing local areas on an everyday basis. In my research during the mid-1990s on precinct-level policing in Bandung, the limits of formal bureaucratic authority were quite striking. Despite the New Order government’s well-deserved reputation as an authoritarian, militaristic, and repressive regime, when it came to the policing of city streets and neighborhoods, the state was much lighter on the ground than one might have expected. Much of the day-to-day work of policing was conducted not by the police at all but by civilian organizations, gangs, and private businesses. The police themselves remained largely confined to the big streets, just as they had been during the colonial period. The limits of direct police authority were evident also in the perception, frequently expressed by precinct-level police officers I talked to, that officials could only get anything done if they worked together with local “authorities” from within their jurisdictions. To describe these potential collaborators, the police used the term “tokoh-tokoh” or the English term “informal leaders.” (Sometimes they inadvertently used the term “informant leaders,” which provides an indication of the kind of relationship they desired with their collaborators.) These were the first people the police would turn to when they needed to get witness testimony, catch criminals, provide protection to local businesses, prevent protests, or gather intelligence. Such leaders had a reputation for being plugged into local affairs and for being capable of resolving conflicts and imposing order on their communities. They included religious teachers (kyai), neighborhood elders, youth-group leaders, and local toughs. Such people might move in and out of formal positions of state power, but their authority derived at least in part from their ability to command the respect—and sometimes fear—of local residents.

Information about Mat Peci and Rahmat Hidayat is taken from an interview with Sumpena on February 14, 2006.

Mat Peci Pembunuh Berdarah Dingin. Interestingly, Hidayat was himself a figure in the gang world in Bandung.

While this is undoubtedly true for police work anywhere, the situation in Bandung was extreme in this regard. For example, there were many neighborhoods where the police would not venture, even when searching for a suspect, without first seeking approval and support from informal leaders at the local level.
In the area of Cicadas, local district authorities were also very knowledgeable about the informal leaders in the slum. In the early phase of our research, Ebo went to the Cikutra district office to determine whether it would be a suitable site for research. At the office he had a chance to sit down and chat with Pak Fachtudin, the secretary to the district head, who proceeded to provide a good overview of patterns of street-level authority in the portion of Cicadas where this research was focused:

Pak Fachtudin explained that there are organizations for football and for arts in that area. In fact, there is a dangdut music organization that is often invited to perform at wedding celebrations. According to Fachtudin, each RT has its own ronda, administered and paid for by residents. In the area of Asep Berlian street, there are several tokoh-tokoh, like Pak Nana, Pak Dudung, and Ujang Ompong. Most of them are from Garut. In the area of Toko Timur [a shop], there is a gathering of vegetable vendors. He says that people “don’t try anything” (jangan macem-macem) with them [the vendors]. Most of them are experts in martial arts (silat). In the old days there were places to train in the martial arts, like Gadja Putih [and] Salaka Domas. In that area there are also other organizations, like street vendors (PKL, pedagang kaki lima), Posyandu, [and] PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, Family Welfare Movement). When talking about Pak Dudung, Pak Fachtudin explained that he was among the “old cowboys” (koboi kolo); [Dudung] was never a leader of the area but was held in high respect (disegani). Pak Dudung often came to the district office, and when he spoke his voice was aggressive (keras), using [cuss words like] “stupid dog” (anjing goblog). Fachtudin explained that the area of Asep Berlian is indeed famous for its jawara and jeger. Those who come face to face with them will back down.51

While Pak Fachtudin would undoubtedly have been able to recite statistics about Cicadas and describe the organizational structure and membership of the district government, he clearly also had an eye for informal authority structures. In this respect, his manner of “seeing like a state”52 went beyond the modern bureaucratic logic of simplification and legibility, incorporating a more particularistic form of orally transmitted knowledge about the personal reputations of informal leaders at the local level. In relating his stories to Ebo, Fachtudin gave recognition to the importance of authority based on reputation and achievement. In doing so, he also talked up the reputations of particular informal leaders, thereby reinforcing their power.

Any attempt to venture into the world of reputations in order to trace their shifting dynamics is not without its hazards. The world of reputation is full of stories, and these stories are important, but often they are difficult to tie down with hard facts. The stories we heard in Cicadas frequently collapsed events into one another, since what mattered most to the storytellers was a string of powerful personal achievements (their own and others’), to the exclusion of all else. People who had once enjoyed renown but whose stars had faded were good at relating stories about their pasts, but we realized later that we had learned little about their situation in the present. Conversely, people who were at the height of their prowess

51 Eka Chandra, field notes, December 28, 2005.
either did not take an interest in being interviewed or were completely focused on the dramas unfolding in the present moment, showing a complete lack of interest in talking about their pasts. Nonetheless, it was striking how stable reputations were. The list of *tokoh-tokoh* provided by Pak Fachtudin did not exhaust the list of personages in that part of Cicadas, but all the names he mentioned kept appearing again and again. Within the realm of street-level authority, there was only a limited group of powerful leaders, and everyone who was in the know seemed to agree on who they were and most even agreed on the main outline of their life stories. Nonetheless, in most cases there is no textual corroboration for the life stories relayed below. Despite the intensity of their local fame, almost nobody from the older generations of leaders even achieved enough prominence at the city level to warrant mention in the main Bandung newspaper, *Pikiran Rakyat*.53

In what follows, I present the results of interviews with three generations of informal leaders. Nana Berlit, a man born in Cicadas in 1936 and who spent most of his life there, represents the first generation. Nana rose to prominence in the 1960s and probably enjoyed his greatest local authority during the 1970s and 1980s, when he headed a football club and a wrestling club with ties to the army and hired out tough-guy services to powerful businessmen. Two men, Sumpena and Suwarna, represent the next generation. Both were born in 1956 and got their start as Nana’s underlings. At the time of their interviews in 2006, Sumpena was the secretary of a neighborhood association in Cicadas, and Suwarna was a parking attendant at the nearby Matahari department store. Both remained prominent, but it was clear that their period of greatest influence had passed. The third generation is actually of the same age group as Sumpena and Suwarna, but represents a new generation of leadership with a style quite distinct from the tough-guy model of the first two. Ujang Saepuddin and Eman Suherman are good examples of this third generation. Both rose to prominence in the late-1990s as a result of their work in organizing workers in Cicadas’s informal sector, such as street vendors and motorcycle-taxi drivers. They have since become the leaders of the local branch of PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle).54

**NANA BERLIT**

Nana Berlit was born in 1936 in the Santo Yusuf hospital in Cicadas. As a child, he attended school at the Santo Yusuf school. In the period prior to the war, his father was one of the three main landowners in Cicadas, along with Haji Sahroni and Asep Berlian, both of whom have streets named after them. According to Nana, his father was a powerful figure at that time.

[Among those who used to hang out at the Cicadas Market] there were *delman* [horse carriage] drivers, horseshoe smiths, and carriage-wheel mechanics. Each was exceptional in his own way. The *silat* [self-defense] teachers gathered together under my father’s care. The Dutch police [*opas*] used to come by to

53 A fairly exhaustive search of stories about crime, youth groups, and policing in the period from 1972 to the present yielded only one mention of a member of this older generation.

54 Based on interviews conducted with Nana Berlit by Eka Chandra on March 17, 2007, and by the author on June 11, 2007. Direct quotes from this and subsequent interviews were translated from Sundanese to Indonesian by Eka Chandra and from Indonesian to English by the author.
check up on things [mengontrol] and they would ask, “How is the Cicadas area, secure?” And my father would say, “What is it that isn’t safe?” So [the police] acknowledged his authority [segan].

By the end of the war, however, Nana’s father had lost almost all of his land. In the early 1950s, Nana began taking classes in jujitsu and judo. This was a time in Bandung when martial arts clubs were sprouting up in a number of areas, and some of these clubs had ties to prominent people in the army and the police. After the death of his father, Nana went to Magelang to train to become an army officer. However, he ran away because he found the training, which included hazing, to be too demeaning and, as a result, he struck a superior. After pulling some strings with a relative in the military police so as to avoid punishment, he did short stints in the navy and the police in other parts of the country before ending up as a civilian employee of a cavalry division based in Bandung. He worked there until his retirement.

During the 1970s he formed the Dollar Group, whose members included youths from around the Cicadas market. Nana Berlit described the origins of the Dollar Group as follows:

The beginnings of the Dollar Group were like this; sometimes there were troubles in the area and, if there was too much friction, Bang!, it would explode. So we formed the Dollar Group … If there was a problem, people would come here to try to find a way to end it. Thank the Lord that the Dollar Group was not just a group of rioters, but was formed for the purposes of promoting arts and sports [such as football]. Thank the Lord that it was also partly able to calm down rioting, which served no purpose.\(^55\) The perceptions of outsiders were that we were violent [brutal],\(^56\) but it wasn’t really like that. Nah, precisely because of its brutality this group was feared and respected.

The ambiguity in what Nana says in these last two sentences—about whether the group was indeed violent or whether its real aim was to prevent violence—is telling. Was the group really a group of rioters, or was it formed as a means to quell potential disturbances by disgruntled youth by providing them with a less violent and less politically volatile outlet for their frustrations?

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\(^{55}\) Nana Berlit is probably referring here to a large, anti-Chinese riot that took place in Bandung in 1973. Known as the August 5th Affair, this riot was triggered by rumors that a Chinese youth had beaten to death a pedicab driver after the youth’s Volkswagen had been scratched by the pedicab in the street (the pedicab driver was not actually killed). In the ensuing riot, crowds of youths ransacked ethnic Chinese-owned shops, businesses, and homes throughout the city center. It was a huge riot, with some 1,520 houses, 4 factories, 130 cars, 175 motorcycles, and 111 bikes damaged or destroyed (Pikiran Rakyat, August 13, 1973). One of the areas that was hit hard by this rioting was Cicadas. While the government blamed remnants of the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party) for the disturbances, newspaper reports at the time suggest that some of the ransacking was initiated by elements in West Java’s Army Command, Siliwangi.

\(^{56}\) The term “brutal” may be from the Dutch “brutaal,” meaning fearless or offensively bold. In the Indonesian, it is often associated with adolescent behavior and carries the connotation of violence.
In the case of the Dollar Group, Nana is cagey. But he is absolutely clear about another organization he helped to found sometime later, known as Rahwana. Rahwana was formed under orders from an army garrison to secure Cicadas and East Bandung. The other two co-founders were military men. It was one of a few organizations in Cicadas formed during the 1970s that sought to attract and organize youths involved with drugs and gangs. (Another was a gang of pickpockets formed by Nana’s mystically inclined friend, Eman Suhada.) According to Nana, Rahwana was the entity that had the best relationships with people in the army and the police. It was centered on a martial arts school, which provided training, hosted tournaments, and put on performances. But the school was also a business that provided protection to local shops and factories, and, as its reputation grew, to clients in other parts of the city, too. It was lucrative work, but not all the profits went to Rahwana, since the group’s partners (presumably in the army and the police) also had to get their share.

Nana was at pains to explain that in cases where there was trouble, it was not political:

The disturbances did not have a political character; at most they involved individuals who had a territorial conflict. [Sometimes] there were disturbances with a public character, like groups of people throwing things at shops, but it wasn’t politicized. The people of Cicadas follow the way of cows. If someone sullies [menggores] Cicadas’s name, people will go out en masse by truck, bringing whatever weapons they have, to launch an assault. But now, thank the Lord, it is safe here, as long as I’m still around. Once there was an Ambonese or Papuan guy who tried to plant his flag, and the kids from here stabbed him and left him
for dead. He got what was coming to him. This is Cicadas land [lahan] and anyone who tries to colonize it will experience just what he did.

SUWARNA AND SUMPENA

Both Sumpena and Suwarna were among the kinds of youths that Nana brought into Rahwana and the Dollar Group. Suwarna grew up in Cicadas, right next door to Nana. Some of Suwarna’s earliest memories were from the time of G 30 S PKI (September 30th Movement), in 1965, which he remembered as a period of great hardship. If you wanted to eat or to buy fuel to cook with, Suwarna explained, you had to get a card from the RT and then you had to line up. There was no rice, so people ate food made from dried corn. By the 1970s, Suwarna recalled, he was often getting into trouble. This was a time when numerous gangs emerged throughout the city, and youths would launch attacks and counter-attacks on one another. Suwarna was involved in a number of these battles, including one that pitted him against members of Angkatan Muda Siliwangi (Siliwangi Youth Forces), a youth organization and protection racket with close ties to West Java’s military command. As a result of his fighting, Suwarna was captured by the police and held in confinement for two weeks. Upon his release, he spent time selling marijuana in the streets before taking over as one of the jegers who controlled the nearby Cicaheum bus terminal. He provided security at the terminal for nine years, during which time he studied a type of self-defense known as mempo. He also provided security for a number of businesses around Bandung, including a billiard hall, cinema, and bar. He would stay with each establishment for a year or two before being relocated to yet another business somewhere else, where he would be the unofficial leader.

I don’t mean to be arrogant, but at each place I got located to, I made it safe. No matter how brutal it had been, it would become secure. Once Lambada was safe, I was moved to Sukajadi, where sometimes the kids who made trouble were from the nearby army complex. I said to them they could fight me one at a time, if they dared, or they must stop causing trouble. I told them, “Even if the person being asked for a payment [jatah] is Chinese, you still have to work for it, provide some sort of help. If you only make demands on people and they give you something, but you don’t work for it, that means you are a jeger. I’m given money because I work for it.” That’s what I told them.

Suwarna’s story about the advice he gave these army kids reflects his ambivalence about his profession. During the late 1970s, a number of gangs in Bandung and in other cities in Indonesia sought to turn their gangs and protection rackets into legitimate businesses providing “security services,” and thereby to give legitimacy and public respectability to their activities. People like Suwarna, who grew up mostly in the streets and did not get much schooling, clearly desired such respectability. He wanted to have a job and not to be seen as a jeger. There may be other reasons, too, for his desire to distinguish himself from this category of person.

57 “To colonize it” means to take over the extortion rackets.
58 This section is based on (a) interviews conducted with Suwarna by Eka Chandra on April 7, 2006, and by the author on June 11, 2006; and (b) interviews with Sumpena conducted by Eka Chandra on February 7 and 14, 2006.
During the Petrus campaign of the mid 1980s, in which paramilitary squads killed large numbers of suspected *preman* and *jeger*, a number of people he knew were among those murdered. The campaign—which he referred to simply as the “mysterious time”—clearly left a strong impression on him, and he was thankful to have survived it. Furthermore, by the time we interviewed him in 2006, Suwarna had undergone something of a religious awakening. By his own account, he had remained “brutal” until 1999. In that year, he was asked by his boss to take up a new position as a parking attendant at the Matahari department store. He worked under a man called Pak Koswara. Pak Koswara had been brought in from a different department store to coordinate parking because the person in charge of parking at Matahari had been siphoning off money and the owner of Matahari wanted someone more reliable. Pak Koswara left a strong impression on Suwarna:

>[Pak Koswara] wasn’t like other people who always want money and who take anything extra they can get. In fact, when he was offered extra, he would refuse it. I was surprised there could be a person like that, a good person who didn’t make trouble [...]. He said to me] “Pak Kos is rich, Pak Suwarna will also be rich.” I was shocked. “Rich in your heart.” And thank the Lord, he invited me to meet someone, but I had to put away my weapon [clurit] first. I would often bring my weapon to the parking post. And then I met an old man who showed me how to pray [sholat] [...] and I have received [his teachings] from 1999 until today.

It is not uncommon for Bandungers with backgrounds like Suwarna’s to find religion as they grow older. Suwarna’s case is a little more extreme than most, since he experienced it almost as a conversion, but it follows a recognizable pattern. The embrace of religion allows these men to leave fighting behind while maintaining the respect of those around them. For Suwarna, however, this transition did not entirely free him from the kind of fear he must have experienced throughout his life. During the interview he repeatedly expressed his anxiety that the group he had joined might be thought of as “an organization” or an “heretical sect” (*aliran sesat*) of Islam and that it might get him into trouble with the authorities.

Whereas Suwarna remained quite marginal relative to state power, Sumpena was drawn more closely into the machinations of the security state. The son of Maman Sport, a close friend and contemporary of Nana Berlit who had also been active in Rahwana, Sumpena became involved in drugs and gang life during the 1970s. Through school he got to know a number of people who would eventually emerge as locally famous toughs in the city. Eventually, his father arranged for him to go work as a “bulldog” (bodyguard, debt collector, and enforcer) for Fery, one of Bandung’s most well-known businessmen, who owned large quantities of real estate, shoe and garment factories, and who reputedly operated a city-wide illegal lottery network with ticket outlets in a number of locations, including in Cicadas. Fery hired people from Rahwana to secure his business interests and to protect him from a number of gangs who had it in for him. While working for Fery, Sumpena got caught up in a turf war between Fery and Tommy Winata, both of whom had powerful backers in the Army and the Police, and he was arrested. His arresting officer offered him the chance to work as an intelligence agent, so he took a one-year training course and then worked as a spy for police intelligence for several years, in Bandung and beyond.
Intel agents have underlings known as spies [spion]. They are the ones who give the first information. This information is then traced, followed-up upon, and only then do the police launch an operation [penggerebegan]. Spies are given an honorarium, so for example if the operation has a yield of one, the spy will be given as much as half.

While working for the Police, Sumpena tracked a number of people who then became targets of the Petrus campaign, including two men in Cicadas. In return, he was given a salary and a monthly allotment of rice.

There used to be nobody here [in Cicadas] who knew I was an intelligence agent, but now there are some who know because I often talk. There are some who ask why I left, and I explain because I committed a grave sin [by spying, for being a snitch]. Now I really feel what it means to work in a job like that, without forgiveness. Allah can give forgiveness but humans cannot. But if I didn’t follow orders it was me that would have been in trouble.

By the time this interview, Sumpena had retreated from the kind of life he used to lead. He had destroyed all his membership cards for youth organizations, of which there were many, and although he kept up on the latest rumours regarding city politics, he did not himself participate much in it. He spent his time doing his duties as Secretary for the RW while earning money on the side as a shoemaker, a valuable skill he had acquired while working for Fery.

**Ujang Ompong and Pak Eman**

Ujang Ompong and Pak Eman, representing the third generation of informal leadership, were of the same age as Suwarna and Sumpena, but they had a noticeably different outlook and were much less interested in talking about the past. Both men were from the general vicinity of Cicadas, and both had made their livings as traders, Eman selling over-the-counter drugs on the street and Ujang minding a stall at the Cicadas market. Neither had achieved renown by virtue of his fighting prowess. Ujang had reportedly challenged Nana Berlit to a duel on one occasion, but had been given a thrashing. Neither man related any stories about gang involvement and crime.

As representatives of a new generation of local informal leaders, however, these men were very important. Ujang Ompong had for some fifteen years acted as the elected leader of an association of street vendors and former market vendors located along Jalan Ahmed Yani. This association had a fair amount of street power since its members had a reputation for challenging attempts by the city government to clean streets of vendors and had on some occasions been involved in riots directed against the public order police. When he was first elected, the group had only 20 members

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59 Although the Petrus campaign is usually said to have taken place in the mid-1980s, Petrus-like killings persisted long into the 1990s and may even continue today. It is likely that Sumpena is referring to Petrus-like killings that took place in the 1990s.

60 Based on interviews conducted by Eka Chandra with Ujang (Ompong) Saepuddin, April 7, 2006; and by the author with Eman Suherman, June 11, 2006.
but by the early-2000s it had amalgamated with neighboring groups and had grown to have as many as 120 members.

Along with Eman, Ujang Ompong was also active during the early 2000s in establishing an association of motorcycle taxis along Ahmed Yani Street and Cikutra Street. Initially, Ujang had sought to organize the pedicab drivers. To do so, he called together all the pedicab business people and distributed membership cards to drivers free of charge. But the organization never worked very well. As a result, Ujang, together with some others, started to organize the motorcycle-taxi drivers, most of whom own their own motorcycles. This association—known as CIP II, as mentioned above—was much more successful. In just a few years it had grown to include some 140 members.

Both Ujang Ompong and Eman had a similar manner of talking about these organizations, whereby they focused in quite some detail on their economic underpinnings, while making general claims about their political power. Over coffee at his kiosk on the sidewalk, with other vendors listening in, Eman described how the street vendor organization functions. Its territory, he explained, was strictly defined, bounded by Cikutra Street to the east and Toko Timur to the west. This territory was then divided up into vending spots, each of which was occupied by a card-carrying association member. Membership cards varied in price from the equivalent of about US$50 to US$100 (five to ten million rupiah), and if the cards were re-sold, then the association coordinators would get a cut of the resale value. In addition to having to purchase their membership cards, vendors also had to pay a daily fee of about US fifty cents (five thousand rupiah) for each twelve-hour period they worked. A portion of these funds was to cover routine payments to the local police, the local army command, and the RW. Such payments were meant to ensure that vendors would not be evicted or be subject to extortion on an individual basis. (The ojeg organization functioned in an almost identical manner.)

Eman then jovially went on to describe to us how elements in the state apparatus (aparat) had twice kidnapped him because they worried that Cicadas would “explode” during the Reformasi movement, and they expected him to prevent a riot from breaking out. He also described how the PDI-P had approached him about becoming a local leader of the party organization in Cicadas. Indeed, in the early 2000s, as Bandung’s economy began to recover from the financial crisis, both he and Ujang Ompong grew increasingly active in city politics. Ujang reportedly entered into a deal with a man seeking to organize street vendors across Bandung, Eceng Eno, who was active in PDI-P party politics. Both Ujang and Eman became local organizers of PDI-P in the Cicadas area, and in 2004 Ujang Ompong was elected head of RT01. Perhaps because of these maneuvers, the mayor of Bandung at the time, A. A. Tarmana, arranged for the street vendors’ association to receive 100 million rupiah (about US$10,000), ostensibly to help them create a cooperative. In 2005, Eman used the association to mobilize Cicadas street vendors in a demonstration supporting the new mayor’s attempts to “revitalize” the Cicadas market, a move that vendors with stalls inside the market opposed, fearing that they would be displaced.61 The Cicadas street-vendor association, some members of which had been displaced from the market the last time it had been relocated,

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supported the revitalization because Eman had received a promise that their members would get space in the new market. Ujang also lobbied to ensure that another group he was involved with would get the contract to salvage all the steel from the existing market once it was demolished.

**CONCLUSION**

The planet-of-slums hypothesis presents an image of a growing informal proletariat left to its own devices in the burgeoning slums of cities in the developing world. This hypothesis, tinged with fear and revolutionary hope, raises the question of what will happen to the informal proletariat in the coming decades. Will it be enfranchised by nation-states seeking to extend citizenship rights to this urban underclass? Or will groups with radical ideologies step into the breach where nation-states have failed and capture the hearts, minds, and bellies of this lumpen class?

An examination of the history of state power and informal leadership in the Bandung slum of Cicadas raises serious questions about the underlying assumptions of the planet-of-slums hypothesis. While there can be no doubt that Cicadas is the site of work and residence for a significant and probably growing population of people working in the informal sector, the state has in fact been very active in shaping the forms of authority under which this informal proletariat lives. Broadly speaking, these forms of authority can be characterized first of all as a progressive, albeit gradual, deepening of bureaucratic power. This bureaucratization began in the late-colonial period and continues to this day. However, this bureaucratization has always lagged behind a desire on the part of the authorities—both colonial and postcolonial—to tame and control slum areas. Their own lack of faith in the effectiveness of the bureaucratic apparatus led successive city governments to develop two main strategies to exert control over urban slums. On the one hand, they sought to exert control through techniques of modern governmentality, as was evident in the campaigns to make slums more healthful and hygienic. On the other hand, they sought to rule the slums indirectly through the cultivation of informal slum leaders.

In Cicadas, public faith in the authority of informal leaders, many of whom were of a criminal type, gave rise to an idea that the slum existed as a state unto itself: a voyoucracy or *negara beling*, which was beyond the reach of formal state authority, just like the planet-of-slums hypothesis might suggest. Yet an examination of the biographies of several of Cicadas’s *voyoux* presents us with a much more complicated picture of how this voyoucracy functions. From Nana and his underlings, Sumpena and Suwarna, we learned that the organized voyoucracy, in the form of Rahwana and its ilk, was far from being a spontaneous development. It was created under orders from the army as a means to suppress eruptions of social discontent and to allow the army and the police to indirectly “tax” the emergent capitalist class. At the same time, the voyoucracy served the interests of local capitalists by providing them with a means to protect businesses and enterprises in which the accumulation of capital was taking place. The story of political authority in Cicadas during the New Order was the story of the rise and eventual decline of a voyoucracy and little else. As the barely surviving remnants of the voyoucracy, Suwarna and Sumpena are indicative of its fate. Both left the life of the *voyoux* behind—Sumpena to become an informal laborer in the manufacturing industry, and Suwarna to work as a quiet parking-lot attendant seeking spiritual guidance from a charismatic sect that might be subject to state repression at any moment.
The new generation of informal leaders in Cicadas is no longer a voyoucracy of the sort typically expected to function in a *negara beling*. Their leadership does not depend on fighting skills, and they do not engage in much violence at all. Their authority derives not from their capacity to protect capital but from their capacity both to control and to organize the most politically volatile and publicly visible members of the informal proletariat: street workers. In marked contrast to what Davis describes for the slums of African cities, where charismatic religious leaders are increasingly important, what we observe in Bandung is the rise of people like Ujang Ompong and Eman Suherman, pragmatic and entrepreneurial political operators who broker and mediate relations between the state and the slum.62 In the context of a more open multiparty system, these leaders represent that which the political parties most desire: individuals who are able—or at least claim to be able—to mobilize swathes of the masses for political purposes. And to members of the informal proletariat, these leaders represent the prospect that a group of organized workers might be able to carve out a space for themselves that is free from the predations of government officials.63

It is hard not to be curious about whether these leaders will end up representing their constituents or whether they will simply become stooges of a state increasingly focused on making the city safe for big capital. Putting this question aside, however, one can still note an important shift in the politics of informal leadership in this Indonesian slum. Whereas the earlier generation of leaders, in close alliance with the New Order state, built its authority on the basis of fear and violence, the current generation of leaders builds its authority almost exclusively on appeals to narrowly defined economic interests.

62 It is notable that Suwarna did seek support from a spiritual leader. In some neighborhoods in Bandung, there is evidence that charismatic religious leaders are increasingly important, but not so in Cicadas.

63 The Janus face of these leaders may well be a function of the ambiguous character of the informal proletariat itself: part worker, part petty bourgeois.