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Precarious Workers in the Gig Economy: Neoliberalism and Its Discontents in Indonesia

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts

University of Melbourne

June 2021

Abstract

This research explores the expansion of a new form of precarious work tied to the gig economy and shaped by the imperatives of neoliberalism. It examines the effects on workers' identity and politics through a study of Indonesian workers in app-enabled transport services. It argues that in a context where standard employment relationships have never been the norm, while labour and broader society movements have been weak, workers' political struggles are not likely to be articulated through a discourse based on precarity. Instead, workers' autonomy and entrepreneurial identity are reiterated, thereby undermining forms of solidarity that could enable workers to address the structural underpinnings of precarious work, although without entirely eschewing collective organisation and mobilisation. The argument is constructed through a historical and comparative approach that synthesises insights from the works of Michele Foucault and a non-deterministic type of historical materialist analysis as espoused by Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff. Such a synthesis provides a way to address the tendency of prior studies to overlook contradictions inherent in the expansion of precarious work as a material consequence of neoliberal transformation, intertwined in a mutually reinforcing relationship with ideological permutations that allow for heterogeneity in subjective experiences.

Key words: gig economy, precarious work, neoliberalism, solidarity, entrepreneurial identity, Indonesia

Declaration

I certify that this thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: On: 1 June 2021

Acknowledgements

Writing a PhD thesis has been a journey to find my own voice. The journey would not have been completed without the help of numerous individuals, institutions and organisations.

I am grateful to the Australian Awards Scholarship and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne for all the financial support I received to complete my PhD. I am also grateful to the Asia Institute at the University of Melbourne, at which I was based as a doctoral student. I would like to express my gratitude to the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, which granted me the 4.5 year leave of absence I needed to complete my studies. I would also like to offer my thanks to Elite Editing for their copy-editing.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisors, who have helped the PhD thesis to materialise. They helped me to develop my own arguments and make sense of my data, through which I found new ways of seeing the world. I thank Prof. Vedi Hadiz for giving me the inspiration to do research on the subject of precarious work and for pushing me to go far beyond what I ever considered my own intellectual limits to be. I thank Prof. Andrew Rosser for challenging me with intriguing comments and questions that helped me to strengthen the key arguments of this PhD thesis. I thank Dr Claire Maree for her excellent role as chair of my supervisory panel. I would also like to thank Dr Dave McRae for the opportunity to present my ideas at Talking Indonesia and for his valuable feedback on chapters of the PhD thesis. I am indebted to Prof. Kevin Hewison, formerly of the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University, for helping me delve into the subject of precarious work before I started my PhD journey.

I am deeply grateful to numerous app-based transport drivers in Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi and Depok for sharing their stories and giving me access to their communities. I am also deeply grateful to other informants I cannot mention individually. I thank Nicky Chairani and Ghrawiraharto Wicaksono for their assistance during the two phases of the fieldwork.

I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues and friends, who helped me feel less alone during my work on my PhD, including during the toughest lockdown period in Melbourne in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I consider myself lucky to be part of a community at the Asia Institute. My thanks go to my fellow PhD students there: Victor Yim, Charmaine Toh, Asako Saito, Karin Yu Qiao, Qiuping Pan, Yao Song and Patrick Murphy. I especially thank Qianjin Zhang, Michaela Luschmann, Laurence Castillo, Behzad Zerehdaran, Simon Christie, Tarek Makhlouf, Jovana Marjanović, Luqman-nul Hakim and Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir. They helped to make the postgraduate office a more enjoyable place to work. Special thanks also go to Victoria Fanggide,

Sopia Lestari and Richard Fosset, with whom I spent a great deal of time in Melbourne. I would like to extend more special thanks to my colleagues and friends in Indonesia: Inaya Rakhmani, Andi Rahman Alamsyah, Imam Ardhianto and Robertus Robet. Their intellectual and emotional support helped me see my PhD thesis to completion.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my family in Indonesia. My biggest thanks go to my husband, Radityo Triatmojo, for being understanding and supporting me in so many ways throughout my academic journey. I would also like to thank my parents, Yetty Hertanto and Heka Hertanto, for their unwavering support.

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Glossary

AB5	California Assembly Bill 5
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADO	*Asosiasi Driver Online*; Association of Online Drivers
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor Committee for Industrial Organization
Aliando	*Aliansi Driver Online*; Driver Online Alliance
ASOOI	*Aspirasi Serikat Ojek Online Indonesia*; Aspiration of Indonesian Online Ojek Drivers' Union
ASABRI	*Asuransi Sosial Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*; Indonesian Armed Forces Social Insurance
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASKES	*Asuransi Kesehatan*; Health Insurance, the civil servants health insurance fund
ASKESOS	*Asuransi Kesejahteraan Sosial*; Social Welfare Insurance
BOS	*Bantuan Operasi Sekolah*; School Operational Assistance, a school grant designed to provide free access to primary and junior secondary schools
BPJS	*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial*; Social Security Organising Body, a public legal body that administers health and employment social security programs
BPJS *Kesehatan*	BPJS of Health, for health insurance
BPJS *Ketenagakerjaan*	BPJS of Employment, for workers' social security
BPS	*Badan Pusat Statistik*; Statistics Indonesia
BLSM	*Bantuan Langsung Sementara Masyarakat*; Temporary Direct Cash Assistance, an unconditional cash transfer program
CIO	Committee for Industrial Organization
Dishub DKI Jakarta	*Dinas Perhubungan DKI Jakarta*; Jakarta Transportation Agency
EOI	Export-oriented industrialisation
FAKTA	*Forum Warga Kota*; Jakarta Residents Forum
FDO	*Forum Driver Online*; Online Drivers Forum
FDOI	*Front Driver Online Indonesia*; Indonesian Online Driver Front
FGGB	*Forum Gabungan GrabBike Bersatu*; GrabBike United Forum
FKDOI	*Forum Komunikasi Driver Online*; Online Drivers Communication Forum
FPTOI	*Forum Peduli Transportasi Online*; Forum of Concerns on Online Transportation
FKTU	Federation of Korean Trade Unions
FSBSI	*Federasi Serikat Buruh Indonesia*; All-Indonesia Labour Federation
FSPMI	*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*; Indonesian Metal Workers' Union Federation
FSPSI	*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*; Federation of All-Indonesia Workers' Union
Forgab Roda 2	*Forum Gabungan Roda 02*; Forum of Consolidation of 2 Wheels
GARDA	*Gabungan Aksi Roda Dua*; United Actions of Two Wheelers
GBK	*Gelora Bung Karno*; National Stadium in Jakarta
Gerhana	*Gerakan Hantam Aplikasi Nakal*; Destroy Bad Application Movement

Gerindra Party	*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*; Great Indonesia Movement Party
GDP	Gross domestic product
GPS	Global positioning system
IDRB	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICW	International Corruption Watch
IDG	Independent Drivers Guild
ILM	*La France Insoumise*; a French small democratic socialist, left-wing populist political party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	Import substitution industrialisation
ISJ	*Institute Sosial Jakarta*; Institute of Jakarta Social
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
IWGB	Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain
J4J	Justice for Janitors
Jabodetabek	Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi
Jabotabek	Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi
JAMKESMAS	*Jaminan Kesehatan Masyarakat*; Community Health Insurance, a health service waiver fee program for the poor and near poor
JAMSOSTEK	*Jaminan Sosial Tenaga Kerja*; Workers Social Insurance
JPC	Japanese Communist Party
KAJS	*Komite Aksi Jaminan Sosial*; Action Committee for Social Security
KATO	*Komite Aksi Transportasi Online*; National Committee of Online Transportation
KHM	*Kebutuhan Hidup Minimum*; Index of Minimum Physical Needs
KHL	*Kebutuhan Hidup Layak*; Regional Decent Standard of Living
KPU	*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*; General Elections Commission
KSPI	*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*; Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions
Korwil Jaktim	*Korwil Jaktim*; Coordination of East Jakarta Region, an app-based transport drivers' umbrella organisation
KPK	*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*; Corruption Eradication Commission
LBH Jakarta	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta*; Jakarta Legal Aid Institute
Machinist NY	International Association of the Machinist and Aerospace Workers in New York
Monster	*Mobil Online Sarana Transportasi Ekonomis Rakyat*; Online Car Cost-Effective Mode of Transportation, an app-based transport drivers' community
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NYTWA	New York Taxi Workers Alliance
NGO	Non-government organisation
NIEs	Newly industrialised economies
Oraski	*Organisasi Angkutan Sewa Khusus Indonesia*; Special Car Rental Service Organisation
Organda	*Organisasi Pengusaha Angkutan Darat*; Transportation Business Organisation
PAS	*Paguyuban Angkutan Sewa*; Association of Rental Transportation

P2BY	*Persatuan Pengemudi Becak Prawirotaman* Yogyakarta; Yogyakarta Prawirotaman Pedicab Driver Association
PPIR	*Persatuan Purnawirawan Indonesia Raya*; Association of Retired Military Officers of Great Indonesia
PPOIR	*Persatuan Pengemudi Online Indonesia Raya*; Association of Online Drivers of Great Indonesia
Pertamina	*Perusahaan Pertambangan Minyak dan Gas Bumi Negara*; State Oil and Natural Gas Mining Company
PKI	*Partai Komunis Indonesia*; Communist Party of Indonesia
PNPM	*Program National Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*; National Community Empowerment Program
RASKIN	*Beras Miskin*; Poor Rice, a program of food subsidies that enabled rice to be purchased at subsidised prices
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SER	Standard employment relationship
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SPDT-FSPMI	*Serikat Pekerja Dirgantara dan Transportasi*—Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia; Aerospace and Transportation Workers Union of FPSMI
SPSI	*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*; All-Indonesia Workers' Union
SPI	Social Protection Index
TASPEN	*Tabungan dan Asuransi Pegawai Negeri*; Civil Servants Saving and Insurance, the civil servants pension fund
TEKAB	*Tim Khusus Anti Begal*; Special Anti-Robbery Team, an app-based transport drivers' association
Tiber	*Timur Bersatu*; East Jakarta United, an app-based transport drivers' umbrella organisation
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UGB	*Uber Gandaria (Ke) Bayoran)*, an app-based transport drivers' community
UPC	Urban Poor Consortium
URC	URC (*Unit Reaksi Cepat*; Quick Reaction Unit), a section in app-based drivers' communities that serves as a point of contact concerning emergency situations
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for Aid Development
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter 1:

Introduction

The Uberisation of Work

The last decade has witnessed the emergence of the 'gig economy', involving new businesses that rely on temporary and flexible workforces to deliver various services, from transport to cleaning, and running errands for customers who order via digital apps (Friedman 2014; De Stefano 2016a; Aloisi 2016). The most well-known app for on-demand work[1] associated with gig-style employment is without doubt Uber, which was launched in San Francisco after the 2008–2009 global financial crisis to match drivers with passengers. Expanding internationally, Uber became so prominent that the neologism 'to Uberise' is now a verb meaning 'to change the market for a service by introducing a different way of buying and using it, especially using mobile technology' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 4). Beyond the transport service, Uber has expanded to ventures such as food and package delivery, couriering and freight transport. Inspired by the success of Uber, two companies, Grab and Gojek, created apps similar to that pioneered in the United States (US), offering a wide array of services from transport and delivery to grocery shopping. They both operate in Indonesia and several other South-East Asian countries.[2]

The emergence of the gig economy signifies a global trend in the rise in precarious work—insecure and uncertain employment that provides 'limited economic and social benefits' and 'has limited statutory entitlements provided by labour laws, regulatory protection, and labour rights' (Kalleberg 2018, 15). Precarious work stands in contrast to 'traditional' employer–employee arrangements, where jobs involve an ongoing relationship with a single employer; and confer a comprehensive employer-provided benefits and workplace protections (Dokko, Mumford and Schanzenbach 2015). This form of work has been present throughout the history of capitalism, though becoming less prevalent in the post-World War II welfare states of Western Europe and North America, and later, in the rapidly industrialising countries of East Asia, where more stable and permanent work patterns had become the norm. Nonetheless, the neoliberalisation of the world economy since the 1970s, which allows for the intensification of

[1] According to De Stefano (2016b, 473–75), work in the gig economy constitutes 'crowd work' and 'work on demand'. In crowd work, digital platforms are used to connect an infinite number of firms and workers, allowing them to connect on a global basis. In work on demand, a single user firm utilises a digital platform to match workers with demands for various services.

[2] Gojek's services can be found in Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines (Okun 2019), while Grab operates in these countries as well as Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar.

globalised large-scale capital accumulation, has induced various categories and forms of precarious work on a global scale.

Further, although the gig economy could be considered 'old wine in a new bottle', its emergence and spread has been analysed 'in terms of technological advancement that have led to the automation of certain functions and the coming together of information technology and telecommunication technologies' (De Ruyter and Brown 2019, 1). It is true that the kind of work offered in the gig economy—which is 'casual and non-permanent', has 'variable hours and little job security', involves 'payment on a piece-work basis' and lacks 'any options for career development'—can be non-digitally mediated (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 20). However, the use of digital technology transforms existing work practices by making it possible to 'bypass rules, standards and traditions that have protected working standards' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 24). It also allows for more effective and efficient organisation of fragmented work among a large number of workers who are geographically scattered. The gig economy, therefore, creates new work environments that emphasise individualised and atomised work rather than workplace collectives.

This study focuses on the transformation of existing work practices that accompanies the emergence of transport and delivery services in the gig economy, known in Indonesia as online transport, which consists of the online taxi and *ojek* (motorcycle taxi). This study especially concerns itself with contradictions in workers' subjective experiences, identity and organising propensity. The expansion of precarious work, which transfers the risks of work from business and the government to employees, is contributing to acceleration of the individualisation of working experiences and the personalisation of social problems. This transformation poses a threat to workplace solidarity by reiterating workers' entrepreneurial identity and intensifying workforce atomisation. This undermines the formation of a common workers' identity and collective organisations. Nonetheless, collective organisations that challenge and improve conditions of work may still emerge from those engaged in precarious work across different sectors, including in the gig economy (see Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison 2015b; Greenhouse 2016; Webster 2016; Kalleberg 2018).

At the heart of this study is the problematisation of the idea of self-entrepeneurship and how it obstructs the development of forms of resistance to neoliberal structures that underpin contemporary precarity. Precarity has become one of the most pressing issues to be addressed amid the transformation of work in the contemporary world. These issues have been underlined by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has placed precarious workers in ever-more vulnerable

positions. These workers are typically unprotected by unemployment benefits, and are less likely to have the option of working from home, while often being unable to practice social distancing and Covid-19 protocols (Ravenelle 2021, Kowalski and Janko 2021). This study provides insights on continuing constraints to collective organisations in the gig economy, which have only been amplified by the pandemic.

It addresses the following questions. How do workers come to celebrate entrepreneurialism as a way of life and how does the process relate to the accelerated individualisation of work practices and the intensified personalisation of social problems? How can one explain the development of new forms of collective organisation among workers amid the constitution of the entrepreneurial identity and how can one better understand their prospects and limitations? How does the experience of these workers in Indonesia—where stable employment patterns were never the norm and workers' collective organising was historically hindered—differ from others and what does it say about precarisation under the pressures of neoliberalism? In what ways have the Indonesian experience been partly shaped by a context characterised by pressures for greater neoliberalisation of the economy as well as more than two decades of post-authoritarianism?

Precarious Work: Workers' Subjective Experiences and Political Economy Problems

It is important to consider transformation in the world of work in the Indonesian context as part of the dynamics of the broader international political economy. This means paying a great deal of attention to the manifestation of precarious work in different social and historical contexts. As argued by Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison (2015a, 1), in advanced industrialised countries in the West and East Asia, the expansion of precarious work indicates 'a departure from a more stable and permanent work patterns that marked their transition to "modern" industrial societies'. In South-East Asia, including in Indonesia, in contrast, 'work in the "modern" sector has long been precarious, because of the growth of the informal economy in these countries as workers have moved out of the pervasive agricultural sector' and 'unstable and insecure employment practices have also spread to the formal industrial and service sectors' in these countries (Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison 2015a, 1).

This being the case, the concept of precarious work may seem more useful for Europe, the US and the more developed countries in East Asia, and less relevant for developing economies including those in South-East Asia. However, as asserted by Kalleberg (2018, 14), even in developing economies, 'being locked into precarious work, with little opportunity to obtain

better and more secure work can be viewed as a loss, in this case, for the chance to obtain the benefits of modernization and development'. With precarious work becoming more prevalent, what is also important is to acknowledge that the 'the West is more likely to follow the Rest than the other way around' (Breman and Van der Linden 2014, 937). As such, some of the foremost thinkers on issues of work use the concept of precarity to describe 'a lack of predictability and security' that characterises 'a new phase of capitalism' in the West (Kalleberg 2018, 16).

Kalleberg (2018, 16) proposes that precarity results from a confluence of forces such as globalisation and rapid technological advances, as well as political and economic policies created under neoliberalism, which is 'characterised by privatization, deregulation (and re-regulation) of markets' and a decline in 'the power of labour relative to capital' (Kalleberg 2018, 16). Beck (1992, 2000) refers to precarity as one of the main features of modern society. Beck (2000) uses the metaphor 'Brazilianization of the West' to describe a condition whereby a more stable and secure pattern of employment is increasingly being replaced by precarious jobs. In his vision, the trend in the world of work in the West will shift towards the pattern that exists in developing economies, typified by a high prevalence of informality (Beck 2000). The change represents a transformation from the first modernity—institutionalised in postwar Europe through full employment, the welfare state and the exploitation of nature—to the second modernity, which is typified by the growing individualisation of work and social inequalities, along with the ecological crisis.

Although the recent proliferation of precarious work in both developed and developing countries is tied to the globalisation of the economy over many decades, precarious work has distinct features in specific countries. Therefore, this study focuses on the manifestation of precarious work and workers' responses to it in the Indonesian context, taking into consideration the different trajectories of other countries. Other studies instead investigate multiple countries that represent different models of capitalism (Kalleberg 2018). This allows for a broadly comparative investigation on the expansion of precarious work and its consequences, but usually without delving deeply into the features that are distinctive for specific countries. Others focus on an individual country or even occupation; while strongly suggesting that precarity is experienced in unique ways (Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison 2015b; Herod and Lambert 2016; Lazar and Sanchez 2019), such studies may lose sight of how globally relevant macro-level structures affect the processes they are investigating. To date, the approach employed here—that of deep investigation into a specific country, but equipped with broad

theoretical and comparative concerns to illuminate its trajectory—remains less commonly taken.

Also important is consideration of contradictory forces simultaneously at work in Indonesia that form the basis for heterogeneity in workers' subjective experience. These contradictory forces have profound effects on the formation of workers' identity, their organising propensity and politics. A focus on labour politics is crucial because 'the precarisation of labour challenges many existing understandings about the nature of class and political struggle' (Lazar and Sanchez 2019, 4). One of the most important commentary on labour politics in an age of precarity comes from Standing (2011), who argues that neoliberalism created 'the precariat'—an emerging class with none of the social contracts of the working class, whereby security is provided in exchange for subordination. For Standing, the precariat is a 'class in the making' (Standing 2011, 8): there is a good chance that its members will unite under a shared identity and challenge the structural underpinning of their precarity, although they are currently fragmented and prone to be attracted by populist politicians and neo-fascist messages (Standing 2011, 29).

Standing's argument has been criticised theoretically and for neglecting the North–South divide (Bailey 2012; Breman 2013; Munck 2013; Allen 2014). Nonetheless, Standing's work has inspired empirical research on precarious workers' collective organisations to challenge and improve their working conditions (Ogawa 2013; Herod and Lambert 2016; Lazar and Sanchez 2019). On that note, Lazar and Sanchez (2019, 3), assert that 'precarious workers are not always anomic and lacking in work-based political identity' (see Standing 2011), but nor are they straightforwardly a 'class in the making'. Other analysts have examined differences in countries' social, political and economic institutions, and their effect on the experience of precarious work (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015; Kalleberg 2018). They too share Standing's assertion that the negative effect of precarious work has produced protest movements that may become larger. Further, some analysts have examined the emergence of collective organisations in the gig economy in specific national contexts (Webster 2016; Greenhouse 2017), including in Indonesia (Ford and Honan 2016, 2017, 2019; Nastiti 2017b; Frey 2020; Panimbang et al. 2020; Panimbang 2021).

The problem with these studies is that they tend to underexplore contradictions that simultaneously limit and enable the formation of a shared identity and the predisposition of workers to organise, bargain collectively and take industrial action. In the gig economy, the absence of physical workplaces and the digitisation of work practices allows for the atomisation and dispersion of labour. This workplace arrangement intensifies the effects of precarious work

in undermining the formation of a shared identity and challenges attempts to form collective organisations. However, the insecure nature of such work conditions encourages collective organising among precarious workers in the gig economy, in that it induces mutual assistance in the navigation of day-to-day precarity and—from time to time—protests against poor working conditions. Simultaneously, though, the individualisation of work practices in the gig economy interferes with the formation of a shared identity among these workers.

Another problem with these studies is that they tend to underexplore the effects of specific political and economic contradictions on the process of identity formation and collective organisation. In Indonesia, the unravelling of authoritarianism means that society-based movements, including labour, have more freedom nowadays to use democratic space to further their own interests. However, labour and broader societal movements continue to struggle to break away from the legacy of decades-long repression under authoritarianism; and they must navigate a political environment dominated by predatory alliances between political and business elites established during the previous period. Attempts at collective organisation among precarious workers in the gig economy occur in a context in which labour and broader societal movements have been historically weak and ineffective. In addition, as stable and permanent work patterns were never the norm in Indonesia, generations of workers have been acclimatised to life-long individual working experiences. These all result in individualised forms of coping with work-related problems and novel, if ineffective, modes of collective organisation among workers.

Taking a historical and comparative approach, elaborated in more detail in Chapter 2, this thesis proposes the following arguments:

1. In Indonesia, a new form of precarious work has been manifested in a context where a more stable and permanent model of work has never been the norm, and broader social movements, including those relating to labour, have been weak. These all profoundly affect the ways in which those in the gig economy experience precarious work, as well as their responses to it.
2. In Indonesia, the seeds for this new form of precarious work—which is extensively used in the formal sector of the economy to minimise labour costs—had already been sown in the initial period of rapid industrialisation during New Order authoritarianism (1966–1998). However, the subsequent neoliberalisation of the economy, along with large-scale capital accumulation and global economic integration, facilitated the further development of the new form of precarious work in the formal economy.

3. The rise of the gig economy has ultimately been responsible for the rapid expansion of this new form of precarious work. In Indonesia, the important role of the gig economy is in institutionalising earlier forms of precarious work in the pervasive informal sector and ensuring that they are extensively deployed in the formal sector.
4. All these factors contribute to contradictions in workers' subjective experiences. Degrading working conditions in the gig economy encourages various forms of collective organisation. At the same time, though, the manufacture of entrepreneurial identity—which accustoms workers to their role as the bearers of most risk—interferes with the formation of the sort of solidarity that could enable workers to collectively address the structural underpinnings of their precarity. Because of this, it is less likely that workers' political struggles can be articulated through a precarity-based discourse.

Overview of the Thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Each chapter is structured to elaborate on the above arguments about the changes in the world of work and the consequences for workers' consciousness, identity, organisation and politics. The arguments are examined through the specific case of the emerging online transport industry, as part of the gig economy, in the Indonesian context.

The next chapter describes the theoretical foundations for exploring the recent expansion in precarious work and workers' responses to it, which are used to examine the rising gig economy in Indonesia in the chapters that follow. The chapter develops a historical and comparative approach that synthesises insights from the work of such disparate scholars as Michele Foucault, and the likes of Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff. It draws insights from the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, which considers the deployment of a variety of interventions, by various parties, including companies and state agencies, to shape individual behaviour according to neoliberal principles (Li 2007; Liow 2012; Lorenzini 2018). Borrowing from less deterministic Marxist analyses, such as those by Resnick and Wolff, it draws attention to historical trajectories that condition the expansion of precarious work under neoliberalism, as well as the ways in which it has been normalised and resisted. The chapter uses history to examine consent to and compliance with neoliberal ideologies in contemporary workplaces. History is also used to illuminate subjectivity as the terrain of struggle, allowing for resistance at the individual and collective levels. It conducts a dialogue too with the influential work on neoliberal capitalism

and precarity by Standing (2011) as well as by scholars such as Kalleberg (2018) and Hewison (see Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison 2015).

As explored in Chapter 2, studies that have been influenced by the Foucauldian framework tend to underexplore the problem of uneven capitalist development across political economies. In contrast, this study aims to illuminate the heterogeneity in workers' subjective experience, which is linked to differences in the structure of the labour market and the relationship between labour/state/capital across different countries. This is where the work of Resnick and Wolff (2006, 2010)—who offer a non-deterministic type of historical materialist analysis—is useful. Resnick and Wolff (2006, 2010) analyse economic processes as being in a constitutive relationship with other societal, political and cultural arrangements. This inspires an approach that examines political, economic, social and cultural processes that condition workers' consent and resistance to precarious work, as taking place within interactive and constitutive relationships; their mutually reinforcing nature may result in significant contradictions. This study suggests that this sort of historical and comparative understanding allows for exploration of diverse processes that shape the experiences of Indonesian workers as part of the international political economy landscape.

The approach developed in this study emphasises the contradictory forces linked to the formation of entrepreneurial identity. Drawing insights from Foucault (2009), the study refers to entrepreneurial identity as being typified by workers' acceptance of their precarity. Further, it delves into the constitution of the entrepreneurial identity as an interference in the formation of solidarity and collective identity. In doing so, the study explores differences in workers' responses to the expansion of precarious work amid the neoliberalisation of the economy in different contexts. In the advanced economies of the West and of East Asia, stable employment patterns used to be the norm, and union and broader societal movements were stronger, as mentioned earlier. Precarious work has thus been utilised as a discursive strategy in amorphous, formal civic organisation–led and union-centred movements. In South-East Asia, precarious work has been much more the norm, however, and unions and broader societal movements have been historically less effective. While precarious work in the region has been overtly manifested as a problem to be addressed mostly by unions, these have held little sway across broader society and have had difficulty in developing discursive challenges to the acceptance of precarity that resonate with the workers involved.

Chapter 3 explores the manifestation of the new form of precarious work in Indonesia, in relation to the neoliberalisation of the economy, and its consequences for worker

consciousness, identity, organisation and politics. The chapter traces the start of the development of the new precarity in the 'modern' sector of urban employment and the advent of rapid industrialisation that began in the 1960s. Since this time, Indonesia's economy has gradually become more incorporated into the mechanics of global capitalism, particularly following the advent of neoliberal hegemony. It is significant that the new form of precarious work is distinct from the older one, which had expanded in a pre-industrial economy. The chapter examines some developments that have conditioned the normalisation of the new form of precarious work and limited workers' collective resistance, under the New Order authoritarian government (1966–1998) and after the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis. These include the inaccessibility of welfare benefits, the development of a vast informal economy in urban and peri-urban settings, and ineffective attempts to mobilise these workers, which have sometimes involved the efforts of unions as well as non-government organisations (NGOs).

A central theme discussed in Chapter 3 is workers' experiences of living in the new age of precarity in urban and peri-urban settings. The new precarity is expanding today through the casualisation of the formal sector, facilitated by the Indonesian state, as exemplified most recently by the passing of the controversial omnibus bill on job creation during the height of the pandemic. Chapter 4 follows by discussing the important role of the emerging online transport service, as part of the gig economy, in furthering the expansion of the new form of precarious work. The discussion in Chapter 3 provides the historical background for the development of consent to and resistance against the new form of precarious work, which is practised, most notably, in the gig economy. Chapter 4 again follows this by examining the way in which the gig economy model institutionalises the earlier form of precarious work in the pervasive informal sector—in particular, in the *ojek* service—thereby facilitating its extension into the formal sector. In doing so, the chapter compares managerial control within the gig economy model with that in taxi and *ojek* services.

Chapter 4 also examines contradictions in workers' experiences of work and in their self-identities, which are created by the exercise of distinct managerial control in the gig economy. The chapter delves into the process that conditions and constitutes the entrepreneurial identity in an employment relationship within the gig economy: first, through the classification of workers as partners and micro-entrepreneurs, instead of employees of the companies; and second, through digitally mediated managerial control over the way work is done. These all condition a sense of greater freedom, autonomy and flexibility among workers, thus helping to boost their propensity to self-regulate themselves to work hard, in alignment with corporate

goals to extract their labour at minimal cost. At the other end of the spectrum, however, degrading working conditions resulting from increased competition among drivers, decreasing fares, changing bonus and incentive mechanisms, as well as penalties for infringing on the system, fuel a sense of discontentment among workers.

The contradictions in workers' subjective experiences, identity and organising propensity become the main subject of discussion in the subsequent chapters. Chapter 5 investigates workers' entrepreneurial aspirations, which contribute to the normalisation of the new form of precarious work, as practised in the online transport service. It examines workers' personal biographies of moving in and out precarious work, where welfare benefits have been largely unreliable, thus affirming entrepreneurial aspirations. Such aspirations acclimatise workers to develop individualised strategies to cope, providing the conditions for the constitution of the entrepreneurial identity. They also condition hostility towards collective organisations, in a context where collective bargaining associated with unionism has been absent from the working life of most workers. Further, the chapter deals with elements of resistance, which occur amid the constitution of the entrepreneurial identity. It investigates workers' propensity to individually resist managerial control by 'gaming', 'switching' and 'resisting' the system, but without fundamentally challenging the normalisation of precarious work.

Chapter 6 investigates tensions in various forms of collectives established by workers in the online transport service. It points to the fragility of worker solidarity, attributable to an inability to utilise precarious work as a discursive strategy that frames workers' political actions. The chapter considers the operation of worker communities in redistributing resources gathered by their members to provide support for one another. In doing so, the communities instil individualisation in a collectively experienced situation, thus conditioning workers' acceptance of their role as active participants in a system that reduces corporate risks, while shifting these to workers. The chapter also observes that some associations act in ways that are similar to labour unions. While the gig economy denies workers the right to collective bargaining, associations have been the force behind protests and strikes against poor working conditions. Nonetheless, the chapter investigates how individualising mechanisms that operate in workers' communities often challenge the development of the kind of solidarity that might sustain a more coherently organised movement against the sort of precarity that benefits corporations and that is often insulated by state policy.

The last chapter discusses the difficulties experienced by worker organisations in app-based transport and delivery services in addressing collective identity problems and challenging the

instilment of the entrepreneurial identity. The chapter points to these difficulties by analysing the link between workers' workplace-based politics and the broader context in which they are embedded. A theme explored in this chapter is worker organisations' weak bargaining power vis-à-vis firms and the government, as seen in struggles to influence regulations on app-based transport and delivery services. Another theme explored in the chapter is the difficulties faced by worker organisations in taking advantage of opportunities from democratic electoral politics, despite these often becoming the target of mass mobilisation strategies by competing candidates aiming to generate support and votes, in an often vibrant but chaotic post-authoritarian political landscape.

The concluding chapter summarises the main findings of the thesis on the processes of identity formation under neoliberal imperatives and workers' attempts to resist it, reflecting on workers' political responses to the shock of Covid-19 pandemic. The discussion is situated within the distinct historical trajectory of Indonesia, where stable and permanent work patterns were never the norm and working class and broader societal movements have been weak. It reflects on how the trajectory of new precarity affects the course of contemporary workplace and political struggles. The concluding chapter points to future research problems, considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in accentuating the effects of precarious working and living conditions.

Methodology

The study uses qualitative methods and specifically employs the orientational qualitative inquiry approach, which is understood as research guided by a certain theoretical perspective (Patton 1980, 129; Kincheloe and McLaren 2005, 304). As such, the study follows the tradition of critical theory and research by utilising an historical and comparative approach to devise research questions, conduct fieldwork, analyse data and develop arguments. The study involves a historical analysis as it analyses changes in the world of work, and workers' responses to them, as being constructed historically in relation to the operations of power. Meanwhile, the comparative aspect of the study illuminates the variability in precarious work and its consequences in different contexts. It helps to understand the expansion of the gig economy in Indonesia, as observable in the specific case of the emerging online transport service, as part of the international political economy landscape.

This study applies case study as a research strategy, focusing on precarious work arrangements as practised by two major players in the app-based transport service in South-East Asia, namely

Gojek and Grab. Although Uber entered the Jakarta market in 2014, it left South-East Asia in 2018 after selling its business to Grab (Jenkins 2016; Hamza 2018). Having established its service in Indonesia in 2014, Grab currently operates in seven other countries in South-East Asia (Grab 2020f). Meanwhile, Gojek, established in Indonesia in 2010, launched its apps in 2015 and began expanding to other countries in South-East Asia in 2018 (Iskandar 2018). In Indonesia, Gojek and Grab are estimated to have each recruited around one million drivers throughout the country (Paskalis 2018; Pebrianto 2018). Although Gojek and Grab have since been joined by other players (e.g. BlueJek, LadyJek, Bitcar and Anterin), their competitors have ceased to operate because of a lack of capital or funding (Kresna 2017).

Gojek's and Grab's services have visibly impacted Indonesia's biggest cities since their launching. Among the most important cities in Indonesia are Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, and its surrounding urban and peri-urban localities, which include Bogor, Tangerang, Depok and Bekasi. As outlined in Chapter 3, those regions—broadly conceived—have been the major destination for rural–urban migration since the 1980s. Fieldwork for this study was therefore conducted in the region, where the signature green helmets of Gojek's and Grab's online *ojek* service are worn everywhere by drivers roaming vast networks of streets and back alleys. An array of protests and strikes to improve working conditions that involved those who drive with Gojek's and Grab's apps have taken place in the region (Budiari and Amirio 2016; Wijaya 2016). Fieldwork was conducted in two periods: June 2018–January 2019 and December 2019–January 2020. A plan for another brief round of fieldwork was cancelled because of Covid-19-associated travel restrictions.

During the two phases of the fieldwork, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several categories of informant: app-based transport drivers; taxi and *ojek* drivers; and representatives of Gojek management, government officials, unions and NGOs, as shown in Table 1.1. In particular, semi-structured interviews with app-based transport drivers of both sexes were tailored to cover various categories, namely drivers of online taxi and *ojek* services who may or may not have been members of communities and/or associations (see Table 1.2). Of the 48 app-based transport drivers interviewed, only five were female, reflecting the small proportion of female workers in the online transport industry—estimated as less than 3% of all app-based drivers (Panimbang et al. 2020). The female interviewees were all members of communities and/or associations.

The semi-structured interviews with app-based transport drivers were tailored to produce life stories, which can be regarded as a form of personal narrative, a description of lives and events

told from the narrator's perspective (Laslett 1999, 392). The narratives provide a way to explore workers' subjectivity and simultaneously make a connection with broader social and historical contexts. The interviews applied an experience-centred approach to narratives (Squire 2013, 42), focusing on workers' meaningful stories of relevant personal experience related to their precarious living and working conditions.

Table 1.1. Categories of People Interviewed

Category	Number of Interviews
App-based transport drivers	48
Conventional public transport drivers	4
Gojek management	5
Government officials	2
Trade union and NGO representatives	4
Total	**63**

Source: fieldwork conducted June 2018–January 2019 and December 2019–January 2020 in the Jakarta region

Table 1.2. Categories of App-Based Transport Drivers Interviewed

Category of Informant		Number of Interviews
Online taxi driver	Member of a driver community or association	21
	Not a member of a driver community or association	5
Online *ojek* driver	Member of a driver community or association	16
	Not a member of a driver community or association	6
Total		**48**

Source: fieldwork conducted June 2018–January 2019 and December 2019–January 2020 in the Jakarta region

In addition, the research involved observation of various events, such as Gojek and Grab driver meetings and protest strikes to demand improvement in working conditions. It also utilised analysis of relevant written material including official documents from Gojek and Grab as well as research reports and newspaper archives. A literature study was also conducted to form a picture of the social and historical contexts for the data collected from interviews, observations and document analysis. The studies reviewed included those that provide insights on conditions in Indonesia and various other countries to illuminate the problem of precarious work more generally and in Indonesia specifically. The use of multiple data collection methods in the research can be regarded as a form of triangulation of qualitative data sources, which can strengthen confidence when drawing conclusions from data analysis (Patton 1980, 557).

Chapter 2:
Work and Workers' Politics Under Precarity: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations

Changes in the World of Work

The central task of this chapter is to explore the changes that have occurred in the world of work amid the growing internationalisation of production and financial activities under neoliberal economic globalisation within different historical contexts. Such changes have had divergent effects on workers' working and living conditions, consciousness and identity, and organisations and politics. These changes have been linked to the recent expansion of precarious work—the types of jobs associated with the online transport industry in Indonesia—which is the subject of this study. It is argued here that variations in the range of possibilities and options available for these workers are historically conditioned by the way precarious work has been normalised in contexts where significant working-class and independent society movements have been absent or present. This chapter identifies three forms of workers' struggles against precarious work or broader austerity that do not exhaust the range of possibilities: amorphous, formal civic organisation–led and union-centred movements.

The arguments here are constructed through a historical and comparative approach that synthesises insights from the works of Michele Foucault and a non-deterministic type of historical materialist approach espoused by Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff, both heterodox economists. The synthesis extends works that read Foucault as a historical and materialist thinker (see Olssen 1999) and expand the political–economic dimension in Foucault's thought (see Bidet 2016). This synthesis is used to guide an analysis of workers' subjectivities—formed through the experience of working and living under increasing precarity in the contemporary neoliberal era—associated with the construction of certain forms of consciousness and identity, as well as organisations and politics. Such a mode of analysis places a great deal of importance on the contradictions of neoliberal economic globalisation, as well as their material and ideological effects on the construction of workers' subjectivities.

The approach elucidated in this chapter is constructed in a dialogue with studies that explore the expansion of precarious work as the material consequence of neoliberal transformation since the mid to late 1970s and 1980s (Standing 2011; Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison 2015; Herod and Lambert 2016; Kalleberg 2018). According to these studies, the consequences of increasing work-related insecurities were exacerbated by the 2008–2009 global financial crisis. They stress that insecure jobs have had a long existence in the history of capitalism. Yet, their concern is on

the upsurge of a new form of precarious work that has expanded under neoliberal economy globalisation, whereby insecure jobs have been redefined and used by employers to reduce costs, increase labour flexibility, reduce the permanent workforce, shift work-related risks to labour and constrict their power for organisation (Kalleberg 2018).[3] The recent emphasis on job precarity stimulates analysis on current transformations of work and employment relations and the resulting new forms of workers' organisation and politics.

Previous studies have analysed the material effects of the structural changes associated with the neoliberal revolution (Ganti 2014). However, they tend to underplay contradictions within the material conditions associated with the global expansion of neoliberalism. They also tend to ignore that the material effects of neoliberalism are in an intertwined and mutually reinforcing relationship with the ideological, allowing for heterogeneity in subjective experiences. Workers in insecure job situations may indeed experience anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation, as argued by Standing (2011). This may lead to workplace-based collective organisations and protest, perhaps even sowing the seeds for the formation of a new class-based identity. Nonetheless, the spread of precarious employment contracts and freelance work under neoliberal rules normalises solitary working and bolsters a more generalised shift toward the individualisation of work. This shift has profound and distinct effects on collective workplace experiences, workers' consciousness and organisations. While collective resistance to precarious work continues, the individualisation of everyday labour practices constantly interferes with workers' solidarity.

In contrast, this study approaches precarious work arrangements, which expand amid the growing internationalisation of economic activities, as a form of neoliberal governance directed to manage these subjectivities. It links the material and ideological effects of neoliberalism, as well as their inherent contradictions. The approach is influenced by 'governmentality', a concept initially developed by Foucault (1991) to refer to the art of directing the conduct of humans. The analysis is concerned with the way various interventions are deployed under neoliberalism to structure the environment of individuals to obtain specific kinds of behaviours (Lorenzini 2018). It examines the creation of a neoliberal subject—the calculating, self-interested actor who behaves and acts in ways that are in alignment with the requirements of neoliberalism (Liow

[3] In Indonesia, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3, the new form of precarious work has expanded in 'modern' sector employment in urban areas amid Indonesia's deeper incorporation into the mechanics of global capital accumulation, beginning in the 1960s. Prior to this, an older form of precarious work was pervasive in a traditional agricultural economy dominated by subsistence activities, some of which were seasonal.

2012). The dominant focus of the analysis is on examining the processes that condition consent to and compliance with neoliberal ideologies. This is balanced by another focus, which is to illuminate subjectivity as the terrain of struggle, allowing for resistance at the individual and collective levels.

Yet, this study stands in contrast to others that have been influenced by the Foucauldian framework. Many tend to insufficiently address differences in material conditions as revealed in the interconnection between social and cultural practices and political–economic contradictions. This study combines the Foucauldian framework and Resnick and Wolff's use of non-deterministic historical materialist approaches to address such issues. The combination enables a comparative historical exploration of the exercise of neoliberal governance in divergent contexts and workers' responses to labour precarity. The comparison is required to illuminate the contradictions within what might seem to be, misleadingly, the homogenised effects of neoliberal transformation on individuals' subjectivity. On one level, neoliberal globalisation appears to produce a homogenous outcome whereby precarious work arrangements have increasingly become the norm in both early and late industrialising countries. Yet, variations in the trajectories of neoliberal transformation in different contexts constitute diversity in workers' consciousness and politics.

This chapter first traces the historical and materialist aspects in Foucault's work on governmentality. It also explores Foucauldian-inspired studies that explore the issues of work and workers' subjectivity and their tendency to underplay the political–economic dimension. It then explores insights from Resnick and Wolff's non-deterministic type of historical materialist approach. This inspires the construction of a comparative approach to the historicity of work, workers' identity and politics. Last, the chapter examines the effect of the neoliberal reorganisation of work practices on workers across countries with different historical trajectories. The historical comparative approach will inform subsequent chapters that specifically deal with precarious workers in the Indonesian online transport industry.

Foucauldian Governmentality: Work and Workers' Subjectivity

A central objective of Foucault's work was to trace 'the different modes by which […] human beings are made subjects' (Foucault 1982, 777). The term 'subject' has two meanings: 'subject to someone else by control and dependence' and 'tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge', suggesting 'a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault 1982, 781). Here, Foucault's notion of governmentality implies a distinct way in which the

subject is constituted. Foucault (1982, 790) defines government as 'the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed', involving attempts 'to structure the possible field of action of others' to direct individuals' conduct with a certain degree of deliberation. Distinct from a sort of discipline that 'seeks to reform designated groups through detailed supervision in confined quarters', the purpose of government is 'to secure the welfare of the population' (Li 2007, 1). To achieve this purpose, governments regulate individuals through rationalised means that set conditions to educate people's desires and configure their habits. This results in a subtle form of control whereby people are not aware that they are being governed.

Along these lines, Foucauldian-inspired governmentality studies link mundane practices that make individuals subject to domination and the problem of statecraft, that is, the micro and macro processes of power (Gordon 1991; Lemke 2001). However, rather than seeing the state as a monolithic source of power, studies in governmentality examine governmental interventions as assemblages of a range of parties that are involved in attempts to regulate the populace (Li 2007). Olssen (1999) asserts that Foucault's position as a materialist thinker is evident in his theorisation of power. Here, Foucault (1980, 57) emphasises that 'nothing is more material, physical, corporeal than the exercise of power, thus advocating to examine power in its material manifestation'. Governmental interventions should thus be examined in the material manifestations of forms of knowledge that regulate populations by describing, defining and delivering the forms of normality and educability. Such material manifestations are traceable in parties that function as apparatuses that facilitate the constitution of the subject and define what it means to be normal in day-to-day practices.

Foucault (1997) asserts that governmentality takes place when there is a meeting between technologies of domination and those of the self. These technologies are essentially modes of training to acquire certain individuals' attitudes. Technologies of power submit individuals 'to certain ends of domination', while technologies of the self allow individuals to perform acts of self-government to 'attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault 1997, 225). The form and content of these technologies are underpinned by political rationalities that are understood as modes of thinking that influence how government constructs its objects and legitimises its techniques (Liow 2012; Cornelissen 2018). Thus, neoliberal strategies of governance are considered a distinct form of governmentality, fortified by neoliberal political rationality (Foucault 2008, 2009). The neoliberal strategies of governance attempts to guide individuals to live their lives as an enterprise, and it operates

through the construction of models of action that are based upon an idea of the (economic) enterprise in different areas of social life.

Foucault relies on genealogical analysis to trace the historical trajectories of forms of governmentality and the political rationalities that underpin them (Foucault 2008, 2009). Olssen (1999, 14) asserts that genealogical analysis—an examination of the exercise of power through the historicity of the construction of forms of rationality—demonstrates Foucault's position as a materialist thinker. Genealogical analysis is not about the search for origin (Foucault 1988); rather, it uses history to trace the material circumstances that condition the constitution and transformation of forms of knowledge and their effects on the subject. Crucial here is the political–economic dimension within Foucault's genealogical investigation of the state, as addressed by Bidet (2007, 2016). Foucault examines political–economic discourses and the policies they inspire. This in turn conditions the invention of liberal governance, which aims to promote the market economy and advance the management of the population through various techniques that instrumentalise people's freedom (Foucault 2009). By doing so, he illuminates the work of a multiform network of social knowledge and sectoral practices that condition the reproduction of capitalist society (Bidet 2016).

The notion of resistance—practices that attack the exercise of power that make an individual the subject of domination (Foucault 1982, 780–781)—is also important in Foucault's theorisation of the subject and power, including in the problem of government. For Foucault (1982, 790), power can only be exercised over free subjects—individuals who have 'a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions, and diverse compartments may be realized'. Pickett (1996) pinpoints that viewed in this light, freedom's refusal to submit—the source of resistance—is inseparable from the exercise of power. Thus, power and resistance should be analysed as elements that exist together. In this way, resistance, similar to power, should be examined in its material manifestations: at an individual level, as in the desires that drive a worker to misbehave in the workplace; and in the forms of collective revolutionary actions, when the exercise of power brings a collective of subjugated individuals together (Pickett 1996, 459).

In summary, this study uses Foucauldian governmentality lenses to trace historically grounded material practices that define normality and resistance to it in the world of work. It pays attention to the relations between knowledge systems and 'political fields, governmental regulations, and economic order' (Lüddemann 2016). These are all linked to social processes that are embedded or ensnared within day-to-day practices whereby individual subjectivity is

constructed. The Foucauldian framework has been extensively used to examine the governing of economic life (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006). However, as will be discussed later, political–economic problems have been insufficiently addressed.

Along these lines, Lorey (2015) argues that in Western capitalism, since the 1970s, governing has proceeded by ensuring the greatest possible insecurity through the dismantling of the welfare state and the stable employment and rights associated with it. She conceptualises 'precarisation'—the instrumentalisation of insecurity—as a technology of government. Under neoliberalism, precarisation has become increasingly systemic and prevalent, as well as internalised, conditioning individuals' self-management of an array of risks. While precarisation renders individuals complicit, it relies on individuals' participation in their self-government, thus paving the way for individuals to organise collectively against precarity. However, Lorey's analysis insufficiently deals with uneven capitalist development across political economies and does not address the structural basis of deep-seated problems of capitalist expansion. Authors writing about Asia assert that the experience of South-East Asia is somewhat different because precarious employment practices have been extensively used since the advent of rapid industrialisation in the context of the growing internationalisation of economic activities under neoliberalism (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015).

Foucauldian analysis has also been applied in empirical research on the instilment of neoliberal thinking, acting and behaving in individuals to guide their conduct as workers and employment seekers. Some analysts have explored the reproduction of discourses such as employability and enterprise by various institutions, including government agencies, schools and workplaces (Gleadle, Cornelius and Pezet 2008; Southwood 2017). Others have examined the effects of the discourses on imposing certain identity norms, standards and ideals on individuals (Ainsworth and Hardy 2008; Boland 2016). Research has also been conducted to reveal the various ways in which individuals negotiate with and resist the subjugation process (Halford and Leonard 2006). Taken together, these studies illuminate the historical evolution of the discourses that condition the framing of individuals' identities by neoliberal tenets. Yet, the analyses have tended to neglect the connections between social and cultural practices and political economy throughout history. In general, they have been insufficiently attentive to the material structures of work, employment and market exchange.

Attempts have also been made to combine the Foucauldian analytical framework with labour process theory (LPT)—a Marxist-inspired theory that centres on the organisation of work under capitalism. While it does not use the concept of governmentality, LPT links the analysis of

workplace-based mechanisms of managerial control with political–economic analysis (Smith 2015) in parallel with the macro–micro levels of analysis proposed by Foucauldian government analytics. A consistent theme in LPT is management control over labour. Braverman (1998), the originator of LPT, writes about Taylorist scientific management and Fordist technologies that degrade work and fragment and deskill work tasks, thus improving employees' productivity by increasing employers' control of their work. Burawoy (1979) expands Braverman's work by exploring the process through which management provides workers with a semblance of choice. The process described by Burawoy (1985) took place in a context where the postwar labour–capital compromise protected workers from the whip of the market, so management could not rely on coercion to ensure productivity.

Attempting to distinguish themselves from Braverman and Burawoy, some analysts have resorted to Foucauldian elaborations of subjectivity, asserting that the mechanisms of workers' subjectification and subjections 'are not directly derived from the process of production, class struggles or ideological structures' (Knights and Willmott 1989, 553). These analysts examine the distinct relationship of power that operates in workplaces that facilitate the constitution of a particular form of subjectivity (O'Doherty and Willmott 2001). Such arguments are valuable in demonstrating how a particular technology of the self operates in work settings. However, they imply that all individuals—regardless of when and where they live—are tied by social relations into ways of thinking and behaving that reproduce social relations (Ursell 2000, 809). As such, they isolate the mechanisms of identity formation from any structural dimension, including 'the changing nature of regimes of accumulation, state formations, [and] the organizational forms of the contemporary firm' (Thompson 2009, 4).

To conclude this part of the discussion, Foucauldian-inspired studies have centred their analysis on work and workers' subjectivity. The historical dimension of their analysis has tended to overlook the interconnections between social and cultural practices and structural political–economic problems. They have also tended to isolate the process of identity formation from the structural problems of capitalist expansion. In contrast, the present study attempts to deal with the political and economic dimensions when applying a Foucauldian governmentality lens. In doing so, it engages with scholarship that examines the historical trajectories of such structural problems.

A Materialist History?

One of the main challenges in synthesising insights from the Foucauldian approach with historical materialist scholarship is the danger of forcing the analysis into the mould of orthodox economic determinism (Stickney 2007, 73). Instead of viewing economic relations as the foundation of all other societal, political and cultural arrangements in society, Foucault (1988) prefers to stress the contingency of history, seeing the world as 'a profusion of entangled events'. The present study employs the kind of historical materialist perspective advanced by Wolff and Resnick to address this challenge. Their overdeterminist perspective situates the individual's existence and behaviour as a product of influences that emanate from economic, political, cultural and biological processes (Resnick and Wolff 2006, 52). This means that all entities—whether human subject, social or natural process or institution—exist in interactive and constitutive relations, thus depending on one another for existence.

Viewed through these lenses, 'human behavior is deeply contradictory' (Resnick and Wolff 2006, 54). The subject, as the site of the diverse economic, political, cultural and natural determinations, is constantly propelled in different directions at the same time. For example, a subject is overdetermined by an economic process of wealth production. Another determination stemming from political process simultaneously renders the subject relatively powerless and pushes them to perform the work ordered. Concurrently, a cultural process of making sense of the other processes makes the subject aware of their involvement in an exploitative economic process; thus, they are not anxious to withdraw their labour. Changes in the subject are thus regarded as the cause and the effect of the contradictions of the diverse determinations. Consequently, history is viewed as the endless play of social contradictions 'among social processes generating and generated by individuals, groups, structures, and institutions' (Resnick and Wolff 2006, 64).

This overdetermination notion of causation and complexity proposes analyses that start from choosing 'entry points'—one or more of the aforementioned processes out of the totality of all processes—before revealing the totality (Resnick and Wolff 2006, 56). The entry point chosen here is changes in conditions of work amid the expansion of neoliberal economic globalisation. Attempts to understand such changes bring our attention to Resnick and Wolff's (2010) discussion of the internal contradictions, tensions and conflicts of the capitalist system that periodically generate crises along with cyclical booms and busts. Resnick and Wolff (2010) emphasise the significance of the 1970s global economic crisis, which led to the replacement of state-interventionist capitalism with harsher laissez-faire capitalism supported by a neoliberal

ideological framework. This shift reflected the pendulum swinging back after the Western world replaced the relatively laissez-faire capitalism that had evolved since the late nineteenth century with more humane forms in the wake of the Great Depression and World War II.

Resnick and Wolff (2006, 2010) use US history to draw attention to the contradictory interactions of economic and cultural processes and their effect on workers' subjectivity. They highlight the century of US capitalism before the 1970s as a period in which workers experienced steady wage increases. Concomitantly, between 1945 and the 1970s, the Keynesian welfare state provided workers with social security systems, unemployment insurance and job creation (Wolff 2012). However, the other side of this was rising consumption levels, which were sustained by an increase in workers' real wages and job security. From 1870, real wages increased by an average of 1.29% per year; however, this was accompanied by a dramatic rise in workers' productivity (a rise of nearly 2% on average per year). This shows that workers are paid less than the value of their labour (Resnick and Wolff 2006, 346) and that the rate of exploitation, measured through 'surplus-value relative to the value of labor power' has risen substantially throughout US history. Nonetheless, rising consumption levels have implanted in workers the idea that capitalism rewards them generously. This has acclimated them to the idea that their ability to consume adequately compensates for the exploitation of their labour and all of its consequences for their lives.

Wolff (2012) also draws attention to the link between state–labour–capital relations and economic crises, attributing the emergence of the US welfare state to pressures from labour and various leftist groups. Analysts note the relative weakness of US unions before the Great Depression (Skocpol 1980), while a small section of communist-related unions have become the target of domestic anti-communist politics since the 1920s (Luff 2018). Nevertheless, pressures from the union–leftist alliance amplified the fear that poverty and deprivation created under the Great Depression would drive a critical mass of the population toward the Soviet Union's communism. This eventually pushed President Roosevelt to enact the New Deal—a series of reforms and regulations that formed the basis for US welfare capitalism. Wolff (2012) is certain that such measures are no longer possible in the US, as an entrenched coalition of business and conservative groups has dominated politics since the late 1970s. This has allowed for greater synergies between the neoliberal agenda and aspects of right-wing populism, which has systematically weakened union power.

The 1970s crisis brought about the beginning of the systematic dismantling of the New Deal legacy. A century of rising real wages also ended in the 1970s as a result of processes that

brought changes to the labour market. These processes provided solutions to the labour shortage problem because, prior to the 1970s, demand exceeded supply in the labour market. They included an increase in automatisation and exported jobs from the internationalisation of US manufacturing sites, as well as overcrowding of the domestic labour market by women and immigrant workers. With the dream of a decent life becoming increasingly unattainable, and trade unions become increasingly unreliable, the working class was pushed to work longer hours, take multiple jobs and turn to the only remaining option—borrowing. The historical dimension of Wolff's (2012) analysis again draws attention to the internal contradictions of capitalism, specifically in its neoliberal phase.

In broad strokes, Resnick and Wolff emphasise the constitutive relations between social, cultural, political and economic processes that were left unaddressed by Foucauldian-inspired studies. The political–economic dimension of their historical analysis is attentive to the structure of the labour market and the constellation of forces behind neoliberal ascendancy. They also detect internal contradictions within neoliberalism, thus focusing our attention on issues like consumerism, debt and self-exploitation. Although their analysis is largely informed by US history, they are aware of the uneven development of global capitalism. Thus, they call for an exploration of countries with different historical trajectories.

The growing internationalisation of economic activities means that Indonesia should be examined as part of a broader international political economy, but without slipping into an oversimplified generalisation about the homogenous effects of neoliberalism. The tendency to homogenise the effects of neoliberalism masks contradictions within the historical path of the neoliberal transformation, where we witness the return of precarious work after decades of interruption in some regions, while it remains persistent in others (Mosoetsa, Stillerman and Tilly 2016). In South-East Asia, workers' movement from the agricultural sector to the industrial and service sectors has transpired amid international competition in the production chain and the rapid expansion of the service sector, which requires flexible forms of employment (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015). Given that unions have been weak and the labour protection system has been underdeveloped, the extensive use of precarious employment practices has been relatively unhampered (Ofreneo 2015). Here, a historical comparative approach can reveal the contradictions within the historicity of the expansion of neoliberalism, as well as its effects on the normalisation of precarious work and workers' responses to it.

An important issue is how the recent rise in precarious labour is considered a problem because it deviates from the standard employment relationship (SER) characterised by full-time and long-

term employment. While the model is used to define the normative conception of work in the West and in the more developed economies of East Asia, it is historically exceptional in other Asian countries (Hewison and Kalleberg 2013). In this regard, analysts view the different way in which precarious work is normalised as an outcome of particular industrialisation experiences that revamp the structure of the labour market in specific ways (Mosoetsa, Stillerman and Tilly 2016). Large-scale industrialisation occurred much later in newly industrialised countries and encompassed a much smaller segment of the population compared with industrialised economies. The formal economy in the region only absorbed workers to a limited extent, and only a few privileged workers were provided with access to relative security. The sector is experiencing increased casualisation,[4] while the informal sector continues to expand (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015).

The extent to which precarious work is normalised is also an outcome of state–capital–labour political dynamics. The role of militant workerism in the West was crucial in the consolidation of the postwar class compromise, while workers in non-Western contexts had a lesser effect. The features of the distinct state–capital–labour relationship, in return, determine the range of options available for workers' struggle, notwithstanding the various initiatives that have emerged outside traditional unionism. The recent expansion of precarious work has hampered workers' ability to struggle collectively—both in advanced and newly industrialised countries, like Indonesia—albeit there are differences in labour movement efficacy. A crucial point of discussion here is therefore the vicissitudes of the state–capital–labour relationship in different historical experiences that provide the terrain on which working-class and independent society movements operate. Such differences led to varying models of accommodation between state, capital and labour, as identified by Hadiz (1997), including the 'social democratic' linked with 'liberal democracies' and the 'exclusionary' linked with 'exclusionary corporatism'.

In summary, this study places the expansion of precarious work in Indonesia as part of the developments in the international political economy. In doing so, it applies a historical and comparative approach to trace the different ways in which precarious work has been normalised, as well as how workers have responded to it. It pays attention to political–economic problems in different industrialisation experiences, namely, the structure of the labour market

[4] Standing (2008, 23) asserts that the process of casualisation refers to a specific development characterised by a shift from regular employment 'to the use of workers in short-term employment arrangements'.

and the presence or absence of labour and society movements, to shed light on the Indonesian case.

Governing Precarity: The Normalisation of Precarious Work and the Politics of Precarious Workers

This section explores the different historical experiences under which precarious work has come to be accepted. It also maps out the ways in which workers have engaged in various forms of organisation amid increasing precariousness. The recent extensive use of precarious employment practices in the West and in the developed economies of East Asia, where the SER used to be the norm, and in South-East Asia, where precarious work remains persistent, is connected to the expansion of neoliberal policies and ideology since the 1970s. Yet, it is also linked to the broader trajectory of industrialisation and the formation of organised labour movements.

Resistance Against Precarity in Advanced Economies in the West: Amorphous Movements, Union and Formal Civic Organisation–Led Movements

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, industrialisation and the advance of the factory system proceeded slowly, and the state's directing role was less central compared with that of later industrialisations (Streeck 2005). Such an environment provided organised labour movements in North America and Western Europe with ample opportunities to develop. This eventually helped to enable the establishment of wider liberal democratic social and political frameworks, whereby the working class was granted freedom of association and labour organisations had relative autonomy from the state (Hadiz 1997, 23). While this was the story in broad strokes, industrialisation began at different times in various Western European and North American countries. Consequently, workers and their organisations appeared in a variety of political environments and the confronted states had different characteristics, which affected the level of labour militancy and the strength of the movements.

The liberal or interventionist state traditions, conditioned partly by the timing of industrialisation, influenced the degree of labour radicalism (Streeck and Hassel 2003). Labour was inclined to become radicalised in contexts where the state undertook an authoritarian role in the industrialisation process, which made the consolidation of the social democratic framework a more turbulent process. In liberal environments, such as in Britain and the US, political democracy arrived prior to or simultaneously with the onset of industrialisation. Labour thus tended to eschew radical political strategies associated with socialism. Whereas many

socialist movements grew strong in other European countries during World War I and in the interwar period, the British Labour Party maintained a relatively non-socialist and non-Marxian ideology (Lipset 1983; Streeck 2005). Socialists also remained a relatively small pressure group in the US, where labour entered World War I without strong unions or a labour party (Skocpol 1980; Luff 2018).

Amid the industrial upheaval in the 1930s, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) was central in helping to perfect US anti-communism. Meanwhile, the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), the AFL political counterweight, already had some anti-communist tendencies, although it had opened itself to communist organisers in its earlier years (Luff 2018, 126). Although the CIO grew stronger under the New Deal, the purge of the left from the CIO, along with American anti-communism and the prosperity experienced by workers, eradicated the tradition of radical labourism (Moody 2003). Luff (2018, 116) notes that in the 1930s, as in the US, communist parties in the UK mostly operated as 'a rump faction within existing unions', whereas some European countries 'had entire communist unions and federations'. Although the British Trade Union Congress (TUC), unlike the AFL, expressed reluctant tolerance of communism, mirroring a characteristic of postwar Britain, the Labour government and the TUC had shifted into full-throated anti-communist politics by 1949. These all contributed to gradually erasing the remnants of radical labour politics.

Concurrently, along with the postwar economic boom and the rise of Fordism, the SER—characterised by a full-time continuous employment relationship whereby workers have access to comprehensive benefits—became the norm in the West. However, it remained inaccessible for some, such as women and minorities (Vosko 2010). Accompanying this development was the consolidation of different types of welfare governance, influenced by the strength of labour (Esping-Andersen 1990). The establishment of social democratic welfare regimes that are designed to secure the highest standard for all, like in the Scandinavian countries, is attributable to labour radicalism (Streeck and Hassel 2003). At the other end of the spectrum are liberal welfare states, like the US and the UK, which were born out of relative labour reformism, rather than radicalism, amid political liberalisation. In this model, welfare provisions tend to be minimal and means-tested, while the state subsidises private welfare schemes. This allows for weak decommodification, whereby workers' degree of immunisation from market dependency is relatively low.

In Britain and the US, the shift from the SER to precarious work as the norm began in the 1970s. The shift involved the flexibilisation of the labour market and the dismantling of the welfare

state (Standing 2011). Wright (2013) demonstrates the consequences of the changes that have taken place since the early 1980s in Britain: the proportion of workers below the low-paid threshold has almost doubled; there has been a significant increase in the number of non-standard forms of employment (temporary and fixed-term); and the number of low-skilled jobs has also substantially grown. Similarly, Kalleberg (2009) demonstrates that between 1977 and 2002 in the US, there was a decline in perceived job security and the average time people stayed in the same employment, as well as an increase in the number of people who remained jobless for a period of six months and the number of people who engaged in non-standard work arrangements (contracting and temporary work).

The recent normalisation of precarious work in the West has been linked to weakened organised labour movements. As asserted by Kalleberg and Hewison (2015), the neoliberal flexibilisation of the labour market contributes to the decline of unionism, which in turn paves the way for greater inequality and job precarity. Visser (2006) shows that the union density rate in the US dropped from 23.5% in the 1970s to 12.5% in 2003; in Britain, the rate declined from 44.7% in the 1970s to 29.3% in 2003. Exceptions are identified in individual countries, such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium, where the density has remained stable. In general, where leftist or social democratic traditions have been relatively stronger, like in Scandinavian countries, unions have been better able to maintain their strength and push back against the consequence of the neoliberal transformation, although they are not entirely immune from it (Kalleberg 2018).

Capital owners in the West have taken advantage of the increasingly flexible labour market not only for low-skilled and easily replaceable jobs, but also for the lower and middle levels of the service sector. Ross (2009) demonstrates how policies are developed to foster the growth of sectors like the creative industry, which helps provide a positive gloss to precarious work, characterising it as 'self-directed, entrepreneurial, accustomed to precarious, nonstandard employment, and attuned to producing career hits' (Ross 2009, 10). For example, in Britain, the Department of National Heritage was renamed the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in 1997. Its policy focuses on the promotion of 'an entrepreneurial model of self-organized innovation in the arts and knowledge sectors of the economy' (Ross 2009, 18). In the 1990s, the US Government introduced the 'creative cluster'—a development strategy for cities that had lost their industrial job base. It encourages costly investments in cultural fields in the development of cities to attract and retain creative workers, whose capacity to innovate is deemed crucial for economic development.

Amid wage stagnation, declining job quality and weakened unionism, US workers are pushed toward self-exploitation and borrowing. It is important here to delve deeper into Resnick and Wolff's (2010) argument on the way in which increasing consumption levels condition workers to consent to the degrading effect of capitalism. They point out that trade unions' goals are reducible to increasing 'privately consumable goods and services, not to a change in the class structure of production' (Resnick and Wolff 2010, 347). As discussed previously, it has become extremely difficult for workers to attain the so-called American dream since the 1970s. Yet, the focus of US unions continues to be individual consumption levels rather than collective efforts to improve workers' lives in any other ways, thereby conditioning the absence of a substantial discussion about the changing labour markets. Workers are thus acclimatised to blame themselves for what is a social problem associated with changes in the political–economic structure, which aggravates their tendency to resort to individual responses and solutions.

Likewise, in the UK, consent to neoliberal capitalism is attained through the adoption of middle-class values by those who once had a firm working-class identity. As explained by Harvey (2005, 61–62), 'the opening of Britain to freer trade allowed a consumer culture to flourish, and the proliferation of financial institutions brought more and more of a debt culture into the centre of a formerly staid British life'. In general, the US and UK are among those countries with huge household debt relative to income (Harvey 2010). The development is attributable to the financialisation of the economy, referring to 'a marked increase in the volume, velocity, complexity and connectedness of financial flows and an increasing shift of finance capital from production and trade toward speculation and intermediation' (Mahmud 2012, 23). Driven by the financial deregulation that started in the 1970s, financialisation expands the scope and reach of credit, entrapping workers into a circuit of credit and self-exploitation to repay the loan.

In the Western world, the formation of the entrepreneurial identity occurred under some distinct circumstances whereby the expansion of precarious work involved a transformation of previous patterns of the SER. Significant working-class and broader society movements have also been present in the US and various European countries, even after the eradication of radical labourism. These historical roots are conducive for the kind of struggle in which 'precarity has become a discursive practice that serves as an action framework for political organizing, by emerging social movements, as well as more established unions' (Kalleberg 2018, 172). The struggle that transpires in such a context demonstrates overt resistance to precarious work or broader austerity, of which three types can be identified.

The first type is in the form of amorphous movements, as exemplified by the Occupy and *los indignados* protests in the US and some European countries. Peterson, Wahlström and Wennerhag (2015, 3) label such protests as 'episodic mass mobilizations', referring to 'short-term protest events with large numbers of participants' that are not 'originally organized by formal organizations or professional activists'. Another important feature of these movements is their ability to mobilise support from an array of groups whose lives have been threatened by the ascendancy of neoliberalism—not just specific members of a class (Kalleberg 2018). To date, their potential has remained unrealised because of their lack of a concrete political agenda and strategy, as well as their detachment from more established unions and civic organisations. Nevertheless, they have raised issues of precarious work and inequality, which could inspire the adoption of concrete political strategies in electoral politics.

The second type of anti-precarity struggle in the West is the one initiated by formal civic organisations. While often targeting wider goals, such as seeking to improve the living conditions of the poor, these movements help to address the degrading effect of increasing precarious work on workers and their families. An example is the UK Living Wage campaign, which was started in 2001 by Citizens UK, an alliance of local community organising groups whose membership includes religious and educational organisations, and community groups (Woodcock 2014; Heery, Hann and Nash 2017). Following the success of a similar campaign in the US, the UK Living Wage campaign has attained some success in persuading thousands of employers to pay the recommended wage to hundreds of thousands of workers. Unions' and workers' self-organising attempts have also worked independently of Citizens UK to adapt the living wage standard in collective bargaining and in their own independent campaigning.

This second type of struggle against precarious work can also be found in the activities of labour-oriented NGOs—known in the US as worker centres. These centres were developed in the 1990s to respond to the expansion of precarious jobs and the weakening labour movement of the 1970s and 1980s (Milkman and Ott 2014). They are active in the advocacy and organisation of those in casualised occupations, where conventional forms of unionisation are difficult to establish (e.g. day labour or domestic service). The centres also target workers in industries that are deemed 'unorganisable' by many unions (e.g. garment manufacturing and restaurants). In contrast to most unions, the centres address not only workplace issues but also the social needs of workers and their families, such as education and housing. While they continue to grow, most workers' centres continue to be locally based and modest in size, especially in comparison to

unions. In addition, many of them continue to work independently from unions, although there are cases of unions partnering with, and even launching and funding, worker centres.

In the third type of anti-precarity struggle, unions are at the forefront of the struggle against the expansion of precarious work. They reach out to unionised workers who are excluded from 'traditional' unionisation. An example is the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which has, since the mid-1980s, unionised migrant cleaners and janitors across the US and Canada under the umbrella of the Justice for Janitors (J4J) campaign (Milkman 2011; Woodcock 2014). The campaign has been successful in unionising and improving the working conditions of hundreds of thousands of precarious and migrant workers, thus inspiring a model that has been replicated by others. In 2005, the SEIU assisted the Transport and General Workers Union in the UK (now called UNITE) to develop its own Justice for Cleaners campaign in London. This campaign led to the establishment of the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) in 2013, a rank-and-file union that represents some of the most underrepresented workers in the UK, including those in the gig economy.

The discussion thus far has focused on broader social movements, including those of the working class in the Western world. These movements have developed in a social democratic milieu; therefore, they have had ample opportunities to mature. The amalgamation of the postwar economic boom and workers' strength made the SER the norm, supported by the Keynesian welfare state. Beginning in the 1970s, changes associated with the neoliberal revolution have gradually eroded workers' forces and shaken the foundation that forms the basis of work security. Workers have organised collectively to respond to the changes, notwithstanding processes that condition their consent, including the normalisation of flexible work, rising consumption and personal debt, and the erosion of the working-class identity. Their struggles generally emphasise resistance to precarious work or broader austerity, of which three types are identified: amorphous movements, those initiated by formal civic organisations and others spearheaded by unions. Although they have won some important victories, the struggles have continued to be largely segmented and plagued by fragmentation and are yet to reach a consensus regarding ways of dealing with the negative effects of neoliberal transformation.

Anti-Precarity Struggles in Developed Economies of East Asia: Unions and Formal Civic Organisation–Led Movements

Exceptionally rapid industrial growth started to take place in the 1960s in Japan and in the newly industrialised economies (NIEs) of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, which were

galvanised by the adoption of export-oriented industrialisation (EOI). In Japan, economic expansion during the 1960s 'stabilised employment relationships for many salarymen who moved into more secure employment in core industrial sectors' (Gottfried 2014, 467). In the pre-war period, the proportion of salarymen was 10% of the employed workforce, and this increased to around 50% and 75% of household heads by 1955 and 1970, respectively. Similarly, South Korea managed to maintain a very low level of unemployment throughout the 1970s and the next two decades (Kim and Park 2006). The unemployment rate was between 3.2% and 4.5% in the 1970s and remained below 5% from 1988 until the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis. Against such a backdrop of economic prosperity, the SER came to be accepted as the norm in Japan and the NIEs.

In the region, the SER was supported by what Holliday (2000) calls the 'productivist' welfare system, which is characterised by the subordination of social policies to economic development and growth. This model provided workers in core manufacturing industries with substantial benefits, including lifetime employment, while people outside the employment relationship 'were forced to depend on other sources of welfare provision, such as the family' (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015, 18). Unlike in the West, labour was weaker, so 'the political class standing behind each of these welfare regimes was a largely unaccountable conservative elite that imposed its vision of social policy on the rest of society' (Holliday 2000, 715). Labour weakness itself was attributable to the consolidation of working-class forces in the later stage of industrialisation, which proceeded at a much faster pace under the guidance of authoritarian states (Streeck 2005). Emerging labour movements have thus had to encounter the 'exclusionary corporatist' social and political frameworks that are characterised by 'the arrangement of state-society relations on the basis of state-controlled and established, monolithic and non-competitive institutions, geared to facilitate the control and demobilization of society-based organizations and movements' (Hadiz 1997, 27).

In Japan, labour turbulence was at its height in the postwar period (Gottfried 2000, 247). From World War II to the early 1960s, union membership reached its highest level of 45% of overall workers. Labour militancy culminated with workers' appropriated control over production in several factories. A period of repression against independent unions started in 1947 after the abortion of a militant strike activity under the US-led occupation administration. In the 1950s, management adopted systematic strategies of 'replacing militant "first labor unions" with cooperative "second labor unions"' (Imai 2015, 55) and conditioned the consolidation of cooperative enterprise-based unionisation that ensured job security and an age-grades system

of rewards in large enterprises. Between the early 1960s and the late 1980s, organised labour was split between a more radical group that prioritised political issues and a more accommodative group that emphasised economic incorporation. In 1987, the former, associated with left-leaning politics, merged with the latter, linked to rightist tendencies, under the umbrella of a rightist confederation (Carlile 1994).

In South Korea, concerns about the rise of communism in the aftermath of the Korean War (1950–1953) resulted in the suppression of the labour movement, supported by the US. During this time, a communist-organised labour union was crushed and replaced with an anti-leftist union, which evolved into the state-sponsored Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) (Deyo 1987). Labour continued to be suppressed throughout the 1960s and the 1970s. Nonetheless, militant unionism emerged among unions in big companies in South Korea by 1987, elevating unions' collective bargaining power and enhancing the employment stability rate while improving wages. Organised labour's militancy also added pressure to South Korea to open itself to democratic reform. Nevertheless, unionism in South Korea, like in Japan, has continued to be contained by an entrenched enterprise-based bargaining system (Kim 2010). Enterprise unions are less powerful than industry-based ones because they have weak links across workplace boundaries and with political parties or union confederations.

In East Asia, the history of weak labourism and the neoliberal reforms set the stage for a departure from the SER after the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis (Hewison and Kalleberg 2013). In Japan, non-regular employment has become more prevalent since the stagnation of the economy beginning in the late 1980s, after the Plaza Accord-enforced appreciation of the yen versus the US dollar, leading to the collapse of the Japanese asset price bubble. However, non-regular employment has expanded especially rapidly since the 1997–1998 crisis (Imai 2015). In South Korea, beginning in the early 1990s, big industries started to implement new management approaches to enhance their competitiveness, including legalising the unrestricted use of contingent labour (Lee 2015a). This set the stage for the substantial expansion of non-regular workers since the late 1990s. In both countries, the dismantling of the SER is represented by a growing casualisation of the formal sector. In Japan, the proportion of non-regular workers—those who are hired indirectly through employment agencies or outsourcing firms—in the labour force grew from 15.3% in 1984 to 34.1% in 2008 (Osawa, Kim and Kingston 2013). In South Korea, the proportion of non-regular workers in the total labour force increased from 27.4% in 2002 to 34.2% in 2011 (Shin 2013).

In line with the trend in advanced economies in the West, the growth of precarious work in the formal sector in Japan and South Korea has been accompanied by a decline in union membership and power. Watanabe (2015) shows that there was a steady decrease in union density in Japan from 25.2% in 1990 to 17.7% in 2013. There was also a decline in the membership of Rengō, the largest national trade union centre in Japan, from around eight million at the time of its establishment in 1989 to about 6.8 million in April 2012. Lee (2015a) asserts that union density in South Korea increased from 12.3% in 1986 to 18.6% in 1989, yet decreased considerably to 10.1% in 2011. The decline in union density had also been accompanied by a significant falling-off in the number of labour disputes, from 1,616 to 3,749 during unions' heyday between 1987 and 1989 to 65 in 2011.

Against such a backdrop, Japanese political elites have used popular culture to curb resistance to precarious employment. Driscoll (2007) discusses how they did so by encouraging the favourable depiction of *freeters*: a Japanese expression for young people who lack full-time employment or who are unemployed. While government reports have, since the early 2000s, pointed out that the number of *freeters* has grown at an alarming rate, they are blamed for refusing to work full time, to the detriment of the economy. Yet, since the late 1990s, popular culture has celebrated *freeters* as young workers who choose anti-corporate laidback lifestyles. This way of idealising *freeters*, which centres on the triumph of individual choice and celebrates the 'flexibility' and 'freedom' provided by neoliberalism, has gained popularity. In general, the depictions help to mask the structural roots of precarious work, inducing workers' self-blame and consent to the degrading work conditions.

Workers in South Korea have experienced similar processes that contribute to the replacement of the ideal image of salaried men (and, to some degree, women) in stable employment with the entrepreneur self. Song (2007) elaborates how the shift is encouraged among others by the post-1997–1998 crisis implementation of the government's campaign of the 'new intellectuals', referring to innovative young people who create their own jobs and new services. The new intellectual rhetoric was given life not only by governmental administrative efforts, but also by academics, NGOs, mass media and welfare recipients. This contributed to its use in policies that promote flexible labour with creative self-entrepreneurship. Amid the collapse of the SER, the reproduction of the rhetoric contributes to instilling in young people a new kind of aspiration that celebrates entrepreneurial efforts, like opening one's own small business, in contrast to salaried stable jobs in large companies. This kind of aspiration supports the gradual normalisation of the shifting of risks from the firms and the state to the individual worker.

While being exposed to the processes that condition the instilment of the entrepreneurial identity, workers in advanced economies in East Asia continue to aspire to middle-class lifestyles. However, the increase in precarious working and living conditions since the 1990s has made it difficult for them to achieve such aspirations. This has led many workers into the trap of debt, through which their tendency to resort to individualised solutions is nurtured. West (2018) observes how South Korea has witnessed its middle classes recede. For instance, recent data show the decline in South Korea's middle class from 75% of the total population in 1990 to 67% in 2015, with the middle class defined as those who earn 50%–150% of the median national disposable income. While Japan has experienced its system of lifetime employment diminish, as in South Korea, increasing numbers of Japanese are also slipping out of the middle class.

Smith (2018) notes how the expectations of most Japanese have been shaped by the standard pathways and achievements of the salaryman since the late 1960s. They are marked by distinct consumption patterns, often typified by the ownership of a suburban house or modern city apartment and the latest consumer durables, cars, fashion and electronic devices, and sustained by a smooth transition from school to stable employment. However, Armstrong et al. (2019) note that since the 1990s, more families have experienced a decrease in their disposable income. This has increased the burden of tuition on families—especially low-income families—because Japanese families are responsible for financing their children's education. Thus, similar to the US, student loans have increasingly become the norm in Japan (Nohara 2016). This pushes more Japanese students to engage in precarious jobs while in school to repay the loan. Meanwhile, there is little guarantee that a college degree will grant them full-time employment.

Notwithstanding these difficult circumstances, collective struggles to resist increasing precarity continue to take place in the advanced economies of East Asia. These struggles display some similarities with those that transpire in the West in contexts where the SER used to be the norm. Here, precarity serves a discursive strategy and is used as an action framework for political mobilisation and organisation initiated by emerging social movements and more established unions (Kalleberg 2018). Out of three types of anti-precarity struggle that occur in the West, two have taken place in Japan and South Korea: formal civic organisations–led and union-initiated.[5] In addition, anti-precarity struggles have achieved less than their counterparts in the West,

[5] Occupy protests occurred in Tokyo and Seoul in 2011, but they were much smaller in size and shorter in duration than those in the US and various European countries and were supported largely by trade unions and civic organisations. The protests in Japan intersected with anti-nuclear rallies after the Fukushima disaster, while those in Seoul focused on the free trade agreement with the US (O'Day 2012; Saito 2011; Ogawa 2013; Hap 2011).

because the changes in the world of work in the region occur in a context where labour and broader society movements have been relatively weaker than those in the early industrialised economies in the West.

O'Day (2012) explores how some *freeters* have initiated several protests against precarious work and broader austerity within the last decade. Like the Occupy and *los indignados* movements, the *freeters'* protests align with diverse groups of people, such as the working poor and those not in education, employment, or training (NEET). These protests are organised by community unions—new forms of unionisation that address the concerns of irregular workers who are largely excluded from their enterprise unions—often through partnerships with various social movements. Sharing some similarities with worker centres in the West (discussed in the previous section), the activism of the Japanese community unions represents the first type of anti-precarity struggle. However, despite their vibrant activism, the size of Japanese community unions tends to be small (Watanabe 2015). Their human and financial resources are also much smaller compared with those of traditional unions. This hinders them from pushing for broader labour reform, although they have been successful in helping individuals and segmented groups of workers.

Community unions have also expanded in South Korea to address the needs of workers who are largely unrepresented by big enterprise unions. Shin (2010, 2013) elaborates on the changes that took place after the 1997–1998 crisis that created two categories of workers in major companies: standard and non-standard. The latter group receives different wages, is largely unionised and is often excluded from social protection. Notwithstanding such difficulties, non-standard workers have organised themselves and, with the help of social movement organisations, they have organised some major strikes since the 2000s. These have achieved some success in protecting jobs and employment status, and they have contributed to making precarious work an issue during presidential and general elections. Nonetheless, Lee (2015b) notes that disparities between regular and non-regular workers continue to maintain hostile conditions for the formation of broad-based labour movements. Those in different types of employment tend to focus on 'job protection or conversion without seeing broad labor issues or building solidarity' (Lee 2015b, 453).

The second type of anti-precarity struggle that manifests in advanced economies in East Asia is the one led by trade unions. Watanabe (2015) explains how the decline of trade unionism prompted some enterprise unions to reach out to and organise non-regular workers and unorganised regular workers in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). However, many

enterprise unions continue to be hesitant to organise these workers because their interests often conflict with those of regular workers in large companies, who continue to be the main concern of the unions. South Korean enterprise unions have also attempted to organise and convert non-regular to regular workers and improve their conditions of work. Nevertheless, in general, their attempts have been inadequate, with most firms forbidding such workers from joining unions and many unions themselves excluding the workers from membership (Lee 2015b).

Anti-precarity struggles in the advanced economies of East Asia have attained less success than those in the West. Although the struggles in the West remain segmented and fragmented, they have achieved notable nation-wide and/or cross-country victories. The union-led J4J campaign (mentioned in the previous section), for instance, has unionised hundreds of thousands of migrant cleaners and janitors across the US and Canada. In contrast to anti-precarity struggles in East Asia, those in the West have emerged in contexts where labour and broader society movements have been stronger for historical reasons. Hence, alliances between unions and non-labour groups have had more success in grassroots organising of precarious workers than in East Asia. As such, the J4J campaign provides an example of how the immigrant labour movement in the US (Basok 2008; Milkman 2011) involve unions that join forces with immigrant rights movements, which are historically connected to the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

The relatively limited achievements of the struggle to resist increasing precarity in East Asia are attributable to the demobilisation of the working class and other forms of society-based movements prior to the peak of industrialisation. As argued by Jayasuriya and Rodan (2007, 777), in many Asian countries, the attempt to build democracy has had to confront 'unfavorable geopolitical circumstances, late industrialization and growing economic globalization'. Focusing on South-East Asia, Jayasuriya and Rodan (2007) draw attention to the role of the Cold War in reinforcing the capacity of authoritarian states to curb the consolidation of organised labour and other potential forms of collective organisations. As previously discussed, similar developments also took place in Japan and South Korea, where the demobilisation of labour was supported by the US-led anti-communist purge. This history of the repression of society-based movements has conditioned the continuous marginalisation of an array of social forces even after the unravelling of authoritarianism.

Rodan (2018, 49) stresses that the legacies facilitate the emergence of forms of civil society expression that rarely involve 'powerful class-based organizations'. Focusing on South-East Asia, Jayasuriya and Rodan (2007, 786) assert that these expressions often manifest in informal

protest actions, which tend 'to be poorly coordinated and often transitionary'. This tendency is also observable in Japan, where constitutional democracy was introduced in 1947 within the Allied Occupation of Japan (1946–1952), under which the US-led purging of various leftist groups occurred (Andrews 2016, 14–17). Against this backdrop, the demobilisation of labour that started in 1947, as previously discussed, and the purge of the Japanese Communist Party (JPC), which prompted the latter to renounce its militant means in the 1950s, eventually led to the creation of the New Left. The latter was a disparate reaction to the state-led control of the established left-wing groups. Various social movements, including those influenced by the New Left, continue to exist in contemporary Japan, although they have been less than cohesive.

Likewise, the US's insistence on keeping South Korea in its sphere of influence since the late 1940s has helped to launch a systematic anti-communist purge that dismantled the left under Syngman Rhee's presidency (1948–1960). Although oppositional movements have continued to exist in South Korea, they are not a direct continuation of the politics that existed before the Korean War (Hart-Landsberg 1989). Whereas New Left alliances emerged in the 1990s, after South Korea's transition to democracy, they have remained disorganised and lack a strong social base. Wong (2004) shows that they can do little to challenge the delegitimation of the left in global geopolitics. They must try hard not to be labelled leftist organisations, and they struggle to broaden their mass base, thus continuing to experience some form of marginalisation. It remains difficult for them to effectively represent the interests of the working class and the poor. Thus, their potential to organise those who engage in insecure jobs remains unrealised.

In summary, in the advanced economies of East Asia, rapid economic growth during the heyday of industrialisation created an era in which the SER was accepted as the norm, supported by a productivist welfare state. However, the faster pace of industrialisation meant that labour and broader society movements encountered exclusionary environments under which non-competitive state-controlled institutions were created to facilitate the demobilisation of their power. In Japan and South Korea, precarious work has expanded substantially in the aftermath of the 1997–1998 crisis, facilitated by weakened unions. At the same time, workers have been exposed to mechanisms that condition their acceptance of increasing labour precariousness and self-exploitation, including the instilment of the entrepreneurial identity and the trap of debt.

Among the three forms of anti-precarity struggles that occur in the West, two have manifested in Japan and South Korea: the formal civic organisation–led and union-initiated. In the context where the SER used to be the norm, the struggles resort to precarity as a framework for political actions. Yet, they have achieved less than their Western counterparts owing to the relative

weakness of labour and broader society movements. The limited influence of these movements on society has made it difficult for ideas that challenge the structural underpinning of the expansion of precarious work and inequality to gain mainstream traction. This has undermined support for cross-class mobilisations that characterise amorphous anti-precarity struggles.

Union-Centred Anti-Precarity Movements in Middle-Income Countries in South-East Asia

Following the original NIEs of East Asia, the aspiring NIEs (Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia) started the process of rapid industrialisation in the 1970s. Thailand and Indonesia's adoption of EOI, in the 1970s and 1980s respectively, created a period of steady economic growth over the decades that followed. Owing to its important role as one of the main beneficiaries of export manufacturing production from Japan, Korea and Taiwan, Thailand's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) grew steadily from 1957 until 1997 (Hewison and Tularak 2013). Except for the sharp downturn caused by the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis, growth has been generally high since the mid-1980s. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, high economic growth was initially stimulated by the oil boom in the 1970s, and later by the rapid expansion of the export manufacturing sector, accompanied by the growing service and construction sectors and foreign direct investment (Isaac and Sitalaksmi 2008). Thus, the growth rate in Indonesia was high between 1968 and 1996, with the highest growth taking place between 1988 and 1995.

However, the scale and pace of industrialisation in the aspiring NIEs was inadequate to create stable employment for the majority of the population. Different from the experience of the advanced economies in the West and East Asia, precarious work had long been the standard in the low- and middle-income economies of South-East Asia.[6] In Thailand and Indonesia, despite the expansion of employment in the industrial and services sectors that accompanied high economic growth, agricultural employment has remained significant. Informality has also always been high. Up to the 2000s, around 40% of workers in Thailand and Indonesia remained in the agricultural sector, where wages are the lowest (Hewison and Tularak 2013). The proportion of formal employment to total employment in Indonesia has also tended to be low, reaching 30% in 1990 and slightly above 40% in 2000 (Isaac and Sitalaksmi 2008). Similarly, based on 2006 data, the informal sector in Indonesia makes up around 60% of the labour force.

[6] Thailand was categorised as a lower-middle-income economy between 1989 and 2009. Meanwhile, Indonesia was categorised as a lower-income economy from 1989 to 1994 and from 1998 to 2002 and as lower-middle-income economy from 1995 to 1997 and from 2004 to 2018. Thailand and Indonesia have been categorised as upper-middle-income economies since 2010 and 2019 respectively (World Bank 2021).

In contexts where the informal economy has been pervasive, earlier forms of precarious work arrangements, especially those practiced in urban areas, have been exploited by firms to reduce labour costs in the gig economy, as will be detailed in Chapter 4. Researchers have therefore consistently demonstrated the role of the gig economy in South and South-East Asia in perpetuating 'earlier regimes of informal piecework prevalent' there (Mazumdar 2020, 235). In Thailand and Indonesia, these informal activities are pervasive in the motorcycle taxi business, with which online *ojek* and taxi are often associated, and which have exploded in size in Bangkok and Jakarta since the economic meltdown of 1997-1998 (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016; Sopranzetti 2018). In India, the informal economy – which absorbs 90% of the labour force – includes *autorickshaws* (battery-operated rickshaws and *kaali-peeli* (black-and-yellow) taxis (Agarwala 2014). In the Phillipines, informal transport services include tricycles (motorcycles with sidecars) (Cervero 2000).

Furthermore, in South-East Asian countries, rapid industrialisation led by authoritarian states has contributed to conditioning the formation of exclusionary social and political environments (Hadiz 1997). In such contexts, organised labour, along with left-wing political movements, was heavily demobilised prior to the arrival of the EOI. In Thailand, after taking part in overthrowing the absolute monarchy in 1932, labour was granted the right to openly organise. However, this was short lived, as the state soon applied strict censorship, banned communism and outlawed political parties (Hewison and Brown 1994). The following decades witnessed dynamic underground labour activity and organisation, accompanied by a limited degree of labour militancy. Working-class protests thus became part of larger social protests that overthrew the military government in 1973. Yet, the resumption of military rule in 1976 intensified control over labour and the left. Thus, union activism has remained weak in both the breadth of coverage and in workplace industrial relations.

In Indonesia, although a radical stream of the labour movement had developed since the early post-colonial period, it failed to establish a unified movement. Nonetheless, it was the military-backed New Order (1966–1998) that severely crushed labour militancy, starting with the abolishment of the Indonesian Communist Party and its associated leftist unions, which were the new regime's designated political enemies (Hadiz 1997; Ford 2009). It then continued with the establishment of a single union policy as an instrument of control, as well as the violent repression of worker activism (Hadiz 1998; Ford 2006). In 1973, the remaining labour organisations were forced to join the single state-sanctioned federation known as FSBI (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Indonesia*; All-Indonesia Labour Federation), which changed to SPSI (*Serikat*

Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia; All-Indonesia Workers' Union in 1985) and then FSPSI (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*; Federation of All-Indonesia Workers' Union) in 1995. Overall, the control and repression of labour activism contributed to the demobilisation of labour, thus undermining its significance as a social and political force.

Similar to the developed economies of East Asia, the end of the Asian financial crisis witnessed the unquestionable expansion of neoliberal policies and practices in South-East Asia toward a more flexible labour market, which further weakened the (already weak) labour movements. In Thailand and Indonesia, the shift is tied to the casualisation of the formal sectors, along with the expansion of the informal economy (Ofreneo 2015). While the majority of informal workers in Thailand are employed in the informal agriculture and fishing sectors, casualisation also arises in sectors such as hotels and restaurants, wholesale and retail trade, construction and manufacturing (Hewison and Tularak 2013). In Indonesia, while the informal economy continues to be large, widespread practices of short-term contracting, outsourcing, apprenticeships, part-time work, piece-rates and on-call work in the formal sector contribute to the expansion of precarious work in the formal sector (Tjandraningsih 2015).

South-East Asian countries share the experience of the developed economies of East Asia, where the expansion of precarious work is accompanied by some progress in the distribution of welfare (Lee 2015a; Kalleberg 2018). Nonetheless, such a development in this region has not been sufficient in limiting the degrading effect of the expansion of precarious work. In Thailand, healthcare has been more accessible since 2001, when a populist political party led by Thaksin Shinawatra delivered an affordable package of universal healthcare provisions (Hewison and Tularak 2013). In Indonesia, the gradual introduction of new social programs after the end of authoritarianism has improved welfare distribution in a significant way (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016). However, in Thailand and Indonesia, the cost-sharing formula for contributions to the social security scheme requires the government, employee and employer to each pay a fixed percentage of the worker's wage. Yet the scheme remains weighted toward formal workers, thereby excluding most informal workers that have long overcrowded the labour market.

In Thailand, the post-1997 expansion of precarious work and improvements in the distribution of welfare created the precondition for the emergence of various state-led projects designated to shape citizens' entrepreneurial identity. As elucidated by Sopranzetti (2017), some of the policies implemented in the aftermath of the crisis were designed to transform small businesses and low-income earners into 'free entrepreneurs'. The government did so by providing the 'entrepreneurs' with easy access to credit to support not only their economic activities but also

their consumption. Here, expanding welfare provisions are envisioned as the means to help entrepreneurs cope with difficulties—particularly health expenses and outstanding debts. These initiatives that emerged under Thaksin's premiership (2001–2006) and survived its deposition in 2006 contribute to motivating workers to accept their precarity. Amid the pervasiveness of precarious work in informal and formal economies, the project accentuates workers' entrepreneurial aspirations, under which small-scale self-employment has come to be associated with freedom, while masking the harmful effects of precarious labour.

In Thailand, as well as in Indonesia, the expansion of precarious work has also been accompanied by a general improvement in access to education, which is a product of the economic growth of the pre-crisis era. Thailand, especially, has managed to produce one of the highest rates of university graduates among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (OECD 2013). Higher education offers potential pathways for younger generations aspiring to a middle-class lifestyle marked by a culture of consumerism, where urban-dwelling individuals, regardless of their income level, are likely to consume non-essential goods that serve as constitutive elements of their daily life (Chua 2002). Existing research (Simone and Fauzan 2013; Warouw 2014) demonstrates how the difficulties involved in finding stable full-time jobs push Indonesians—especially the lower class—to resort to individualised entrepreneurial efforts. While struggling, many of them maintain their aspiration to a middle-class job and lifestyle, with 'the promises of a better life just out of reach' (Naafs 2018, 63). This conditions the reproduction of entrepreneurship identity, which helps them to accept their precarity.

Overall, the expansion of the scope and reach of credit helps the populace to achieve middle-class lifestyles through consumption-based debt. Like in the early industrialisers, the expansion of credit in Asia is also sustained by financialisation—driven by financial deregulation throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Karwowski and Stockhammer 2017). Important for our discussion here is the consequence of financialisation on rising household debt, demonstrating the extent to which the populace is entrapped in the circuit of debt. Karwowski and Stockhammer (2017, 76) observe a high household debt-to-GDP ratio of 92% and 87% in the UK and US respectively during 2008–2015. Close to this level is South Korea, which has household debt of 79% of GDP. South-East Asian economies follow suit at markedly lower levels: Thailand with 58% and Indonesia with less than 20%.

Although the household debt-to-GDP ratio is relatively low, credit is now much more accessible for the Indonesian middle class. Noerhidajati et al. (2020) observe that easier access to the financial system allows middle-income earners to increasingly rely on credit to fund their

vehicular and housing needs. They also find that middle-class households often have higher consumption levels without being supported by adequate financial capacity. Given the pervasiveness of insecure jobs, much of the middle class is therefore in an inherently vulnerable position. The need to maintain middle-class lifestyles, thus increasing debt, increases this vulnerability. Viewed in this way, debt has become a mechanism of control through which self-exploitation is justified.

For late industrialisers, like Thailand and Indonesia, the processes that condition the formation of the entrepreneurial identity take place in a context where the working-class identity has never strongly developed. The latter is impeded by the historical normalisation of precarious work and the relative weakness of labour, even before rapid industrialisation. Therefore, in this region, precarious work emerges as a discursive strategy that frames political action only in one form of struggle: the one spearheaded by unions. Although some of these union-led anti-precarity movements can attain some tangible material benefits for workers, they are far from achieving what has been attained by their counterparts in the West. In contexts where labour and broader society movements were heavily demobilised in previous struggles, there is a small chance that unions can join forces with non-labour groups in the grassroots organisation of precarious workers. Thus, it becomes challenging for unions to use anti-precarity discourse to leverage the effect of precarious workers' self-organising attempts.

In Thailand, unions in the manufacturing sector have been at the forefront of the struggle against work insecurity. Yet, flexible employment has significantly undermined their capacity to collectively organise workers and improve their conditions (Hewison and Tularak 2013). Workers' self-organising attempts also occur among those 'lacking the protections of formal union membership' (e.g. migrants) supported mainly by NGOs (Campbell 2013). Although they have gained some benefits, like wage rises, they remain disconnected from unions. In Indonesia, unions and their allies have achieved some success in pushing the government to enact agreements to reduce outsourcing practices and implement legislations on social security (Tjandraningsih 2013, 2015). However, it remains challenging for the alliance to safeguard the implementation of the agreements and the laws. Unions have also attempted to organise outsourced and contract workers, especially in the manufacturing sector. Yet, most workers remain reluctant to join unions, and attempts to unionise them have been challenged by local community members who depend on the insecure jobs that unions attempt to abolish for their livelihood.

Like the experience of the advanced economies in East Asia, as discussed in the previous section, the demobilisation of labour and other forms of society-based movements in South-East Asia is attributable to their repression under authoritarianism in the Cold War context. As in many East Asian countries, the repression of these movements in Thailand and Indonesia occurred alongside struggles to eradicate the influence of left-wing political movements. As asserted by Jayasuriya and Rodan (2007, 778), 'democratic transition in the context of weakening left-wing politics has made capital and the middle class less fearful of democratic politics'. In South-East Asia, where the demobilisation of society-based movements, including that of labour, is more complete, forces that can potentially support sustained forms of class mobilisation have been severely hampered. This has conditioned their continued incapacity for mobilisation and collective action even after democratisation.[7]

Without the presence of cohesive labour and broader society movements, precarious workers are more inclined to be mobilised by different groups for various ends, including those representing reactionary and populist movements (Standing 2011). The problem is not exclusive to Thailand and Indonesia. As noted by Kalleberg (2018, 17), 'the resulting politics of fear that are rooted in these forms of precarity are reflected in the rise of right-wing, anti-immigrant parties and sentiment in countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Nordic countries to name a few'. Yet, where labour and society-based movements have been much weaker, the probability of precarious workers being mobilised by progressive forces that can provide democratic–based solutions is much smaller. Instead, their mobilisation can provide the means through which diverse agendas, including those that represent non-democratic ideologies, can be advanced (Rodan 2018).

in 2010, Thailand witnessed the mobilisation of the precarious working poor during the Red Shirt protests to support Thaksin's premiership. For Forsyth (2010), the support from the poor was not an indication of a unified class-based movement. Instead, it was generated by a coalition between low- and middle-income peasantries who felt excluded from the development in Thailand, and by Thaksin and his supporters who sought support to oppose the new regime and engineer a return to power. Behind the formation of the coalition is the failure of labour and

[7] As argued by Jayasuriya and Rodan (2007), the structures of the political economies in South-East Asia are underpinned by a distinct political logic under which the representative institutions of democracy have been marginalised. Therefore, in post-authoritarian Indonesia, we witness powerful corporate groups, which Robison and Hadiz (2004) call the 'oligarchy', act as gatekeepers within a reformed parliament, after previously being linked to a strong and powerful presidency. In Thailand, a complex system of checks and balances was established under the Thai Constitution of 1997. However, many of these checks and balances have been repeatedly subverted because of the absence of substantial linkages between intermediary organisations and formal representative organisations.

broader society movements to organise this section of the working population. The Communist Party of Thailand, which first attempted to mobilise the poor peasantry, had already been crushed by the state in the 1980s, and so had no role to play in further struggles. It has never been replaced by another identifiable and long-term left-wing, or pro-poor, source of political power.

In Indonesia, the precarious working poor have also become the target of mobilisation by groups that exhibit violent and coercive characteristics and flirt with those in power (Mudhoffir 2017; Yasih 2017). The possibility of generating this kind of mobilisation is greater when unions and society-based organisations lack the social base to organise the working class or the poor more generally, especially after the demise of the Indonesian Communist Party and its allied unions and mass organisations. Under authoritarianism (1966–1998), the only vehicle available for pro-poor mobilisation was NGOs (Aspinall 2005, 92). NGOs began to flourish in the 1970s and prospered mostly because of their non-oppositional stance to the state—including during the New Order. They favoured partnerships with the government and did not aim to organise a struggle for political power or mobilise a mass base. Thus, they have remained plagued by dependency on foreign funding and the lack of a strong social base.

In Thailand and Indonesia, collective organisational attempts that have come to be aligned with political efforts to advance diverse agendas have often involved motorcycle taxi drivers. Yet drivers' politics have tended to be non-ideological and pragmatic, largely because of the continuing absence of effective left-wing or pro-poor grassroots vehicles of mobilisation.

In Thailand, groups of motorcycle taxi drivers who were disgruntled by the meddling of 'influential people' in their activities were at the forefront of the 2010 Red Shirt Protests, thus siding with former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in one of the most pivotal conflicts in the country's recent history (Sopranzetti 2014, 2018). The military coup of 2014, however, which saw the overthrow of a pro-Thaksin government, led to a switch of allegiances among several drivers' organisations, 'demonstrating that political cleavage can be manipulated from above and by the military' (Hewison 2018, 3). In Indonesia, *ojek* drivers, along with various kinds of urban informal sector workers, have become a target of political mobilisations by contending forces (Amin 2012). The way such mobilisations have affected forms of resistance in the online transport and delivery service, will be explored in detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

In short, Thailand and Indonesia have witnessed the demobilisation of labour in previous struggles, which has paved the way for the state to exercise strict control at the advent of rapid

industrialisation. Another important feature of these late industrialisers is the pervasiveness of work in the informal and agriculture sectors, where precarity is prevalent despite periods of high economic growth. Precarious work further expanded after the 1997–1998 crisis through the accelerated casualisation of the formal labour market, which contributed to the weakening of the (already weak) unions. Under such circumstances, the effect of the recent expansion of precarious work is difficult to address. Here, working-class identity has never developed, and precarious work has been always perceived as normal. Thus, most workers are amenable to the imposition of neoliberal entrepreneurial identity, sustained by increasing consumption and debt.

In a context where working-class identity is relatively weak and the SER never considered the norm, precarious work overtly manifests as a problem to be addressed mostly in union-led movements. Growing casualisation of the formal sector of the economy has severely weakened the stronghold of unions; therefore, resisting precarious work has become one of the main agendas of unions. However, unions have had little influence on society outside their traditional base (industrial workers), even after the unravelling of New Order authoritarianism. Organic links between labour and broader society movements have also continued to be absent. Although attempts at collective organisations often emerged among precarious workers in the urban informal sector, including motorcycle taxi drivers, their weak links with labour and broader society movements have made grassroots organising of precarious workers more difficult. These have all challenged the use of precarity as a framework for political action by broader society movements, thus hampering the emergence of civic organisation–led movements that overtly resist labour-related precarity.

Summary

This chapter elucidated the major contradictions that accompany the expansion of neoliberal economic globalisation in its material and ideological manifestations, which are intertwined in a mutually reinforcing relationship. The discussion was focused on the way contradictory forces allow heterogeneity in workers' subjective experiences amid the recent expansion of precarious work, under which workers are exposed to processes that condition their consent, while making collective resistance possible. The discussion was guided by Foucault's concept of governmentality as a means to understand the various ways in which the workers' milieu has been shaped by socioeconomic and political changes associated with neoliberal transformations and its effect on workers' working and living conditions, as well as on their consciousness and politics. The use of a Foucauldian-inspired framework here means that a great deal of attention

is given to history to understand how the world of work has changed and how workers have responded.

In applying the governmentality-inspired framework, this study rereads Foucault as a historical and materialist thinker. In doing so, it traces historical trajectories that condition the expansion of precarious work, as well as the ways in which it has been normalised and resisted. The chapter subsequently demonstrated how insights from the Foucauldian framework can be combined with Resnick and Wolff's (2006) non-deterministic type of historical materialist approach to deal with political–economic problems left unaddressed by previous studies on precarity. These problems include the structure of the labour market and the labour–state–capital relationship, which is perceived as being in a constitutive relation with social–cultural processes that condition workers' consent and resistance to precarious work. Cognisant of the uneven development of global capitalism, a historical comparative approach is applied here to understand the diverse processes that shape the experience of Indonesian workers as part of the international political–economic landscape.

Although focusing on the recent expansion of precarious work, this chapter situates it as an outcome of different industrialisation experiences. In advanced economies in the West, where industrialisation occurred earlier and more gradually, the working class was nurtured in a social democratic milieu, which allowed labour and broader social movements to progress as a significant social and political force. The amalgamation of their power (despite variations in different places) and the economic progress of the postwar era conditioned the acceptance of the SER as the norm. In East Asia, industrialisation occurred much later and much more rapidly, exposing the working-class and broader society movements to an exclusionary political milieu where non-competitive institutions were created to facilitate the control of these forces.[8] While the scale of industrialisation in the original NIEs eventually pushed for the acceptance of the SER as the norm, work has always been precarious for most people in the aspiring NIEs.

The expansion of precarious work in divergent contexts discussed in this chapter has been linked to the weakening of organised labour movements. This development has been accompanied by the progression of various processes that condition the instilment of entrepreneurial identity, which acclimatises workers to accept the insecurity of their labour and dismantle the basis of

[8] In Japan, democratisation was achieved through the US Occupation-made constitution of the late 1940s, which allowed the US to intervene in Japan's political process to ensure conservative political dominance. The legacies of the alliances between US operatives and domestic conservative elites remain in contemporary Japan 'to such an extent that post-Cold War politics has limited human rights initiatives and stunted electoral and progressive politics' (Hansson, Hewison and Glassman 2020, 40).

their solidarity. Much attention was given in this chapter to explore the different ways in which the processes have operated in different contexts. In the more advanced economies in the West and East Asia, the process involves the transformation of previous patterns of the SER, although labour and broader society movements are relatively weaker in the latter. In South-East Asia, workers are acclimatised to the entrepreneurial identity in a context where work has always been precarious. Labour and broader society movements have been much weaker there due the history of repression, which decapitates their mobilising capacity even after the unravelling of authoritarianism.

The ways in which precarious work has expanded have profound effects on workers' consciousness, organising attempts and politics. There are variations in the contours of various anti-precarity struggles that emerge globally, as well as the effects they generate. In advanced economies in the West and East Asia, where the SER used to be the norm, the problematising of precarious work serves as a discursive strategy that frames political actions spearheaded by unions and formal civic organisations. In the West, precarious work also serves as a frame for political action of several amorphous movements. In general, the struggles in the West have achieved more than in East Asia. In South-East Asia, where the SER was never the norm, the notion of anti-precarity is most clearly expressed as a frame for political action by union-led movements. But inherent union weakness, and the absence of organic links between them and broader society movements, adds another challenge to the grassroots organisation of precarious workers.

Further, this chapter outlined the principal features of the approach that will be used in the remainder of the study to explore in detail the Indonesian case, as summarised in Table 2.1. The approach emphasises the contradictory nature of workers' subjective experience, which provides the parameters of possibility for the development of consent to and resistance against increasing precarity. Such a process, involving the formation of identity, is linked to the contradictions of working and living conditions under neoliberalism. On the basis of this approach, the next chapter will examine the historical trajectory of the expansion of a new form of precarious work, tied to large-scale capital accumulation, amid the neoliberalisation of Indonesia's economy. The historical trajectory set the stage for the emergence of the online transport industry, as well as the opportunities that are available for workers, which determine their consciousness, organisation and politics.

Table 2.1. The Expansion of Precarious Work and Workers' Responses

	Advanced Economies in the West	Advanced Economies of East Asia	Middle-Income Economies in South-East Asia
Historical emergence	Early industrialising countries; social democratic milieu	Late industrialising countries; exclusionary social and political frameworks under which state-controlled institutions were created to facilitate the control of society-based organisations	Very late industrialising countries; exclusionary social and political frameworks that contribute to the continued weakness of labour and broader society movements after democratisation
Social and political environment	Workers are granted freedom of association and are relatively independent from the state; liberal, conservative, social democratic welfare regimes	Unions are relatively weak outside the enterprise-based system; society-based organisations are relatively weak; productivist welfare states	Unions and society-based organisations have been historically weak; welfare states have been less developed
Expansion of precarious work	SER as the norm prior to neoliberal transformation in the 1970s	SER as the norm up to the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis	Precarious work as the norm, except for a very small number of privileged workers in the formal sector, even during the peak of industrialisation
Formation of consent to precarious work arrangements	Celebration of flexible work, rising consumerism and debt and deeper penetration of middle-class values erode working-class identity; yet the SER used to be the norm and labour and broader society movements are stronger	There is a shift from the salarymen to the entrepreneurial identity, sustained by increased exposure to debt; in a context where the SER used to be the norm, but labour and broader society movements are weaker	Instilment of the entrepreneurial identity is sustained by rising consumerism and debt, while the working-class identity is never fully developed; in a context where the SER has never been the norm and labour and broader society movements are much weaker
Workers' responses	Notion of anti-precarity or broader anti-austerity is expressed clearly in three forms of struggles: union-led, formal civic organisation–led, amorphous protests; although winning some important victories, they remain segmented and are far from reaching a consensus on the way to deal with the neoliberal assault	Precarity serves as a discursive strategy that frames political actions in two forms of struggles: union-spearheaded and formal civic organisation–led; despite their vibrancy, they continue to struggle to attain standards in the West	Precarity serves as a discursive framework for political action mostly in movements connected with unions, whose focus has mostly been on industrial workers in the formal sector; achieving a minimum effect because of the absence of labour and broader society movements as a significant social and political force

Chapter 3:

Socioeconomic Change and the Normalisation of a New Precarity: The Indonesian Trajectory

Historicising Precarious Work

This chapter aims to explicate the historical process under which a new form of precarious work—one that expands through the mechanics of large-scale capital accumulation—became the norm in Indonesia, and its consequence for workers' consciousness, identity, organisation and politics. Following the historical and comparative approach of this study (as described in Chapter 2), this chapter discusses the historicity of the expansion of the new precarity, under circumstances that are specific to Indonesia, as well as forms of anti-precarity resistance, prior to the expansion of the gig economy. The discussion in this chapter, along with that in Chapter 2, provide the basis for analysis of individual and collective identities among online taxi and motorcycle drivers in Indonesia, as elaborated in subsequent chapters.

This chapter focuses on the period that began with rapid industrialisation under New Order authoritarianism (1966–1998) and eventually facilitated Indonesia's gradual incorporation into neoliberal economic globalisation. At the global level, the latter has conditioned the normalisation of precarious work as part of the mechanics of capital accumulation. The chapter also discusses the post 1997-1998 expansion of precarious work. In Indonesia, the normalisation of the new precarity – which has placed limits on today's anti-precarity struggles – has been conditioned by the pervasiveness of informal activities and the insecurity of formal sector work, as well as the unreliability of the social security system. In urban and peri-urban settings, the normalisation of the new precarity has been sustained by, and in turn, reiterates, the formation of entrepreneurial identity. While attempts at collective organisation have continued among the precarious working poor, the ineffectiveness of labour and broader society movements have limited the consolidation of workers' efforts to challenge the neoliberal structures that underpin their precarity.

This chapter argues that rapid industrialisation during the New Order and economic reforms after the fall of international oil prices in the 1980s, but particularly after the 1997–1998 crisis, gradually brought about, and made increasingly common, a new form of precarious work. An older form of precarious work was already predominant throughout much of Indonesian society relating to the prevalence of the subsistence agricultural economic activities, some of which was seasonal in nature, prior to rapid industrialisation. Yet, amid rapid industrialisation, which coincided with accelerated urbanisation, precarious labour was absorbed into the rising

'modern' industrial sector in urban centres as more workers moved there from the 'traditional' agricultural sector in rural areas. Workers in the formal industrial sector have more stable incomes and jobs compared with those in the agricultural sector. However, they experience a degree of precariousness because rapid industrialisation in Indonesia relied heavily on a cheap and politically repressed labour force.

Precarious work became more prominent in the formal sector after the economic crisis because of the effect of the process of casualisation on that sector (Tjandraningsih 2013). Available data demonstrate that the share of casual wage workers—defined as 'persons who do not work permanently for other people, employers, or institutions, and have worked with more than one employer during the last month'—increased fast, especially in regard to men in non-agricultural work, from less than 10% in 2001 to more than 17% in 2009 (Matsumoto and Veric 2011, 8–9). The rise is attributed, in part, to the shift towards a casual form of employment in the formal sector. The casualisation of the formal sector led to the start of a new form of precarity that has come to be directly instrumentalised by large-scale capital to suppress labour costs, and that has become more prevalent as the Indonesian socioeconomic landscape has further evolved.

Furthermore, even the impressive scale of industrialisation could not address the problem of chronic labour oversupply, thus resulting in the pervasiveness of an informal economy generally characterised by severe precariousness. Recent official statistics show that the level of informal employment continues to be high in Indonesia, reaching 60.47% in August 2020, though the Covid-19 pandemic would have made a contribution. This represented a 4.59% increase compared to the level recorded in August 2019 (BPS 2020). Habibi and Juliawan (2018, 15) show that the percentage of informal workers in the urban labour population decreased from 36.64% in 1986 to 31.69% in 1996 before rising to 41.41% in 2006 and decreasing to 35.3% in 2014. Nonetheless, their absolute numbers increased from 4,986,146 in 1996 to 19,641,659 in 2014. This indicates that in addition to the movement of agricultural labour to the modern industrial sector, workers have also moved into city-based informal work. Special attention will be given here to the pervasive urban informal economy that sets the stage for the rise of the online transport industry in Indonesia. This new business, as part of the gig economy, institutionalises the earlier forms of precarious work in the informal sector so that they are extensively used in the formal sector, as explored in Chapter 4.

This chapter also observes that welfare benefits have remained inaccessible to much of the population despite the welfare schemes hatched after the 1997–1998 Asian economic crisis. Under the New Order, the welfare system was designed to protect specific social groups in

formal employment. Indonesia's social policy regime then shifted toward a more universalistic orientation after the crisis. The transformation is attributed, in part, to the pressures generated by unions, NGOs and their allies, who have had more freedom to operate since the end of authoritarianism. The transformation is also a product of a strategy designed to reduce the risk resulting from resistance to the implementation of the structural adjustment program. This program was supported by international development organisations and was designed as the cornerstone of Indonesia's economic recovery. However, the provision of social services has remained challenged by the welfare regime's exclusivist nature, rampant corruption, predation and rent-seeking, including under the present Jokowi government, which initially rose to power with an emphasis on health and social welfare systems.

It is also shown here that the expansion of precarious work in urban and peri-urban settings, along with massive urbanisation, has contributed to the idealisation of entrepreneurship as a way of life among workers. Commencing in the 1980s, new employment opportunities, linked to the booming of manufacturing and better educational infrastructures, have encouraged massive rural–urban migration, especially to major cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Palembang and Medan, as well as their surrounding areas. The major destination for rural–urban migrants is Jabodetabek, which is the name given to the area covered by Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi. While the physical growth of the city and the surrounding peri-urban areas has instilled urban dwellers with new dreams and desires for a modern urban lifestyle, many of them have ended up in precarious work, which has expanded substantially since the 1997–1998 crisis.

Last, despite grievances, the growing number of precarious workers in the urban economy has not coalesced around a shared identity that would enable the development of a coherent movement to address the structural roots of their problems, as envisaged by Standing (2011). These workers have organised collectively to address specific issues, like the eviction of petty traders and the banning of some modes of informal public transport, although less freely during the New Order and more openly after its demise. Nonetheless, their activism continues to be prone to fragmentation owing to the heterogeneity of their work conditions and the difficulties in uniting them. The inability of these workers to become a more significant social force is partly attributable to the demobilisation of labour and broader social movements during the previous authoritarian period of recent Indonesian history. Although Indonesia's transition to democracy has created new opportunities for unions and NGOs to press their demands, they have remained largely ineffective in representing the interests of their lower-class constituents.

The arguments here are situated within larger debates on contemporary Indonesian society, workers and the labour movement in the post-authoritarian era. The tendency of some of the literature is to celebrate the vibrant activism of organised labour amid difficulties in breaking away from the legacies of authoritarianism. For instance, Juliawan (2011) draws attention to the proliferation of street protests but admits that Indonesian labour is yet to be an established political force. He ponders whether Indonesia has transformed into a 'movement society', which is a phenomenon 'in advanced industrialized countries in which social movements as a form of representing claims have become normalised political practice' (Juliawan 2011, 367). In another example, Caraway and Ford (2020) argue that despite the enormous structural barriers, the Indonesian labour movement has achieved more of its goals since the end of the New Order. They highlight how unions have won some important policy victories and have inserted their agenda into the political realm through engagement in electoral politics.

As observed by Hadiz and Robison (2013, 44), the point of such studies 'is to explore the possibly [sic] of social agency trumping structural constraints'. They do so by presenting some positive developments attained by local and grassroots organisations since the unravelling of authoritarianism. The tendency to stress individual (or organisational) ability to outmanoeuvre the structure could produce a misleading conclusion—that the former can simply 'accumulate resources such as wealth, authority, status, media control, and so on by virtue of the voluntary exercise of individual skills, including that of leadership' (Hadiz and Robison 2013, 40)—that underplays the contradictions of capitalist development in late industrialising countries like Indonesia. As discussed in Chapter 2, the range of possibilities available for labour are not infinite; rather, they are confined by the circumstances they inherit from previous struggles, linked to the trajectory of industrialisation and formation of working-class movements. While labour has room to manoeuvre, its movements are characterised by the continuous need to address the logic of the existing power structure.

The tendency to underexplore the contradictory nature of capitalist development is also observable in studies on workers' activism in the era of uberisation in Indonesia (see Ford and Honan 2017; Frey 2020) and globally (see Cobble 2016; Greenhouse 2016). These studies, like those that focus on post-authoritarian labour resurgence, are liable to neglect the influence of historically moulded social structures on present-day collective resistance to precarious work. Against such a backdrop, this chapter provides an overview of the historical processes that constrict the emergence of a coherent anti-precarity movement. It examines the difficulties in using precarious work as a framework for political action—partly because the SER was never a

norm in the first place—in a context where rapid industrialisation occurred at the same time as the expansion of neoliberal economic globalisation. It also explores the difficulties in organising precarious workers under circumstances where unions and broader society movements have been largely ineffective.

The chapter first explores the normalisation of a new kind of precarious work amid Indonesia's deeper incorporation into neoliberal global order that is increasingly tied to larger-scale processes of capital accumulation. It then examines the inadequacy of the social protection system in protecting those in precarious working and living conditions. The chapter subsequently investigates the effects of the expansion of precarious work in the urban and peri-urban areas of Jakarta as a form of neoliberal governance (as discussed in Chapter 2) on the formation of workers' entrepreneurial identity, under which entrepreneurship is idealised as a preferable way to live (McGuigan 2014). It investigates these issues in relation to the circumstances that maintain the weakness of unions and society-based movements. However, before examining socioeconomic transformation linked to the expansion of neoliberal economic globalisation, this chapter examines the expansion of an older form of precarious work prior to the New Order in Indonesia to establish the more longstanding historical context.

Precarious Work in Colonial Indonesia and the Early Indonesian Republic

Precarious work has been the experience of a vast majority of workers throughout the history of capitalism (Breman and Van der Linden 2014; Betti 2018). However, in some interpretations, its current incarnation is linked to the growing internationalisation of production and financial activities under neoliberal economic globalisation; thus, it differs from previous eras (Kalleberg and Hewison 2013). As argued by Kalleberg and Hewison (2015, 20–21), the development of global production chains that began in the 1970s has been accompanied by the restructuring of work on a global scale. This process has resulted in the relatively easier movement of goods, capital and people within and across national borders at an accelerating pace, thereby freeing employers from conventional temporal and spatial constraints. This has made it possible for employers to locate their production facilities more efficiently—usually where labour and materials are considerably cheaper. Further, advanced technologies and information have made it possible for capitalists to exert control over a labour process that has become more decentralised and spatially dispersed.

Kalleberg and Hewison (2013, 276) also assert that the era of neoliberal globalisation is characterised by the growing expansion of investment and commodity production. The rapid

increase of annual foreign direct investment inflows from an annual average of US$548 billion during 1994–1999 to more than $1.2 trillion in 2010 is indicative of how such expansion has taken place. As noted earlier, precarious work was expansive prior to the New Order, in a context where large-scale processes of capital accumulation were limited, except for niche sections of the economy such as the plantations sector. In light of this discussion, this section explores the expansion of an older form of precarious work in Indonesia prior to the emergence of (especially private) large-scale capital after the emergence of the New Order. The analysis pays attention to the idea that colonialism produced diverse effects across different regions of the world (Elmhirst and Saptari 2004, 17). It thus examines the distinct implications of global-local links fostered through Dutch colonialism on labour and precarity in Indonesia.

Overall, colonial capitalism in Indonesia, dominated by enclave export commodity production, did little to substantially change the structure of the pre-colonial economy, and thus the nature of work for the vast majority of Indonesians. An older kind of precarious work in the form of subsistence agricultural economic activities, some of them seasonal in nature, continued to persist. Subsistence farming, which is common in pre-industrial agricultural society, is often typified by the usage of almost all of the crops or livestock to maintain the farmers and their families, leaving them with very little surplus for trade. As demonstrated by the 1930 census, subsistence agriculture remained the main source of income for most Indonesians. While more than 1.3 million people earned their income from plantation agriculture, a larger number of people (more than 12 million) stayed in smallholder production (Mansvelt and Creutzberg 1979, 96). The number of people who stayed in the agricultural sector was much larger than those absorbed by the industrial sector, which reached around 300,000.

Working conditions in pre-industrial economies dominated by agricultural activities are extremely precarious because they are informally arranged with no protection. People often work for long hours and earn low and unstable incomes. Notwithstanding the pervasiveness of precarious work under colonialism, its manifestation was different from the new form ushered in by neoliberalism because of the limited scale of capital accumulation in the former. While the type of colonial capitalism—where enclave export commodity production predominated—led to important social and economic changes, it did little to advance the rapid spread of capitalist relations of production (Hadiz 1997, 44). As will be discussed in more detail in this section, because of the limited progress of industrialisation and urbanisation at this stage of history, the vast majority of Indonesians remained in subsistence farming. An array of non-traditional

economic activities—created by the plantation sector, industries and services—that hired people as wage labour only absorbed a minority of Indonesians.

Tracing the kind of capitalist development cultivated and promoted under Dutch colonialism, scholars show that important developments took place in the 1870s, when the colonial government instituted liberal agrarian reforms to replace the archaic cultivation system (Robison 2009, 6–7). The reforms allowed for the transformation of the mercantile colonial economy into a more modern and expansive capitalist enterprise. Capital investment in agriculture, which was made possible by the growing strength of the Dutch industrial and financial capitalist class at the time, went hand in hand with legislation, drafted in 1870 and 1875, allowing the long-term leasing of 'unused' land and shorter-term leasing of village communal land. The period 1870–1949 thus witnessed the conversion of more lands into plantations and an increase in the scale of these plantation enterprises. Along with the growing demand for capital investment, individual planters were increasingly being replaced by banks and large trading houses.

However, the scale of capitalist transformation at this later stage of colonialism was relatively limited, as the plantation sector—largely sugar on Java and coffee and sugar on Sumatera—continued to be the main basis of the rest of the modern capitalist economy (Gordon 1982, 172). This means that the development of banking, trade and manufacturing continued to depend on the sustainability of the plantation system. In this regard, Indonesia provides an example of a specific historical and social context in which 'the impulse of capitalism is so weak that it barely creates a ripple on the surface of feudal society' (Robison 2009, viii). Here, the development of capitalism created a social and economic environment predominated by the enclave export commodity production, whereby the state primarily constituted the interests of Dutch capital. The dominant economic force was in fact mostly Dutch finance capital in the form of the merchant banks and major trading conglomerates (Robison 1982, 49).

Under such circumstances, while industrial development started to take place, it progressed at a slow pace. Despite the significance of tin mining and petroleum production—the only modern economic activities relatively independent from the plantation sector—manufactures continued to be imported or produced locally on a small-scale household basis. Moreover, the relatively underdeveloped manufacturing sector was further weakened by the Great Depression of the 1930s, which dramatically decreased colonial government earnings from crop exports, thus severely affecting the import capability of the Dutch East Indies economy. Robison (2009, 4)

observes how this kind of colonial capitalism could not create substantial change in the structure of the economy:

> Village subsistence production continued to exist with the modern plantation sector, and elements of pre-capitalist political authority operated side by side with the Dutch colonial administration right up until the end of the colonial period. By the end of the colonial era, the Indonesian bourgeoisie was still relatively weakly developed and concentrated in the sector of trade.

The liberal agrarian reforms did, to an extent, generate a significant set of social–economic changes, particularly in Java, the centre of colonial economy and administration. Because of the development, more people were attracted to new job opportunities in the developing cities and towns and in plantation areas. For instance, the development of a railway system that was started in 1870, initially to transport plantation crops, linked all of the major cities in Java by 1894 (Shiraishi 1990, 8). The railway networks brought thousands of people from villages and small towns seeking jobs with better incomes (Ingleson 2014). The expansion of the rubber and tobacco plantations in Sumatra since around the 1860s and the 1910s, respectively, attracted hundreds of thousands of people from the poorest regions of Central and East Java (Li 2017). In this fashion, the socioeconomic reforms allowed for the creation of new non-traditional economic activities, under which a significant number of Indonesians were, for the first time, employed as wage labourers (Hadiz 1997).

These socioeconomic transformations set the stage for the expansion of a new form of precarious work, tied to the growth of a larger scale of capital, in the decades that followed. The introduction of industrialisation under colonialism allowed workers to move from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector. However, as previously mentioned, industrialisation made limited progress, even at the later stage of colonialism. Mansvelt and Creutzberg (1979, 46–47) estimate that in 1939, around 300,000 workers were employed in 5,000 factories that utilised ‘considerable mechanical installations, electrical steam power, and/or conducted in relatively large establishments of 50 or more workers’. The expanding cities and towns also meant an increase in their capacity to attract business and create jobs that drive growth. However, as mentioned earlier, the level of urbanisation was relatively limited at this stage; up to the 1930s, only 8.7% of people in Java resided in towns occupied by more than 5,000 people (Hadiz 2002).

Reflecting on social–economic changes that transpired amid the formation of the new republic, Robison (2009, 63–65) notes that between 1949 and 1957, attempts were made to alter the structure of the inherited colonial economy. One objective was to move from an economy that relied on exports and smallholder crops toward self-sufficient industrialisation. Policies and regulations were created to support indigenous capitalists, who were envisaged to become the backbone of domestic capital accumulation. The most concentrated efforts were in the import sector under the auspices of the Benteng program. However, the goals were not achieved. Moreover, by 1949, the new republic inherited plantation sectors that had already experienced a serious decline (Robison 1988, 58–59). The end of colonialism removed the imperative of the colonial state to guarantee the Dutch capitalists' privileged access to land and labour within Indonesia. Plantation accounted for only a small fraction of output, which was under permanent threat until the nationalisation of plantations in 1958 and 1964 (Gordon 1982, 181).

Thus, the structure of the economy of the new republic continued to be largely unaltered from that of late colonialism, with the industrial sector remaining largely undeveloped and the plantation sector having deteriorated (Robison 1988, 64). Between 1953 and 1958, the share of industry to national income declined from 13% to 11%. At the same time, the contribution of export crops to national income declined from 36.2% to 8.8%. Consequently, industries continued to absorb a small number of workers (Hadiz 1997, 48). Among 25,000 firms that were registered in 1953, only 575 employed more than 500 workers, while 1,500 employed 50–100 workers and the rest had fewer employees. Most industrial firms at this time were both small and family oriented (with fewer than 20 workers) compared with the more than 500 workers employed in one-third of the plantation establishments.

Briefly, under colonialism, emerging private capital investment brought about by the 1870s liberal agrarian reform created new and significant numbers of modern non-agricultural jobs. However, the scale of the changes was limited, even up to the later stage of colonialism. This colonial socioeconomic structure remained largely unchanged in the first decades of the Indonesian republic. Thus, prior to the expansion of large-scale private capital under the New Order, an older form of precarious work was pervasive in an economy dominated by subsistence agricultural economy activities.

The Normalisation of a New Form of Precarious Work

As Robison (1982, 51) asserts, 'either a state apparatus or a national bourgeoisie' within Indonesia's new republican government was 'able to provide a basis of accumulation and

management to replace the Dutch'. This contributed to maintaining the late colonial period's social and economic environment after the formation of the new republic and eventually led to the disintegration of the economy in the late 1960s, whereby (Robison 1982, 52):

> Inflation escalated to over 600%, the flow of imported consumer goods and spare parts ground to a halt and the economic infrastructure fell into increasing disrepair and disarray. Export earnings from plantation agriculture declined as production on the estates was affected by lack of maintenance and reinvestment and poor management.

Substantial change in Indonesia's socioeconomic structure only began to take place in the mid-1960s after the emergence of the New Order, which was 'dominated by a military-bureaucratic oligarchy and by the infusion of foreign capital to supplement the process of accumulation' (Robison 1982, 54). Large-scale movements of workers from the traditional agricultural sector to the modern industrial sector started to occur. This section will explore this transformation by first analysing the advent of rapid industrialisation, sustained by the emergence of large-scale capital investment, through which Indonesia's economy eventually became more incorporated into the global capital mechanism under neoliberalism. This enabled the expansion of a new form of precarious work. The section will then analyse the expansion of this new form of precarious work after the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis, which enabled the unquestioned implementation of neoliberal reforms. This shift has contributed to enhancing labour market flexibility through casualisation in the formal sector at the same time that the informal sector has persisted and expanded.

The capitalist revolution that took place under the New Order enabled the economy to experience a substantial alteration from one that predominantly relied on agricultural activities to one that was based on rapid industrialisation (Robison 1988). The scale and magnitude of the transformation are reflected in Indonesia's GDP from 1965 to 1997, whereby the contribution from agriculture declined significantly from 56% to 16%, while the share from manufacture increased substantially from 8% to 25% (World Bank 1990, 182; World Bank 1998, 212). The change in the structure of the economy was attributable to the liberalisation of trade and investment (Vanzetti, McGuire and Prabowo 2005). Along with the dismantling of import licensing, a new scheme was introduced to stimulate exports. In 1970, the government introduced a policy package that was designed to simplify the procedures for exports and imports. International capital controls were also eliminated, marking an important milestone in attempts to reconnect Indonesia to the world economy.

These economic policies were formed on the basis of orthodoxies that were prevalent within the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which facilitated the influx of massive amounts of foreign capital investment, finance, aid and technology. As Robison (2009, 109–110) asserts, the policies offered the basis for economic growth without compromising the social and economic order that was acceptable to Indonesia's new political rulers. Yet, the liberalisation of the economy proceeded haltingly in the early decades of the New Order. Selective protectionism was emphasised in state policies, particularly in the developing industrial sector, facilitated by the upsurge in international oil prices in 1973/1974 and 1978/1979, which reduced state dependence on foreign investment (Chalmers and Hadiz 1997). The collapse of international oil prices in the early and mid-1980s eventually ended the period of selective protectionism (Robison 1987). Indonesia was then pushed to implement a range of policies associated with neoliberalism, which entailed deregulation, privatisation and reduced roles of the state.

The Indonesian economy's gradual incorporation into the mechanics of global capital accumulation subjugated the agricultural and industrial sectors into a newly evolving international division of labour (Habibi and Juliawan 2018). This affected how workers moved from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector. In the era of US hegemony, agriculture transformation in many Southern countries was tailored to benefit US farmers and agribusiness (Araghi 1995). Between the 1950s and 1970s, policies and programs were implemented to promote 'more productive agriculture based in deepening commodity relations, whether through 'smallholder' development or larger-scale farming, public and private' (Bernstein 2010, 74). In Indonesia, state financing of inputs, price support and subsidies, where were designated to facilitate agriculture modernisation, increased agricultural productivity. In the mid-1960s and throughout the 1970s, agricultural growth substantially increased from an average of 2.4% per year between 1966 and 1970 to 4.2% per year between 1970 and 1981 (Tambunan 2006). In 1984, Indonesia reached rice self-sufficiency for the first time in its history (Tambunan 1998).

However, over time, diminishing budget allocations to the agricultural sector, which began in the 1980s after the state lost the ability to implement protectionist policies, resulted in the systematic decline of income in the farming sector. As such, the era of rice self-sufficiency ended in the late 1980s, when the state started to import rice and removed most agricultural subsidies (Fane and Warr 2008). Consequently, an increasing number of peasants struggled to survive and were dispossessed of their lands. Many were pushed, under unfavourable conditions, to sell their land for development projects. At the same time, an array of land policy changes were

implemented to accelerate the commercialisation of land and promote the expansion of estate crops and fisheries for exports (Rosser, Roesad and Edwin 2005). This forced peasants to give up their land to state enterprises or government-supported private firms.

The change in the structure of the economy, discussed earlier in this section, was marked by the decline in the share of GDP from the agricultural sector and the rise of the contribution from the manufacturing sector and indicated that some rural workers found employment in industry. The proportion of agricultural workers decreased from 56.4% in 1980 to 44.0% in 1995, while the proportion of manufacturing workers increased from 13.1% in 1980 to 18.4% in 1997 (Tjandraningsih 2013). In particular, in the 1980s and 1990s, the strategy was to reorient the inward-looking import substitution industrialisation (ISI) strategy to an EOI strategy, which was closely tied to global markets (MacDonald 1993). In Indonesia, the gradual shift from ISI to EOI began taking place after the collapse of international oil prices in the early 1980s, which significantly affected the state's capacity to implement protectionist policies.

EOI that is based on cheap labour typically absorbs many workers and attracts an influx of foreign investment (Beng 1980). Therefore, the adoption of EOI enabled Indonesia's deeper integration into international production chains, under which it became a world production base for labour-intensive manufacturing (Tjandraningsih 2013). In general, industrial workers tend to have more stable and higher incomes than those in the agricultural sector and in the informal economy. However, the dependency of EOI on a cheap, docile and politically repressed workforce exposes workers to a certain degree of precarity. The incidence of low pay—whereby employees earned less than the national average wage—accounted for 55.45% of workers in the formal industrial sector in 1986 and 39.26% in 1996 (Habibi and Juliawan 2018, 15). In addition, the capacity of large and medium firms to absorb labour was still less than that of small and household establishments, which provided worse wage and working conditions (Smyth, Saptari and Maspiyati 1994). During this time, many factories also employed workers on short-term contracts (Tjandraningsih 2000). Without a guarantee of job continuity, the workers could be fired at any time. Some factories also enforced overtime, which forced workers to work long hours, often in poor working conditions. The government also placed heavy restrictions on factory workers' freedom of expression and association.

Although EOI has a high capacity for labour absorption, rapid industrialisation in Indonesia inadequately absorbed people who left the agricultural sector. Those who were not absorbed resorted to the informal economy in urban areas. As noted by Tjandraningsih (2013), workers in the informal section of the economy are typically poor and have lower levels of education. Their

employment is often characterised by low-level technology usage, low income and unstable employment. The proportion of this type of urban worker has been consistently high, even during periods of high economic growth, reaching more than 30% in 1996, as pointed out earlier (Habibi and Juliawan 2018). At the same time, job creation continued to be problematic in Indonesia. In the 1980s, every 1% of economic growth contributed to a 0.44% rise in employment, which was substantially lower than the rate for Bangladesh (0.55%), the Philippines (0.54%) and Malaysia (0.68%) (Felipe and Hasan 2006, 1). In the 1990s, the percentage further declined to 0.38% in Indonesia.

The 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis hit Indonesia hard (Soesastro and Basri 1998). By January 1998, the value of the rupiah had declined by more than 80% since it had been floated in mid-1997. This devaluation made the US dollar six times more expensive than it had been for earnings based on the rupiah. The crisis brought a halt to the economy as the stock market collapsed, and national banks were unable to meet their obligations to their depositors, while the international rating of the larger banks fell. Foreign investors fled the country, and many local companies faced bankruptcy. Economic growth slumped to 3.4% in the third quarter of 1997 after reaching 7.4% in the first quarter. Prices rose by 6% in the last four months of 1997, thus resulting in double-digit inflation, before jumped by 6.9% in January 1998. Overall, job creation in the modern sector was severely affected (Manning 2004). Many workers—especially industrial and construction sectors—were laid off. Growth in non-agricultural jobs remained slow even after Indonesia regained economic stability in mid-2000s (Lucich, Dal Bon and Houston 2006).

As Indonesia struggled to deal with the crisis, the IMF entered the scene and imposed conditions of reforms to the financial and trade regimes in return for a US$43 billion rescue package, which further facilitated Indonesia's transition to a more liberalised market economy (Robison and Rosser 1998). As Rosser (2010, 10–12) asserts, the economic crisis provided opportunities for the consolidation of coalitions that supported economic liberalisation. In Indonesia, the coalition was found within ministries and the broader bureaucracy and was supported by academics in prominent university economics departments and businesses that depended on foreign investment. At the same time, the economic crisis weakened coalitions that were arrayed against economic liberalisation and in favour of state protectionism. At the onset of the crisis, economic policies, including labour policies, were developed amid the struggle between these groups and their competing interests. Against this background, Indonesia witnessed the implementation of labour policies that enhanced the flexibility of the labour market.

In the early 2000s, the government passed new laws on labour that were designed to support the restructuring of the labour market, as required by the IMF. Directly related to the discussion in this section is Manpower Law no. 13/2003, which was considered a mixed blessing for workers (Juliawan 2010). The act benefited workers by increasing severance rates and long-service pay, and by improving the standard upon which minimum wages are determined by replacing the index of minimum physical needs, KHM (*Kebutuhan Hidup Minimum*), with a regional decent standard of living, KHL (*Kebutuhan Hidup Layak*). However, it also promoted a flexible labour regime in the form of contract work and outsourcing practices (Tjandraningsih and Nugroho 2008; Tjandraningsih 2013). In doing so, it established the condition for the expansion of precarious work by facilitating a further shift toward the casualisation of employment relations in the formal sector, which made employment relations unstable and often indirect (Chang 2009).

While work in the formal sector has been made increasingly precarious, the industrial sector's recovery from the crisis was also prolonged. Between 2001 and 2010, growth in the manufacturing sector reached an average of only 4.5% a year, which was substantially less than the average of 12% per year between 1990 and 1996 (Rahardja et al. 2012, 3). The stagnancy of the manufacturing sector was due, in part, to corporate indebtedness and dried up inward foreign direct investment flows, triggered by competition from other countries recovering from the same crisis (Habibi and Juliawan 2018). The sector's dependency on foreign investment also increased the fragility of domestic industries to global economic volatility.

Altogether, various changes in the agricultural sector forced an increasing number of people to move into informal employment in the cities. Reduced agricultural productivity at the peak of the 1997–1998 crisis prompted, among other things, the cutting back or abolition of already-scant subsidies. The fertiliser subsidy was removed in 1998 after the abolishment of the rice subsidy in 1986 (Arifin 2008). In addition, economic uncertainty associated with the crisis prompted banks to apply stricter rules for lending to farmers (Habibi and Juliawan 2018). Further, although the manufacturing sector was in decline, mining thrived after the crisis. For instance, mining and mineral commodities contributed around 22% to Indonesia's exports in 2010, higher than the contribution of manufacturing (Rahardja et al. 2012). While mining activities contributed to the demolition of thousands of hectares of cultivated land and the displacement of more people from their land, its contribution to employment was relatively insignificant, accounting for 1% in 2001 and 1.4% in 2012 (Tadjoeddin 2016).

The post-crisis change in agriculture also transpired through the promotion of land titling, a form of land reform that gives individuals formal property rights to land that had previously been used informally, usually based on customary land tenure. While the practice was promised to secure land ownership for the poor, in reality it facilitated land rights commercialisation, thus increasing smallholders' vulnerability to land rights dispossession (Fauzi 2009). Concurrently, cash crops—particularly oil palm, rubber and cacao—expanded substantially, dispossessing more people from their land and forest. Plantation areas grew dramatically, from 2.9 million ha in 1997 to 6.3 million ha in 2007 (Deininger and Byerlee 2011, 703). From 2005, a partnership scheme was implemented to oversee the conversion of forested and state land into plantation; this enabled firms to control as much as 80% of the land, leaving the remaining 20% to farmers (McCarthy, Gillespie and Zen 2012, 557–558). The new scheme replaced the previous arrangement of a 70:30 land-split obligation in favour of farmers.

In summary, the 1997–1998 crisis encouraged the unquestioned implementation of neoliberal economic reforms, which conditioned the expansion of the new form of precarious work. While manufacturing has ceased to become the economy's star performer, the industrial sector has experienced increased casualisation, under which employment relations have become increasingly flexible, alongside an urban informal sector that had long been sizable. Concurrently, the combination of reduced subsidies, the pervasiveness of land tilting and the expansion of mining and cash crops has substantially increased agricultural workers' precarity. Meanwhile, formal jobs in the modern economy have remained unable to absorb the increasing number of rural workers seeking jobs in urban areas.

It was against this longstanding backdrop that the Jokowi government enacted the omnibus bill on job creation—a collection of regulations on labour law, investment and the environment—in October 2020 to foster economic growth and foreign investment (Samboh 2020b). The bill was passed into law in November 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic raged, and mass protests against the passing of the bill were therefore constricted. Under the pretext of labour creation, the bill revises numerous laws, including Manpower Law no. 13/2003, thereby stripping workers of rights especially pertinent in the Covid-19 situation (Ford and Ward, 2021; Mudhoffir and Hadiz 2021). Whereas the pandemic itself has had a serious impact on employment[9], the bill reduces or eliminates overall rights for severance payments beyond a basic allowance and revokes workers' rights to paid leave under certain circumstances. Most important for our

[9] Labour force survey data from August 2020 shows that the open unemployment rate had reached 7.07% in August 2020 (increasing by 1.84%, compared to August 2019); and that 24 million people had had to work reduced hours (BPS 2020).

discussion here is the bill's contribution to further accelerating the casualisation of the formal sector—for instance, by relaxing outsourcing requirements. The enactment of the omnibus bill, against labour and broader civil society opposition,[10] demonstrates the central role played by the state in sponsoring the expansion of the new form of precarious work, linked to large-scale capital accumulation.

The Indonesian Social Security System: From Productivism Towards Universalism?

The section explores how the existing social welfare system has failed to protect the vast majority of precarious workers, who have continued to rely on informal social protections, sustained by the contribution of family and community members, to cope with increasing precarity. In doing so, the first part of this section examines the development of the Indonesian social welfare system under the New Order, when a major initiative to establish social policies first occurred amid high economic growth. Social welfare was designed to protect the privileged few: the military, civil servants and their families, and to a lesser extent, private sector workers in formal employment. The section then explores the transformation of the social welfare system after the 1997–1998 crisis, where some schemes were designed to be universal in nature and to improve social protection for the poor and for informal sector workers. However, the schemes have so far failed to achieve a desirable outcome, and their implementation has continued to be coloured by predation and corruption.

Indonesia's social welfare regime under the New Order adhered broadly to the 'productivist' and 'particularist' model of welfare capitalism (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016). Influenced by the typology developed by Esping-Andersen (1990) and expanded by Holliday (2000), to explain East Asian cases, the productivist descriptor is assigned to a type of welfare model in which social policy is subordinated to economic growth. The developmental–particularist represents a subtype of the productivist model under which social rights are almost non-existent, with parts of society being excluded from social welfare arrangements (Holliday 2000). However, Rosser and Van Diermen (2016, 303–304) suggest that productivism in the developed economies of East Asia emerged in a context of a high level of administrative capacity and low levels of corruption. In contrast, in Indonesia, productivism emerged in the context of a predatory state

[10] In regard to the types of anti-precarity struggles (discussed in Chapter 2), protests against the Indonesian omnibus law show how the notion of anti-precarity is clearly expressed as a frame for political action. While the protests have gained support from student movements and the wider public, the unions' roles in framing precarious work as a social problem have remained central (Wijaya 2020; Oktavianti 2020). Organisations that are connected to drivers in the online transport sector express divergent responses to the bill. Some organisations, with links to unions rejects the bill, while others, which are relatively independent support it, as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

characterised by a low level of administrative capacity and high levels of corruption. They therefore suggest that Indonesia's social welfare regime is better described as representing a predatory–particularist model instead of a developmental–particularist model.

The productivist and particularist nature of Indonesia's social welfare regime is evident in the New Order's significant investment in social protection programs on supposedly productive elements: the military and bureaucratic officials, who play an important role in safeguarding political and social stability and promoting economic growth (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016, 317). The government obliged military and bureaucratic officials to participate in an array of schemes, such as TASPEN (*Tabungan dan Asuransi Pegawai Negeri*; Civil Servants Saving and Insurance), the civil servants pension fund; ASABRI (*Asuransi Sosial Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*; Indonesian Armed Forces Social Insurance), the military pension fund; and ASKES (*Asuransi Kesehatan*; Health Insurance) the civil servants health insurance fund.[11] The schemes, which were subsidised by the government while requiring members to pay fixed contributions, provided an array of benefits, including health and maternity care, old age and death benefits, saving programs and disability and workplace accident compensation. Murphy (2019) notes that the development of social security for military personnel and civil servants is a common feature in authoritarian contexts. The provision of social policies helped to maintain the privileged status and loyalty of groups that were functional to the state.

The government also provided JAMSOSTEK (*Jaminan Sosial Tenaga Kerja*; Workers Social Insurance), another social security scheme for formal private sector workers. Designed as a compulsory provident fund, JAMSOSTEK delivered pension and healthcare benefits, and was financed through member and employer contributions (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016). JAMSOSTEK appears to meet the criteria of the productivist and particularist model because it was designed to provide benefits for 'key workers' in the industrial sector, which is important in the process of economic development (Murphy 2019, 262–264). However, employers often evaded the obligation to provide workers with JAMSOSTEK, making it a less effective social protection program. By 2012, 20 years after it was first launched, less than one-quarter of formal sector workers were covered by the scheme. JAMSOSTEK's funds, managed by for-profit state

[11] Some undeveloped precursors were initiated prior to the New Order (Sumarto 2017). In 1947, the government started a scheme that provided accident and sickness benefits for workers in state-owned enterprises and private corporations. In 1960, the government-initiated health insurance for private and public sector workers, and three social protections for public sector workers: pension benefit, saving and insurance, and welfare funds. While these programs were stipulated in the government's regulation, their implementation was hampered by economic stagnation and hyperinflation. Between 1951 and 1960, the government spent very little on social welfare—around 15% of the total budget compared with 30% for military spending (Booth 2010).

enterprises, were also prone to predation (Wisnu 2007). The funds became the target of a series of corruption cases and irregular investments. For instance, in 2005, former investment and executive directors of JAMSOSTEK were convicted of corruption involving irregular investments of JAMSOSTEK's funds.

In other areas, like health and education, Indonesia stood in contrast to productivism in the developed economies of East Asia, where priority is given to education and, to a lesser extent, health. Although the New Order invested in education and health, it did so inconsistently and at a much lower level compared with neighbouring countries (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016, 314). In the 1970s and early 1980s, an upsurge of revenue from oil exports facilitated the expansion of new public schools and health facilities, including to the most remote places, along with the addition of new healthcare providers and teachers. Not surprisingly, the government's spending on education and health fell after the collapse of international oil prices in the early and mid-1980s.

The government adopted a policy of universal free primary education as early as 1974. It then adopted policies of universal free primary and secondary education and free healthcare for the poor in 1994. Nonetheless, Indonesia's education and health systems were plagued by corruption, predation and rent-seeking (Rosser and Joshi 2013). In education, schools were permitted to charge fees for tuition, building construction, exams, photocopying, uniforms, book purchases and extracurricular activities. In some cases, the charges were legalised through government regulation and/or decree. In other cases, the government turned a blind eye to the practices. In health, illegal fees remained an embedded feature of the national public health system (Lieberman and Marzoeki 2000; Rosser 2012). The additional fees, which were routinely channelled upward to local health authorities, became a means through which politico-bureaucrats generated extra income. Its pervasiveness contributed to the exclusion of the poor from the public health system.

Rosser and Van Diermen (2016, 314) also note that the government 'provided no unemployment benefits, old age social pension, disability pension, or work opportunities for the poor through labour market schemes'. At the same time, while schemes that were provided for workers in the formal private sector, such as JAMSOSTEK, remained inadequate, no similar schemes were provided for workers in the pervasive informal economy, forcing many households to rely on family and community members (Wiebe 1999, 15–17). Those in rural areas depended on remittance from family members who worked in cities and towns, even if they remained in the informal sector. Community members developed their own social insurance or saving schemes

under which households contributed a cup of rice, or its monetary equivalent, to help others in times of emergency.

In brief, Indonesia's welfare regime under the New Order represented the productivist–predatory model, characterised by the subordination of social policy to economic growth and the provision of welfare benefits for specific groups, as well as rampant corruption. Comprehensive social protection was provided for public sector workers, while those in the private sector were inadequately protected and those in the informal sector were not protected at all. In this model, as evident in the unequal access to education and health, there were almost no social rights, which made life more precarious.

After the 1997–1998 crisis, Indonesia's social welfare regime shifted from the particularistic model toward a universalistic orientation (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016). Some schemes were designed to be accessible to those who were previously ineligible for social welfare support under the New Order. A range of programs were tailored to target the poor and/or be universal in nature, at least in principle. The changes were attributable to the opportunities that were available to unions and NGOs that focused on social policy issues to influence government policies. These unions had gained some influence from their increased ability to access the media and use the court system to further their interests amid democratisation. The transformation of the welfare regime also resulted from the pressures generated by donors and institutions that favoured mobile capital—for example, the IMF and the World Bank, which advocated for 'affordable' and 'cost-effective' broad social safety nets. Their structural powers had been enhanced substantially at the period of the crisis and during its intermediate aftermath, when Indonesia desperately needed foreign aid.

There was a gradual post-crisis reorientation of the social welfare regime from a particularistic focus toward a more universalistic orientation. The first generation of the social protection programs ran from 1998 to the early 2000s and received financial support from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). They covered the fields of health, education and employment creation and included a separated program that provided affordable rice for the poor (Sumarto and Bazzi 2011). The second generation, introduced in the early 2000s, was funded by large-scale cuts to government fuel subsidies. The most substantial programs in financial terms were Raskin (*Beras Miskin*; Poor Rice), a program of food subsidies that enabled rice to be purchased at subsidised prices; BOS (*Bantuan Operasi Sekolah*; School Operational Assistance), a school grant designed to provide free access to primary and junior secondary schools; BLSM (*Bantuan Langsung Sementara Masyarakat*; Temporary Direct Cash Assistance),

an unconditional cash transfer program; JAMKESMAS (*Jaminan Kesehatan Masyarakat*; Community Health Insurance), a health service waiver fee program for the poor and near poor; and PNPM (*Program National Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*; National Community Empowerment Program), a program that funds empowerment projects at the village level (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016).

The third generation was introduced in 2004 after the enactment of Law no. 40/2004, also known as the Law on the National Social Security System. In principle, the law proposed a universal healthcare and pension system, although it was short on detail (Murphy 2019). Later, Law no. 24/2011 mandated the restructuring of the four existing state insurance schemes (PT ASKES, PT JAMSOSTEK, PT TASPEN and PT ASABRI) into BPJS (*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial*; Social Security Organizing Body). There are two BPJSs: BPJS *Kesehatan* (BPJS of Health) for health insurance and BPJS *Ketenagakerjaan* (BPJS of Employment) for workers' social security. The two schemes included informal sector workers in their coverage, although these workers were expected to pay their own premiums. Prior to BPJS, most workers in the informal sector were excluded from social protection coverage. They were not classified as poor; therefore, they were disqualified from targeted social assistance programs like Raskin or JAMKESMAS, although some were recipients of ASKESOS (*Asuransi Kesejahteraan Sosial*; Social Welfare Insurance), an income-replacement scheme that targets informal sector workers (Satriana, Schmitt and Muhamad 2012, 9–12).

Analysts assert that the implementation of the social protection program since 1998 has built up expectations for improvements in the welfare regime (Booth 2002). Nonetheless, the transformation of Indonesia's welfare regime has been shaped by bureaucratic and business elements that occupied the state apparatus under the New Order. While their structural power was weakened by the crisis, they eventually found ways to maintain instrumental control over the state apparatus, despite democratisation and decentralisation, by forging alliances and making use of political parties (Hadiz 2010). They have played a significant role in shaping the direction of social policy, and in that capacity, they have been able to ensure that 'the government's funding of social programs remained focused on areas that promoted economic growth and/or served state-based patronage networks' (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016, 318). The welfare regime has thus continued to maintain its productivist character, as social policy has continued to be the subordinate of economy policy. Corruption, rent-seeking and predation also continue to challenge the distribution of welfare benefits.

The subordination of social policy to economic policy is evident in the debate around the reallocation of the budget for education and health. From 1999 to 2002, amendments to the 1945 Constitution required the central and regional governments to spend a minimum of 20% of their budget on education. Yet, opposition from some politico-bureaucrats, business actors and donors managed to push the government to spend below that level (Rosser and Joshi 2013, 183–184). Calls to increase health spending to 5% of the budget were also successfully opposed by economic technocrats, although this requirement was stipulated in Law no. 36/2009 on Health (Prianti 2010). Corruption has also continued to colour the implementation of social protection programs in Indonesia, and illegal public fees have persisted in Indonesian public health (Rosser 2012). ICW (International Corruption Watch) and KPK (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*; Corruption Eradication Commission) have received complaints about corruption in schools in the form of illegal charging of user fees (Rosser and Joshi 2013).

The continued prioritisation of military and bureaucratic officials is another indication that the productivist and particularistic nature of Indonesia's welfare regime has been fundamentally unchanged. While an attempt has been made to expand social security coverage to informal workers, it is yet to achieve the desired outcome. As of 2020, BPJS *Kesehatan* has covered more than 80% of the population, including 96 million poor individuals. However, in 2019, only half of the independent members paid the insurance premium, and only one-third of informal sector workers received government subsidies. The rise in the premium in mid-2020—in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic—will reduce enrolment, especially among the poor (Sutarsa, Prastyani and Al Adwiyah 2020). In regard to BPJS *Ketenagakerjaaan*, the use of a social insurance model of regular contributions from salaries is an obvious challenge when the informal sector is pervasive (Murphy 2019). In addition, there are difficulties in enforcing employers' compliance, even for workers in the formal sector, as evident in employers' circumvention of JAMSOSTEK.

Overall, after the 1997–1998 crisis, various social protection schemes were designed to target the poor and/or be universal in nature, indicating the reorientation of the welfare regime toward a universalistic orientation. However, the productivist–particularist and predatory nature of the New Order's welfare regime has remained intact. Attempts to expand social security coverage to workers in the pervasive informal sector have remained inadequate. Other attempts, like those designed to improve the population's access to education and health, have also remained insufficient. As such, Indonesia scores low in the ADB's Social Protection Index (SPI)—an indicator used to assess social protection effectiveness across countries (ADB 2016). Despite the social welfare reforms that Indonesia introduced after the crisis, it had a relatively

low SPI of 1.2% in 2012, which was lower than that of Malaysia (4.2%), Vietnam (4.0%), Thailand (2.9%) and the Philippines (2.2%). As a result, many Indonesians have continued to rely on informal social mechanisms in cases of illness, loss of income and other unforeseen events.

The Formation of Entrepreneurialism in the Urban and Peri-Urban Economy

In the new period of precarity, the formal sector of the economy has undergone a process of casualisation, while the informal sector has remained pervasive. The limitations of the welfare regime have forced workers to rely on themselves, including by making use of informal social security networks to cope. These have conditioned the idealisation of entrepreneurship as a way of life among these workers, many of whom have moved from rural to urban and peri-urban areas of Jabodetabek to seek non-farm jobs. This section explores the development by first examining the physical growth of Jabotabek—an acronym for Jakarta, Bogor, Tanggerang and Bekasi, prior to the formation of Depok City, as a division of Bogor Regency in 1999—amid accelerated industrialisation, particularly between the 1980s and 1990s. It will provide a snapshot of the precarious living and working conditions of many workers. The section then proceeds with an examination of the development of the cities after the 1997–1998 financial crisis. While workers have continuously moved to the regions to seek better employment, the types of jobs that have expanded substantially are precarious jobs.

Within the period of accelerated industrialisation, economic activity was highly concentrated in Jabotabek as the largest beneficiary of foreign and domestic investments. By the mid-1990s, Jakarta received 11% of domestic and almost 20% of foreign investment. Meanwhile, West Java received 31% of domestic and 9.4% of foreign investment, concentrated heavily in Botabek, which is the surrounding regions of Jakarta (Firman, Kombaitan and Pradono 2007). The influx of large-scale private capital under the New Order facilitated the expansion of industrial development in Jakarta and created new peri-urban regions. In the mid-1970s, most industries were relocated to the outskirts of Jakarta. They were envisaged to become part of the newly established Pulo Gadung industrial centre in Jakarta, which absorbed 15,000 workers in 1977. This figure was expected to rise quickly to 150,000 workers. In the mid-1980s, a substantial increase in investment by private sector in industries, prompted by the liberalisation of the economy, drove up the growth rate of Jakarta and its surrounding areas—particularly Tangerang and Bekasi (Kusno 2013, 88).

The development of industries in Jabotabek has been accompanied by accelerated physical growth of the regions. The first and second metropolitan highway systems connecting Jakarta

to Bogor and Tangerang were completed in 1978 and 1984, respectively. Throughout the 1980s, the development of inner ring roads stimulated private sector property development around the dense core of Jakarta. Residents of low-income neighbourhoods were pushed to reallocate to emerging suburbs, because their housing was cleared for new development projects or because they faced escalating rents (Silver 2007, 167). Throughout the 1990s, domestic and foreign investment, especially from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, turned the peripheral areas of Jabotabek into industrial zones. The 1990s also marked the start of the construction of a series of new towns by major developers, often tied to the New Order's political elite. This resulted in a large proportion of land in Botabek being converted from agricultural to residential, industrial and commercial uses, causing many people to lose their farm-related jobs.

Along with this transformation, more jobs were created in the urban and peri-urban areas of Jakarta. Jones and Mamas (1996, 53–56) demonstrate how total employment in the extended Jakarta metropolitan region rose by 2.3 million, or 69%, in the 1980s and 1990s. Of this rise, an increase of 52% (exactly one million) occurred in Jakarta itself, and an increase of 90% (1.3 million) occurred on the fringes. Yet, from 1980 to 1990, the total population of Jakarta grew by only 2.4% per annum, while the total population of Bogor, Tangerang and Bekasi grew from 1.1 million to 4.6 million, or a rate of 15.6% per annum. Thus, Botabek, instead of Jakarta, is increasingly becoming the target of migration because of its lower living costs and high accessibility to Jakarta (Kusno 2013, 89). It also offers employment opportunities resulting from the spillover of Jakarta's industrial growth.

The flow of migration to Jabotabek has also been motivated by the desire for improved education, allowing those who seek 'higher levels of better-quality education to move nearer to senior high-schools and tertiary education institutions', although rural–urban migration also includes many poorly educated rural dwellers seeking better employment (Jones et al. 2016, 57). Nonetheless, although the number of jobs in the cities is increasing, they rarely offer stability, partly due to EOI's reliance on a cheap workforce, as previously discussed. Many factory workers cannot rely on their income alone, thus forcing households to resort to income-pooling strategies (Kusno 2015, 56). Here, we witness how precarity is intertwined with the feminisation of labour. Since the 1990s, more women are being employed as low-wage workers in industries, while their husbands are self-employed in the informal sector. Since the 1980s, policies and programs have been tailored to motivate low-income women to migrate overseas

so they can better support their family, while the rights of these workers have been largely neglected (Silvey 2004, 2006).

Important for our discussion here is the role of informality, which has grown rapidly in the urban and peri-urban economy, in supporting accelerated industrialisation, as put forward by Kusno (2015, 56). In addition to its role in making income-pooling possible for households, the informal economy provides cheap goods and services that are affordable for factory workers being paid low wages. These workers are employed in factory complexes, condominiums, offices and shopping malls, which have expanded drastically in the Jabotabek area since the 1990s and which rely heavily on the informal sector to meet their daily needs. For example, they depend on street vendors for the supply of cheap food, on informal arrangements for affordable rooms to rent and on informal mechanics for cheap maintenance of their vehicles. These arrangements demonstrate how the operations of the informal economy help to maintain conditions where labour costs can be kept low. They ensure workers' survival even on low wages, while maintaining the formal economy's dependency on informal sector activities.

The informal economy plays a crucial role in sustaining the growth of modern infrastructures in the urban and peri-urban regions, and creates employment for both migrants and non-migrants of Jabotabek (Kusno 2013, 85–92). In Jakarta, for instance, many young men who migrate from the villages serve as a pool of labour for the construction industry. These migrant labourers are placed into informal networks of construction workers that supply the workers needed for the development of the city. The seeming lack of urban governance also provides peri-urban areas with ample opportunities for informal enterprises to develop. For example, the system of land acquisition and building construction for development enables the proliferation of informal fees and brokers, including thugs. Employment opportunities are also created by the middle-class residents of new towns, who rely on housemaids, vendors, security guards, drivers and workers from outside their gated community for the operation of their daily lives.

In short, the concentration of economic activity in the Jabotabek region, amid accelerated industrialisation, started in the 1980s and 1990s and has resulted in the physical growth of urban and peri-urban areas. This development has also created opportunities for improved jobs and education, while simultaneously inducing large rural–urban migration flows, along with the transformation of farmland on the outskirts of Jakarta into factories, shopping malls and housing areas. However, the new employment opportunities created for urban dwellers has largely been concentrated in the informal economy, whose operations have ensured the availability of cheap labour needed by formal establishments and growing cities.

The 1997–1998 crisis hit the lower class especially hard, as the closing or scaling down of the activities of industries and housing construction in Botabek areas created an unemployment crisis. Many workers who lost their jobs resorted to the informal sector, taking up jobs as street vendors, motorcycle taxi (*ojek*) drivers and even urban thugs. Some of them found employment in informal enterprises created by the so-called managerial class, many of whom also found themselves newly unemployed following the closing down of many financial and other service industries. Unable to find jobs in the shrinking formal sector, many of the latter turned their houses and surrounding pavements into family businesses, semi-permanent shops and small restaurants (Kusno 2004, 2013). In general, jobs have been made increasingly precarious after the crisis, even after the prolonged recovery of the economy. In particular, the process of casualisation has made employment relations increasingly flexible.

In this new period of precarity, the landscape of the Jabodetabek area has changed significantly, owing to the buoyant development of shopping malls, large mixed-use complexes (superblocks) and gated communities. Numerous high-rise apartments, hotels and hospitals, as well as several private universities, have also come into being. At the peak of the 1997–1998 crisis, many construction projects were left on the drawing board or stopped in mid-construction. However, as a result of improved economic conditions in the mid-2000s, these came back online in rapid order (Silver 2007). The expansive development has been spearheaded by a small number of private business that had power to influence the land and residential market of the whole metropolitan region. They have found ways to reorganise themselves and protect their collective interests amid democratisation and decentralisation. They have forged new alliances and deepened ties with dominant political parties and members of the parliament, thereby allowing them to further their influence over the government's economic policy in the post-authoritarian environment (Kenichiro 2015).

The increasing number of businesses targeting the middle class—including shopping centres, hypermarkets, fashion retailers, restaurants and cafes—has created a significant number of jobs in the service sector for the lower class. The growing employment opportunities, along with improved educational attainment for younger generations,[12] have contributed to instilling aspirations of upward mobility in the lower class. Such aspirations are sustained by the imagined lifestyles associated with the 'consuming class', which is characterised by the ability to use disposable income beyond that of basic needs, including shelter, food, health and basic urban

[12] According to the 2010 population census, 10.7% of Indonesians aged 25–29 had tertiary qualifications compared with 2.7% of those aged 65–69 (McDonald et al. 2013, 7).

services (Simone and Fauzan 2013, 281). Nonetheless, as previously discussed, the kind of jobs that have been available are often precarious and unable to support a household. Thus, more individuals and households that have never had a large amount of disposable income have been struggling to achieve the aspirations of stable urban livelihoods.

In light of the above discussion, it is useful to reflect on recent reports of the rising Indonesian middle class. World Bank (2011), for instance, reports that the middle class—defined as those with a minimal monthly income of IDR2.5 million or US$170—increased from 2003 to 2010, with an addition of 7 million people per year. However, it is also reported that the lower middle class, whose daily spending ranges from US$2 to US$4, accounts for 38.5% of the middle-class demographic. In contrast, the upper middle class, whose daily spending ranges from US$10 to US$20 a day, consists of only 1.3% of the entire middle class. This indicates that the modern urban lifestyle offered by the fast-growing metropolitan area has only been accessible for a small portion of residents. Nevertheless, the vast majority of them, who fall broadly into the category of the middle class, aspire to increased consumption, improved household wellbeing and access to higher-quality services and leisure time. The aspiration is reproduced through the physical growth of Jabodetabek areas, whose residents are exposed to modern urban lifestyles.

In short, working and living conditions have become increasingly precarious, especially for workers in the urban and peri-urban areas of Jabodetabek belonging to the lower middle class. At the same time, the physical growth of the cities and the improved educational attainment among the younger generation have increased these workers' exposure to aspirations associated with modern urban lifestyles. Even at the peak of industrialisation, many workers have had to rely on informal economy activities, which requires a reset of their expectations of the modern urban lifestyle according to their social reality. In the new period of accelerating precarity, aspirations for upward social mobility contributed to the further idealisation of entrepreneurship as a preferable way of life (McGuigan 2014).

Being accustomed to relying on themselves reiterates to workers the idea that they should be entrepreneurial and that they only have themselves to blame when things go wrong (Simone and Fauzan 2013, 286). This sort of entrepreneurialism motivates workers' engagement in various entrepreneurial endeavours. In some cases, they supplement their ordinary job by running a small business or selling a service, not only to sustain their life but also to chase newer consumption habits to which they perennially aspire. This idealisation of entrepreneurship motivates workers to nurture social networks, which are reproduced in associations, ethnic or

regional affiliations and even local political arrangements, to keep various opportunities open (Simone and Fauzan 2012, 131).

Precarious Solidarity: Its Historical Genesis

While growing aspirations for a modern urban lifestyle in the new period of increasing precarity has harnessed workers' self-reliance in urban and peri-urban settings, they have also developed grievances associated with poor working conditions. Such grievances have developed in the context where the SER model was never the norm, and where labour and broader society movements have been historically weak. This has challenged precarious workers to transform their grievances into a coherent movement to address the structural roots of their problems. To elaborate on the argument, this section discusses how the legacy of the demobilisation of broader social movements, including those of labour, has contributed to the absence of the movements as significant social and political forces under the New Order. Meanwhile, the development of organised labour movements is impeded by the problem of chronic labour oversupply. This section then elaborates on the contribution of the relative weakness of the movements, even after the unravelling of authoritarianism, in leveraging precarious workers' self-organising attempts, which emerged under enormously difficult circumstances.

The defeat of the left in the political struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s has allowed state and private business elites to almost continuously ignore the interests of the working class in decent employment, complemented by a comprehensive system of social welfare. In broad strokes, the story began when the military-backed New Order came into power in the mid-1960s against the backdrop of Cold War politics. Indonesia's transition to the New Order was preceded by a bloody anti-communist purge that resulted in the dissolution of the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*; Communist Party of Indonesia). The New Order that emerged in the aftermath banished all PKI-affiliated mass organisations from social and political life. This is because the PKI's attempts to mobilise groups (including workers, peasants, university teachers and village officials) were perceived by the New Order as a threat (Hindley 1967, 237).

The authoritarian government imposed a range of restrictions on social and political activities. In general, freedom of expression was severely restricted, with intimidation and violence by security forces justified as a way to maintain social harmony, which resulted in the effective disorganisation and depoliticisation of labour and broader society movements. In the 1970s, the New Order started implementing the corporatist mode of representation for different social groups, including labour, through the creation of an array of state-sponsored organisations

whose main function was to exercise strict control over the groups rather than represent their interests. In the mid-1980s, the New Order forced all social organisations to adopt Pancasila, the state ideology, as their sole basis, thereby ensuring ideological uniformity (Adnan 1990). The control over labour and other forms of society-based groups had become truly consolidated by the mid-1980s.

This control over labour was exercised in a context where a chronic labour-surplus condition remained insufficiently addressed, as discussed previously. This created a situation that constricted the development of strong workers' organisations, as 'someone less troublesome from the long unemployment line all too easily substitutes for the worker with an inclination to organize' (Hadiz 2000, 242). This weak bargaining position of workers in labour-surplus economies such as Indonesia, along with severe control over them, contributed to the emergence of an exclusionary model of relationships between the working class, business and the state, as discussed in Chapter 2. As such, the interests of workers were highly subordinated to the latter. Strict restrictions on the social and political activities of labour and broader society movements placed significant constraints on their ability to push for a pro-people redistributive policy agenda (Rosser, Roesad and Edwin 2005). Development policies and strategies were instead made 'in the restricted confines of the upper echelons of society and often boiled down to redistributive concessions among cronies' (Habibi and Juliawan 2018).

Nevertheless, small and often community-based labour organising emerged near the end of the New Order. For example, the frequency of labour strikes increased dramatically, reaching 350 in 1996 compared with only 15 in 1989. The increased labour activism was associated with social and economic changes brought about by rapid industrialisation, which created a new industrial working class in urban and peri-urban settings. The everyday problems associated with urban life encouraged a new form of social solidarity among these workers, and their sense of injustice was fuelled by the experience of often living in proximity to those who were more privileged. The 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis became another source of discontentment, as firms and factories closed or downsized their workforces, thereby creating large-scale unemployment and underemployment. Yet, large-scale unemployment and underemployment also severely weakened the union movement. The role of unions was thus negligible in the events surrounding the downfall of the New Order, except near the end (Hadiz 2002, 133–135).

The resurgence of labour near the end of authoritarianism mostly involved workers in the formal sector of the economy. It was NGOs—especially those that worked with the poor—that reached out to some of the abundant informal workers in the urban and peri-urban economy. While

there were few NGOs in the 1970s, their numbers increased rapidly in the 1980s and up to the final decade of the New Order. Some of them were Catholic NGOs, like *Institute Sosial Jakarta* (ISJ; Institute of Jakarta Social), which focused its activities on organising the poor, including squatters, street children and landless peasants (Hadiwinata 2003). One of the most prominent, the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), dealt with issues like housing rights and eviction in urban and peri-urban areas. These NGOs, which flourished in the 1980s and 1990s, operated in an environment constrained by the New Order's political controls. In the 1990s, these NGOs and sections of the intelligentsia became increasingly vocal critics of the New Order. Yet, they remained a relatively weak source of political challenge (Hadiz 2002).

Despite the restrictive social and political environment, some political unrest emerged at times. Between 1970 and 1972, students and other middle-class groups organised public protests against corruption—in particular, within Pertamina (*Perusahaan Pertambangan Minyak dan Gas Bumi Negara*; State Oil and Natural Gas Mining Company), the state-owned oil company—and to resist the development of the controversial Indonesia in Miniature project.[13] in 1974, students, with support from some sections of the military, publicly protested against what they saw as the growing dominance of Japanese capital in Indonesia, culminating in the Malari riots[14] (Juliawan 2010). No major social–political unrest took place against the process of urban governance that deprived precarious workers from the lower middle class, especially at the height of Jabotabek development in the 1980s and 1990s. This form of urban governance, which transpired through *kampong* demolition, banning of rickshaws, *ojek* restrictions and the arrest of vendors, street musicians, beggars, scavengers and sex workers, had generally been accepted or faced only minor resistance (Kusno 2013).

In general, the heterogeneity of the working conditions increased the difficulties of organising and mobilising informal sector workers. The variety of interests within a wide range of informal sector workers made it more challenging for them to come together and further their interests as a collective. Nonetheless, some collective organisation occurred among these workers in Indonesian cities, most often through the formation of associations and cooperatives to protect and improve the livelihoods of their members. Within the exclusionary framework, such collectives aimed for a closer and more positive relationship with the government, rather than

[13] The Indonesia in Miniature project was an extravagant project spearheaded by the first lady to develop a cultural project that portrayed a miniature version of Indonesia.

[14] The Malari riots were a two-day student-led protest against corruption, high prices and inequality arising from foreign investment. The protests began during the Japanese prime minister's visit in January 1974 and turned into a riot.

to mobilise their members in more radical ways to challenge state policy (Gibbings, Lazuardi and Prawirosusanto 2017). In addition, these informal sector workers consented to their own marginalisation because of the creation of new job opportunities in the cities that offered higher incomes than in the stagnant agricultural sector. More farmers considered selling their land for development sites much more profitable than using it for paddy cultivation (Kusno 2004).

In short, in Indonesia, broader society movements, including those of labour, were nurtured in an exclusionary environment, thereby contributing to their relative weakness. While there was a resurgence of union movement near the end of the New Order, it remained relatively weak and included mostly formal workers. Urban informal sector workers were organised by NGOs that worked with the poor and whose organisational capacity was also constrained under authoritarianism. These, combined with the difficulties in organising and mobilising informal sector workers, contributed to the absence of major political unrest, linked to precarious workers in the informal economy, in the sprawling Jabotabek region, although these workers were often marginalised within the new processes of urban governance.

The fall of the New Order marked the unravelling of the institutional framework that had placed constraints on labour and broader society movements. Shortly after the dismantling of authoritarian rule, legislations and policies were enacted that produced changes in the labour area. During the Habibie interregnum (1998–1999), the government ratified International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 87 on Freedom of Association, which encourages the establishment of new independent unions (Ford 2000). As a result, by 2000, the Department of Manpower and Transmigration had registered thousands of union organisations. Two years later, 61 union federations registered themselves at the Department of Manpower. Following this, the government enacted Trade Union Law no. 21/2000, which guarantees unions freedom of association (Juliawan 2010). After three decades of labour movement repression under the New Order, unions welcomed the acts as an improvement for labour organising.

The post-New Order's removal of regulations that control organisational activities was followed by a substantial increase in the number of NGOs. While there were few NGOs in the early 1970s, there were hundreds of NGOs in every Indonesian province by the 1980s. The number of NGOs increased significantly during the final decade of the New Order, reaching 3,251 in 1989 and around 8,000 in 1996 (Aspinall 2005, 114). Many more NGOs were created after the downfall of the authoritarian regime. In 2000, 70,000 NGOs were reported to exist in Indonesia. Many of the emerging NGOs were established to dispense grants and loans from international agencies such as the World Bank and United Stated Agency for Aid Development (USAID). Their targets

were mainly the poor in urban and rural areas who had been severely affected by the Asian economic crisis. Other NGOs advocated for the strengthening of policies and practices that promote democracy after the downfall of authoritarianism (Hadiwinata 2003, 113).

Some other rights associated with democracy, including freedom for speech, were also recognised after 1998. The passing of the Freedom of Speech Law allows for the decriminalisation of public protests, which had been strictly curtailed under authoritarianism. Although restrictions remain, they were limited to matters related to separatism and the incitement of hatred on the basis of race, ethnicity and religion. Post-authoritarian Indonesia thus witnessed an upsurge in expressions of grievances in the form of street protests undertaken by NGOs, unions, Islamic militants, community groups and organisations of enthusiasts and hobbyists. In the labour area, 2,759 work stoppages reportedly occurred between 1999 and 2004 in Tangerang only, in contrast to 2,263 incidents of labour reported nationwide between 1989 and 1994 (Juliawan 2011, 357). Even informal workers in urban and peri-urban settings—in particular, street vendors who are prone to being evicted—have attempted to resist their marginalisation, resulting in 4,538 demonstrations in Jakarta between 1997 and 2002 (Kusno 2013).

Overall, amid democratisation, the working class and the marginalised, often in connection to unions and NGOs, have found new ways to push for a pro-people redistributive policy agenda, including to address the negative effect of increasing precarity. In addition to public protests, they have used the media and the courts to further their interests (Rosser and Van Diermen 2016). For instance, Law no. 40/2004, which marks the social policy regime's transition toward a more universalistic orientation, as discussed in the previous section, was the product of a lawsuit and mass demonstrations led by KAJS (*Komite Aksi Jaminan Sosial*; the Action Committee for Social Security) whose membership includes unions, NGOs and student associations. In another example, unions appealed to the court and the parliament to challenge the practice of hiring workers on short-term contracts without benefits. In 2012, the court ruled such practices unconstitutional, thus mandating the revision of existing labour laws to give outsourced workers the same benefits as permanent employees (Tjandraningsih 2015).

Formal sector workers—through an alliance with unions and, to a limited degree, NGOs—have been better positioned to transform their grievances into coherent anti-precarity struggles, under which precarity serves as a discursive strategy that is used as a framework for workers' struggles. These workers have united around a shared identity as part of the working class to address the structural underpinning of the increasing precarity—for instance, by pushing for

policies to halt the degrading effect of the expansion of precarious work. However, the development of the formal sector of the economy has done little to promote apparent anti-precarity struggles, whereby increasing precarity is publicly resisted in the pervasive informal economy. Urban informal workers have been involved in various self-organising attempts. However, transpiring under circumstances that are tremendously difficult, the activism of urban dwellers and their NGO allies has been challenged in its attempts to attain a broader range of reforms (Wilson 2017).

Groups of people in the cities, including street vendors and *ojek* drivers, have increasingly become the target of mobilisation by political elites seeking support and votes, especially during elections. The dynamics have often produced a clientelistic relationship, whereby the urban informal workers gain material goods and other benefits in return for the support they give to the political elites. The more recent trend is to construct political contracts whereby politicians promise to deliver, after winning the election, certain promises or programs to benefit the groups that supported them. This kind of alliance is fundamentally problematic (see Amin 2012; Gibbings, Lazuardi, Prawirosusanto 2017; Savirani and Aspinall 2018). As discussed, urban informal workers have continued to be fragmented across different interests and short-term goals. Meanwhile, NGOs that work with the urban poor have remained unable to consolidate their mass base to form a social movement with a coherent identity and ideology. This has all contributed to the relative powerlessness of these groups of workers and their NGO allies.

In essence, in the post-authoritarian context, various groups of society—some allied with unions and NGOs—have had better chances to further their interests. However, their struggles, with some using precarity as a discursive strategy to frame political action, have had little effect on the informal section of the economy. Meanwhile, the relatively weak NGOs have remained unable to leverage the self-organising attempts of precarious workers in the urban informal economy. Despite the shared grievances, these workers have remained unable to establish a coherent movement to redress the structural underpinnings of precarity.

Summary

This chapter examined the socioeconomic transformation that created the constraints for the utilisation of precarious work as a framework for political action. In doing so, it shed light on precarious workers' difficulties in coalescing around a shared identity and developing a coherent movement to address the structural underpinnings of the increasing precarity. It traced the historical trajectory of the expansion of precarious work from colonial times to the present

neoliberal era. It suggested that although precarious work has been persistent in different manifestations throughout this time, such work has now been incorporated into the mechanics of large-scale capital accumulation. It also suggested that earlier manifestations, together with the socioeconomic contexts that gave rise to them, paved the way for present-day modern forms that are intertwined with the process of economic and political reconstitution in Indonesia following the fall of the New Order and the Asian economic crisis.

The chapter first explored the expansion of an older form of precarious work prior to rapid industrialisation whereby the scale of capital accumulation was very limited. Precarious work was pervasive in the period owing to the predomination of subsistence agriculture over the economic and employment structure. Then, it explored how the influx of large-scale private capital that began under the New Order has pushed workers to move from agriculture to industry and from rural to urban areas. In the context of international competition in a global production chain, the transformation has facilitated the expansion of a new form of precarious work in the urban economy, sustained through the formal industrial sector's reliance on cheap and politically repressed labour. During its rapid growth, the formal industrial sector was unable to solve the problem of chronic labour oversupply. Agricultural labourers who moved to cities to seek better jobs amid rapid industrialisation and massive urbanisation thus ended up being absorbed by the swelling informal sector. Since the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis, the formal sector of the economy has experienced a process of casualisation, while the informal sector has remained pervasive.

The chapter proceeded to discuss how the lack of an effective social protection regime for many Indonesians has contributed to the normalisation of precarity in the context where the economy has become more embedded within the mechanics of global capital accumulation. Under the New Order, only public sector workers were protected with any kind of comprehensive social protection plan. Private sector workers were inadequately protected, and those in the informal economy were not protected at all. Moreover, unequal access to basic services, such as education and health, contributed to sustaining precarious living conditions. Despite post-crisis attempts to expand the coverage of various social protection schemes to target the poor or be universal in nature, welfare support has remained inadequate in protecting many Indonesians. The pervasive informal sector workers have continued to be inadequately protected, and many Indonesians have continued to be excluded from basic services, thereby conditioning their continued reliance on family and community support.

Also discussed in this chapter is the massive growth of the urban and peri-urban areas of Jabodetabek, as the centre of industrial activity, which started in the 1980s. The creation of jobs in the new cities, along with the development of new factories, shopping malls and housing areas, and the improved education infrastructure, have created large rural–urban migration flows. Yet, most urban dwellers, who became increasingly exposed to an urban modern lifestyle, have been pushed to the informal sector, which ensures the provision of cheap labour for formal establishments and the growing cities. In the aftermath of the 1997–1998 crisis, working and living conditions have been made increasingly precarious, especially for the lower middle class. At the same time, the unprecedented growth of the cities has reinforced the desire for upward mobility through a sort of self-entrepreneurialism, which reiterates the idea that individuals are responsible for improving their livelihoods.

The desire for upward mobility and the manufacturing of a sort of entrepreneurialism among precarious workers in urban and peri-urban settings has helped them accept their precarious working and living conditions. However, at the same time, grievances over poor working conditions have persisted among these workers. These grievances have been expressed publicly at times, especially after the collapse of the authoritarian structure after the 1997–1998 financial crisis. However, despite the vibrancy of their activism, these workers are far from united within a coherent anti-precarity movement. The last part of this chapter has attributed the absence of an explicit anti-precarity movement among workers in urban and peri-urban settings to the development of labour and broader society movements in an exclusionary social and political environment under the New Order. The relative weakness of the movements has challenged them to leverage precarious workers' self-organising attempts. In particular, organised labour movements have been unable to endorse precarity as a discursive strategy to frame precarious workers' political actions.

As discussed in the next chapter, the booming online transport industry in Indonesia has led to the expansion of a new form of precarious work that is linked to larger-scale private capital accumulation. As part of the gig economy, the industry relies on and contributes to making the 'extensive use of precarious employment practices', which were 'built on uncertain, unstable, and insecure employment practices previously experienced in the informal economies', more generalised and pervasive (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015, 22). The chapters that follow discuss how the expansion of the industry has affected workers' consciousness, identity, organisation and politics.

Chapter 4:

The Governance of Workers Through the New Form of Precarious Work in the Gig Economy

The Neoliberal Governance of Work Practices in Indonesia

As asserted in Chapter 3, a new form of precarious work, tied to large-scale capital accumulation, started to emerge in the initial period of rapid industrialisation. The earlier development of the new form of precarious work set the stage for its expansion in the aftermath of the 1997–1998 Asian crisis. As this chapter will show, the emergence of the online transport sector as part of the gig economy furthered the expansion of this new form of precarious work. The emerging service stimulated an entrepreneurial identity within an employment relationship in the formal sector. In Indonesia, the process of identity formation is linked to the institutionalisation of precarious work arrangements in the informal sector, which allows for their implementation in the formal economy. This minimises companies' need for a permanent workforce and reduces their labour costs. These all have led to contradictions within workers' subjective experiences: harnessing their propensity to self-regulate themselves in alignment with the companies' goals, while creating a sense of grievances over degrading work conditions.

Frey (2020, 37) defines informality as 'economic transactions outside the view and formal control of governments and corporations'. The informal sector discussed in this thesis includes 'economic activity outside of state and corporate accounts' (Frey 2020, 39). In urban areas in Indonesia, types of work in the informal economy include street vendors and ojek drivers, which are outside of state and corporate control. In the online transport sector, the institutionalisation of some aspects of work arrangements in the informal economy—so that they are implemented in the formal sector—allows companies to exercise a degree of control over drivers and their work activity. Nonetheless, it is difficult to classify work as drivers on ride-hailing apps in terms of the formal–informal binary. Although they are placed under corporate control, drivers do not have the job security of formal sector occupations, where workers are provided with 'access to institutionalised protection of their labour rights', at least in theory (Ford and Honan 2017, 276).

The discussion in this chapter reflects on the core tenets of the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, already discussed in detail in Chapter 2. It does so through discussion of the changes brought about by the expansion of new forms of precarious work and the digitisation of work practices on workers' identity in Indonesia. Here, managerial control in the online transport and delivery service is analysed as a technique of neoliberal governance, which shapes individual behaviour according to neoliberal principles (Li 2007; Liow 2012; Lorenzini 2018).

Applying a synthesis of political economy concerns and the Foucauldian governmentality lens, this chapter examines the operations of this technique of neoliberal governance in the Indonesian context. There, the gig economy is expanding under circumstances where the informal economy has been prevalent, producing specific contradictions within workers' subjective experiences.

This chapter also highlights how the online transport sector in Indonesia has expanded in a context where the informal sector, in which work is usually precarious and low paid, has been pervasive in contrast to the experience of advanced economies of the West and East Asia. In Indonesia, the online transport industry institutionalises work arrangements—applied especially in the ojek service as part of the informal economy—so they are used in the formal sector. The practices place workers under state and corporate control and allow for the extraction of value from their labour without improving their job security. When doing so, the new industry intensifies older practices of outsourcing by relying on a digitised form of managerial control that allows for more detailed, yet covert, control over the way work is performed, and by using loopholes in existing regulations to expand aggressively. This contributes to the extensive and generalised use of precarious employment in the formal sector to reduce labour costs.

This chapter shows how the expansion of the online transport industry exposes workers to the new form of precarious work by stimulating an entrepreneurial identity within an employment relationship in the formal sector. This process of identity formation transpires through a distinct way of managing workers in the gig economy, which situates workers, instead of business and the state, as the bearers of most work-related risks, consistent with the logic of neoliberal governance. Managerial control is underpinned by the classification of workers as 'micro-entrepreneurs' and 'partners', which disguises the employer–employee relationship while placing the risks associated with assets investment and employment insecurity in the hands of workers. Another common feature of managerial control in the gig economy is the utilisation of digital platforms to guide the ways in which work is performed, which sustains the illusion that workers are their own bosses and justifies their role as the bearers of most work-related risks.

This chapter also demonstrates how the expansion of the online transport industry—through which workers' entrepreneurial identity is stimulated when they enter an employer–employee relationship in the formal sector—is preconditioned by socioeconomic transformations associated with the expansion of precarious work in a distinct context. In advanced economies in the West and East Asia, the expansion of the gig economy indicates a shift from the SER model—whereby workers are protected by an array of statutory entitlements—to precarious

employment practices as the norm. In contrast, the rising gig economy in Indonesia institutionalises older arrangements in the pervasive informal sector so they are implemented in the formal economy without improving work-related security. The aggressive development of the online transport industry contributes to allowing the extensive use of precarious employment practices in the formal economy to reduce labour costs. By doing so, it provides a new way for employers to accumulate value from workers at a minimum cost.

This chapter further shows how the distinct way of managing workers in the online transport industry in Indonesia contributes to a type of contradiction between workers' experience of work and their self-identity. Workers are exposed to risks associated not only with employment insecurity, but also with investing capital into business, because they are required to own their own assets to secure gig jobs. Workers are under the illusion that they have autonomy, flexibility and freedom over their working conditions. Such an illusion harnesses their propensity to self-regulate themselves to work hard and mitigate various work-related risks. However, increased competition and algorithmic management's opaque rules fuel a sense of discontent among workers, who find it increasingly challenging to attain the lifestyle to which they aspire. Workers' dissatisfaction with their conditions of work raises awareness about the power asymmetry between them and their company.

The arguments in this chapter respond to studies that focus on gig workers' dissatisfaction with their conditions of work. This dissatisfaction makes collectivism possible despite workers' increasingly individualised work experience (see Cobble 2016; Greenhouse 2016; Webster 2016; Nastiti 2017b; Woodcock 2017; Panimbang et al. 2020; Panimbang 2021). Focusing on the Indonesian Gojek industry, Ford and Honan (2016, 2017) and Frey (2020) assert that opportunities for collectivism stem from the role of the gig economy in institutionalising precarious work arrangements that underpin the informal transport sector in the formal sector. In particular, in the case of an ojek service, drivers shift from 'self-employment' (as ojek drivers) to 'semi-formal employment' (as online ojek drivers) (Ford and Honan 2016, 2017). The shift provides online ojek drivers with an identifiable target for mobilisation—namely, pseudo-employers who have the power to deprive them of access to customers and income. Gojek's use of digitised technology to control work processes also creates technological savviness among online ojek drivers (Frey 2020). This, in turn, allows them to develop improvisatory tactics and networks to respond to firms' control.

The assertion of previous studies that collective organisations and actions can stem from gig workers' dissatisfaction with working conditions is valid. In the Indonesian context, Ford and

Honan (2019) and Frey (2020) provide valuable insights into how the gig economy model makes collective organisation possible. Ford and Honan (2019) point out that the extent to which online drivers collectively organise stands out against other forms of precarious work. However, previous studies tend to underexplore the types of contradictions in workers' subjective experience (see Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017; Gandini 2019). Some labour scholars are indeed aware that individual grievances do not automatically induce participation in collective actions. Saptari (2008), for instance, examines a combination of factors that influence workers identities and their political participation, including 'the political leadership; the framing of protest within a particular historical conjuncture; the extent in which ethnic or other social networks play a role; the location of the industrial production unit; the workplace politics and labour regimes; and the extent in which there is solidarity or contention between workers in particular moments'.

Her analysis examines 'the interplay between individual decisions and collective action through the mobilization process and the sequencing of collective protest actions' (Saptari 2008, 34). Therefore, it captures some complexities in workers' experiences, identities, and consciousness. However, the focus of the analysis remains on the particular dynamics that facilitate or inhibit the transformation of individual grievances into protest and collective action. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, through the experience of workers in the gig economy, workers' sense of unfairness indeed arises from their exposure to precarious work conditions. However, at the same time, workers are exposed to a distinct form of technology of neoliberal governance, under which they rely on themselves to cope with the increasing precarity in the formal section of the economy. The tensions result from the exercise of the technology of neoliberal governance in a distinct historical conjuncture in Indonesia, where precarious work has been pervasive.

This chapter explores the types of contradictions in day-to-day work practices in the gig economy that lead to the formation of a neoliberal subjectivity under which individuals live their lives as an enterprise, as discussed in Chapter 2. Although such a process of identity formation can spark discontent with precarious work conditions in the gig economy, it can also lead to workers' consent to their self-exploitation, thus fragmentising their grievances and interests. Before exploring these contradictions in the construction of subjectivity, this chapter will first discuss how managerial control in the gig economy stimulates entrepreneurial identity among workers. It will then examine and compare how the gig economy institutionalises older work

arrangements in the informal sector in Indonesia, so they are implemented in the formal economy, with how work is organised in the taxi and ojek industries.

'To Be Your Own Boss' Under Neoliberal Rules

As discussed in Chapter 3, many workers in urban and peri-urban settings have been absorbed into jobs through which they have been habituated to idealise entrepreneurship as a preferable way of life, particularly in the face of increasing precarity. Against this backdrop, the booming online transport industry, as part of the gig economy, has exposed workers to distinct managerial control that facilitates the adoption of an entrepreneurial identity. This section examines the gig economy's classification of those who deliver services via digital platforms as micro-entrepreneurs and partners. The classification justifies the placing of most work-related risks in the hands of workers. The section then explores how digitised managerial control sustains the illusion that workers have freedom at work, thus leading to their acceptance of the shift of risks from businesses to individual gig workers.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the prevalence of precarious work is not new. Nonetheless, the use of a platform—that is, 'a digital environment upon which a software can be run' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 42) 'to bring together the supply of, and demand for, labour' (Graham and Woodcock 2018, 242)—represents a change from conventional ways of organising work. This is a distinctive feature of the Uber model, which has been adopted by firms such as Grab and Gojek. In principle, the firm operates as a kind of intermediary that can also exercise a degree of control over the way work is executed. Hence, compared with conventional employment, which is confined to physical workplaces such as factories and offices, gig work is typified by lower levels of temporality, because the jobs are of a short duration. It is also characterised by a lower level of geographic stickiness, because the jobs can be completed anywhere, although the Uber model, which pioneered the app-based transport and delivery service, necessitates the execution of work in a particular place.

One consequence of the use of digital platforms in the gig economy is that they conceal the nature of the work being performed. According to the gig economy's proponents, an array of jobs that are performed through digital platforms—designated as, among others, 'gigs', 'tasks', 'favours', 'services' and 'rides'—are not considered work (De Stefano 2016b, 477–478). Likewise, they avoid the terms 'work', 'labour' and 'workers', which implies that labour protection and employment regulation are, by default, inapplicable to the emerging business model (De Stefano 2016b, 477–478). This enables gig economy firms to classify workers who

undertake jobs mediated through digital platforms as 'self-employed' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 43–44). In many countries, self-employed workers are defined as those who run their own business. They are responsible for the success or failure of their business and are not entitled to employees' rights, which can vary widely across different countries.

Lawsuits around the misclassification of gig economy workers indicate that there is a fundamental problem in classifying workers as self-employed (Cherry 2015). While this study does not intend to focus on debates over workers' legal status, it follows the argument that 'anyone exchanging their labour power for money is a worker, irrespective of their actual categorization' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 44). Workers' classification as self-employed allows firms to reduce costs by hiring workers but denying them basic employment rights, thus situating them in precarious working conditions. In an SER, the issue of risk in the workplace is usually assumed by entrepreneurs or capitalists (Ravenelle 2017). Hence, the use of precarious employment practices, such as in the gig economy, makes the transfer of work-related risks from businesses and the state to workers more pervasive and generalised (Kalleberg 2018, 21).

To its proponents, there are no consumers in the gig economy, just as there are no employees and employers. At the heart of the Uber model is the optimisation of individuals' assets, time and skills to create an economic value for the owner, which celebrates the individuals as micro-entrepreneurs (Martin 2016). Firms like Uber present themselves as an intermediary whose main task is to connect resource owners with those who might need the resources. In their view, they create a business model that provides opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs to run their own small service business with minimal establishment costs (Kuhn and Maleki 2017). Uber advertises to drivers that they can use their driver app to earn money and be their own boss. Its website offers drivers the opportunity to make money by setting their own schedule (Uber n.d.).

Similar to Uber, Grab and Gojek appeal to drivers who work for themselves as micro-entrepreneurs by undertaking jobs mediated by the companies' apps (Cosseboom 2015; Saputra and Bestari 2018). The companies claim that drivers are free to take orders whenever they want. Using this premise, Grab and Gojek, like Uber, require drivers to provide their own vehicles and cover their own costs. As stated in Grab's 'Terms of Service: Transport, Delivery and Logistics', drivers are required to:

> Own or have the legal right and authority to operate, the vehicle or motorcycle, which you (the driver) intend to use when accepting Users, and such vehicle is in good

> operating condition and meets the industry safety standards for vehicles of its kind. (Grab 2020e)

Likewise, one of the requirements to drive with GoCar, a four-wheeler service accessed through the Gojek app, is to 'own or control a four-wheeled motorized vehicle that meets the requirements specified under applicable laws and is safe and comfortable to ride in on the road' (Gojek n.d.-d, 2).

While gig economy firms, including Uber, Grab and Gojek, refuse employment relationships between themselves and drivers, they require those who seek to make money through driver apps to contribute assets in the form of vehicles. By doing so, the risks associated with investing capital into the business lies in the hands of workers (Kaine and Josserand 2016). This is in contrast to the SER model, which is characterised by, among other things, 'performance of work on a pre-set schedule at the employer's place of business and under the employer's control and direction' (Kalleberg 2018, 75). In this manner, the employer's role is to provide capital and the worker's role is to provide labour. The demand for workers to invest in their own equipment to work in the gig economy indicates how workers are turned into entrepreneurs in the contemporary workplace.

In addition, gig economy firms like Uber refer to those who provide transport services to customers as partners, and they take a commission on the fare for providing the service (Hall and Krueger 2018). The classification of these people as partners is based on the firms' claim that the services delivered though the apps are forms of self-employment. Thus, the firms claim to recruit freelancers or casual workers (Kuhn and Maleki 2017), which paves the way for them to hire workers under flexible work arrangements, without any promise of future employment or deferred compensation. In the US, where Uber was founded, workers in the gig economy were hired as independent contractors (Aloisi 2016). This exempted Uber from the obligation of providing workers with benefits associated with a standard employment arrangement, including entitlement to fixed working hours, paid sick and annual leave, and notice prior to dismissal.

Similar to Uber, Grab and Gojek in Indonesia define those who engage in income-earning activities via the apps as partners. In 'Gojek App Terms of Use' for drivers, Gojek refers to drivers as partners and states that:

> Your (driver) relationship with Gojek is that of an independent contractor, based on a partnership. You understand and agree that … this Agreement is not an employment

> agreement, nor does it create an employment relationship … between You (driver) and Gojek, nor result in You (driver) being engaged by Gojek as a worker. (Gojek 2019a)

Likewise, Grab's 'Terms of Service: Transport, Delivery and Logistics' state that:

> If you are Third Party Provider (including drivers), your relationship with Us (the company) is a partnership to provide Solutions for User through Application, Platform, and/or Software … You acknowledge and agree that this Agreement is not an employment agreement … Therefore, you understand that this Agreement shall not, in any means, be interpreted as an industrial relation between you and Grab. (Grab 2020e)

The classification of drivers as partners means that Grab and Gojek drivers are not covered by Manpower Law no. 13/2003, thereby exempting the companies from the responsibility of ensuring that drivers are protected from most work-related risks. Gojek and Grab provide drivers and passengers with accident insurance (Gojek 2019b; Grab 2020d), and they help drivers register for other forms of insurance, such as private and government-provided health insurance. However, participation is not mandatory, and drivers are required to pay premiums (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016).

Moreover, in the gig economy, workers are exposed not only to risks associated with investing capital into the business, but also to those associated with insecure employment, which is commonly associated with entrepreneurship. Gig economy firms lure workers with the promise of lucrative incomes and freedom. For example, Uber promises 'no shifts, no bosses, no limits' (Ravenelle 2017, 7), while Grab offers drivers the 'freedom to rule your life', 'freedom to manage your own income', 'freedom to pursue your dreams' and 'freedom to socialise' (Grab 2020a). Similarly, Gojek promises motorcycle drivers that they are:

> Free to set their time and income level. Flexible working hours provide you (drivers) with the freedom to set their working hours, according to your wishes. Get up to millions of rupiah of income per month. (Gojek n.d.-c)

In short, the classification of workers as partners, along with the rhetoric of freedom that underpins the organisation of work in the gig economy, contributes to the rise of an entrepreneurship ethos among workers. It justifies the use of precarious employment practices by disguising any employer–employee relationship between the firm and the workers, while simultaneously exposing workers to risks associated with asset investment and insecure jobs. It

indicates the work of the neoliberal ideology, which shifts the emphasis from collective solutions to personal responsibility to create and maintain labour market flexibility.

In contrast to conventional waged employment, the gig economy promises greater freedom for workers. The lure of the gig economy for workers is soundly demonstrated by the catchphrase 'to be your own boss'. However, analysts (Woodcock and Graham 2019) observe that digital platforms allow gig economy firms to exert the same, or even more, control over workers compared with workers in conventional waged employment, and they do so at a lower cost. Kuhn and Maleki (2017, 183) point out that:

> Although the workers are officially considered independent contractors, many platform firms are tasked with workers' recruitment, selection, evaluation, and retention, even if some of these traditional management functions are performed by automated algorithms. While online labor platform firms may have small paid staffs, they can perform quasi-management functions for very large numbers of workers.

The sense of greater freedom is provided by giving workers the flexibility to turn the app on or off and drive whenever they have time to spare, although once workers log in to an app, they enter a delimited environment where their work is organised and managed. As Gandini (2019, 7) notes, the gig economy represents a site where 'social processes of production are put under logics of managerialization and work organization within a delimited environment'. Gig economy firms indeed provide workers with freedom from the formal constraints of a physical workplace. However, digital platforms represent a new workplace in advanced capitalism, whereby information and communication technologies decentralise work from a single physical site to any space equipped with communication facilities (Thompson and Smith 2009).

Digital platforms serve as a site through which the combination of algorithmic management and gamification is used by firms to control the way work is conducted. In algorithmic management, software algorithms are programmed to remotely oversee, govern and control workers' practices (Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017). In gamification, elements of games, such as bonuses, ratings and feedback systems, are incorporated into the work environment. According to Burawoy (1979), management uses gamified practices to encourage workers to reap various material and immaterial rewards. These practices give workers a sense of competence, autonomy and enjoyment in their work, which in turn lures them to cooperate by working faster to exceed production targets. Although companies have, for generations, resorted to gamification to boost workers' productivity, in the gig economy, algorithmic management and

experimentation with video game techniques amplify the effect of gamification. This creates an environment where the work process is guided mostly by apps, which are associated with an abstract system, instead of human supervisors, thereby increasing workers' sense of freedom, autonomy and flexibility.

Uber's surge pricing mechanism—under which surge pricing zones are created to usher drivers to particular locations at certain times—exemplifies how gamification is deployed in the gig economy. It uses heat map visualisation to show drivers the locations where fares will temporarily rise (Rosenblat 2018). Meanwhile, Grab implements an incentivisation scheme based on 'diamonds' (or points) that drivers collect (Grab 2020b). Gojek implements a points-based bonus system that gives drivers cash bonuses based on every milestone they reach in a day (Gojek 2020b). Drivers for Grab and Gojek can track the points they have accumulated in their apps. The bonus systems reward drivers who complete more trips, drive longer distances and work during certain hours and at particular locations. Two-wheeled drivers, who can deliver more than one type of service (ride-sharing, delivery and shopping), can choose the service that best aligns with their earning goals. Drivers are also rewarded for marketing the companies' products—for example, by selling top ups of the firms' official e-wallet.

The use of game elements in the work context allows firms to exercise subtle control over workers. Analysts (see DeWinter, Kocurek and Nichols 2014) have observed how the video game technique makes labour seem more like play, and potentially more enjoyable, thus motivating workers to increase their productivity. The bonus system allows workers to set their earning goals and motivate themselves to reach those goals without feeling exploited (Noam 2017). It provides workers with a sense of autonomy and control, which taps into their desire for self-determination and self-expression (Mason 2018). The use of bonus systems in the gig economy allows workers to meet the companies' targets while simultaneously giving the workers a degree of autonomy in setting their own schedule and choosing their own tasks. This encourages workers to maximise their productivity and produce profits for their employers, without a whiff of coercion.

Another game element is the system of feedback, ratings and rankings. This system ensures that a set of consumer-generated or client-generated data is attached to each worker and translated into metrics. The metrics produce a reputation score that is used by consumers to evaluate workers' performance and trustworthiness (Gandini 2019, 9). Management also uses metrics to evaluate workers' performance and design a system of rewards and punishments to induce good performance (Wood et al. 2019). Uber's main performance metrics, which have inspired firms

including Grab and Gojek, are drivers' ratings and the number of trips they accept and cancel (Nastiti 2017a; Panimbang 2021). The firms reward workers with higher performance targets with opportunities to receive more work, thus increasing their chance to earn a higher income. Low performance targets can result in drivers being temporarily or permanently deactivated from the system, becoming ineligible for bonuses or receiving fewer orders (Gojek 2019c; Gojek 2019d; Gojek 2020; Grab 2020c; Grab n.d.-c).

The consumer-based rating mechanism practised by Uber, Grab and Gojek positions consumers as middle-managers whose ratings have a direct influence on drivers' employability. The rating system is a continuation of the tradition of 'management by customers' or 'consumers control', which is defined by Fuller and Smith (1991, 3) as a way of managing workers through consumers' feedback and managers' monitoring of consumer–worker relations. It is part of the broader trend in flexible labour, where managerial oversight is shifted to consumers (Rosenblat and Stark 2016, 3722). The gamification of consumer-generated ratings has been extensively used, particularly in sectors where the main task of workers is to directly serve customers (ranging from fast food workers and telephone operators to workers in childcare and financial industries). This strategy enables the execution of a form of control to 'deemphasize obtrusive managerial or bureaucratic control and give greater leeway for employees when working with customers' (Fuller and Smith 1991, 2).

However, in contrast to the gig economy, work within these industries is performed within the constraints of a physical workplace. In such a manner, control over workers' performance is exerted mostly by human managers and supervisors. Rosenblat and Stark (2016, 3772) point out that the use of consumer-based ratings as a mechanism of control 'is not new or unique' to the gig economy; however, 'digital spaces facilitate and scaffold new systems of monitoring and opportunities for remote control over workers'. As such, digital platforms make it possible to eliminate the role of human supervisors in managerial control. In the Uber model, from which Grab and Gojek draw their inspiration, the app generates ratings by asking passengers to rate their driver on a scale of 1 to 5 after every ride. It then sends drivers a weekly feedback summary that includes passengers' comments, drivers' ratings and graphs that compare current ratings with previous ratings (Mason 2018).

In the Uber model, the rating feature is combined with other techniques to influence the way drivers deliver their service. For instance, drivers regularly receive messages that explain the ways in which passengers can give low or high ratings to drivers (Rosenblat and Stark 2016). Uber designs these messages to be indirect by framing them as a result of empirical data

generated by algorithmic management, presumably to avoid being regarded as a company policy. Similar to Uber, Grab and Gojek supply drivers with strategies to improve their ratings by framing them as being produced from passengers' feedback that is generated by algorithmic management (Grab 2018; Gojek 2019d). While there is no requirement for drivers to follow the suggestions, their failure to do so puts them at risk of deactivation, ineligibility for bonuses and receiving fewer orders. This management style allows firms to maintain a desired level of quality in the delivery of work, while maintaining the illusion of greater freedom.

The visualisation of the ratings on the apps, as well as their connection to performance targets, pressures drivers to satisfy their passengers. This strategy encourages workers to secure a favourable position in relationships with consumers to ensure good feedback and reviews (Alacovska 2018) and to raise their rating. Drivers are motivated to be friendly and reliable hosts to obtain glowing reviews from passengers, which in turn allows them to receive more job offers (Gandini 2019, 9). Some drivers even devise creative ways to please their passengers—for instance, by providing free bottled water, candy and gum. However, the use of digital platforms allows gig economy firms to assure the quality of the service they provide to consumers without technically managing the workers. It offers a certain degree of freedom for workers to deliver the work however they wish, as long as the quality of the work is satisfactory to the consumers (Wood et al. 2019, 64).

In brief, this section explored the way in which gig economy firms combine algorithmic management and the strategy of gamification, whereby elements of game—in particular, bonuses, ratings and the feedback system—are used as a strategy of control in the work context. Although companies have, for decades, resorted to gamification to exert control over the way work is performed, its execution through a digital platform, as practised in the gig economy, gives workers a false sense of freedom, autonomy and flexibility. This sustains the self-image of workers in the gig economy as entrepreneurs.

The Institutionalisation of Informal Work Arrangements in the Transport Sector

As discussed in Chapter 2, Indonesia's experience stands in contrast to that of the advanced industrialised economies in the West and in East Asia, where the SER used to be the norm, although some categories of workers, like women and immigrants, remained excluded. In Indonesia, precarious work has always been the norm because of the pervasiveness of the informal economy and the smaller size of the formal sector. Against this background, this section explores how the online transport sector institutionalises older arrangements in the informal

sector so they are implemented in the formal sector to reduce labour costs. In doing so, the new business continues the trend towards labour outsourcing. The section will then examine the way the gig economy intensifies the older practices of outsourcing through digitised control over the way work is performed and by exploiting regulatory and legal loopholes to expand aggressively.

As previously discussed, the use of digital platforms in the gig economy signifies a significant shift from the way work is organised in conventional waged employment. However, the hiring of workers under flexible work arrangements in the gig economy is not new. As Woodcock and Graham (2019) note, it is in fact a continuation of an older pattern of outsourcing that has become increasingly prevalent in advanced economies in the West since the 1970s amid the dismantling of the SER model under neoliberal imperatives. This type of work arrangement involves 'an organization taking parts of their operations like facility maintenance, cleaning, and customer services and tendering them out to external companies', thus providing opportunities for public and private companies to reduce 'costs to either increase profits or meet internal targets' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 44).

In the advanced economies of the West, the proliferation of labour outsourcing represents a process whereby 'the defining characteristics of the formal sector in protection and regulation' are degraded (Tjandraningsih 2013, 404). The growth of the gig economy, whereby companies outsource gigs to workers, signifies a shift away from the SER model that used to be the norm in this region. In contrast, although Indonesian workers in the gig economy continue 'to lack the job security or employment standards of workers in most formal sector occupations', certain aspects of their work have been institutionalised in comparison with work as ojek drivers or other kinds of jobs in the informal sector (Ford and Honan 2017, 276–277). Amid the growth of the online transport industry, precarious employment is used extensively in the Indonesian formal sector and is 'built on uncertain, unstable, and insecure employment practices previously experienced in the informal economies' (Kalleberg and Hewison 2015, 22).

In Indonesia, Grab and Gojek have contributed to institutionalising previously informal work arrangements in the transport sector by regulating labour entry to the industry. Both companies require anyone who is interested in being a driver to log in to the app; thus, interested applicants must own a mobile phone, either Android- or iOS-based. Prospective drivers are also required to prepare several documents, including an ID card, driving license, police record and vehicle log. Both companies determine the type of vehicle that prospective drivers can operate. For instance, Grab requires cars that are no more than five years old (calculated from the year of registration), and it gives priority to multi-purpose vehicles and family cars (Grab n.d.-b). The

types of motorbikes considered acceptable by Grab are 'non-trekking and not single-seater types', and they must be in accordance with Grab's criteria, whereby the requirement for the vehicle's lifespan can vary in different cities (Grab n.d.-a). Similarly, Gojek requires prospective four-wheeler drivers to 'have a passenger car (equipped with) at least 1000 cc of engine and (manufactured) at least in 2010' (Gojek n.d.-a). For those who are interested in being a two-wheeler driver, Gojek requires them to 'have a 4 strokes motorized bike with a maximum 250 cc engine capacity' (Gojek n.d.-b).

In contrast to the requirements set by Grab and Gojek, the absence of regulations regarding the use of personal vehicles as a means of public transport, like in the ojek service, indicates that prospective drivers are not obliged to meet any vehicle requirements or prepare any form of documentation. However, entrance to the service is governed by an array of informal rules, under which prospective ojek drivers have several options: to register as a member of a pangkalan (station), which is a small-scale and territorial-based unit in which some drivers are organised; or to be a 'free driver' who risks being banned from certain pangkalan, and thus unable to receive a regular income (Amin 2012, 40). Most pangkalan have a joining fee that ranges from 500,000 IDR (UA$35) to 3 million IDR (US$200), in addition to a regular membership fee (Frey 2020). Moreover, the endorsement of an existing pangkalan member is often required as part of the process.

While drivers in the online transport industry are not bound by the kind of rules that regulate the pangkalan, their employment opportunities depend on their adherence to the standardised rules set by the companies. Thus, the online transport industry establishes barriers to entry by workers. Failure to meet the vehicle requirements set by Grab and Gojek—for an array of reasons, such as an inability to provide a newer motorbike or to supply the vehicle's legal documents—has prevented many ojek drivers from participating in the new industry (Freischlad 2015b; Febrianti 2017). Nonetheless, unlike in the taxi industry, which is unambiguously part of the formal economy, gig economy firms transfer large capital costs associated with vehicle ownership and maintenance to workers, who are hired under flexible work arrangements. The online transport industry has thus taken the project of outsourcing to another level by reducing their ownership of assets and costs as much as possible to increase their profits (Woodcock and Graham 2019).

Although employment arrangements in the taxi industry in Indonesia vary, companies generally do not require asset contributions from workers, unlike in the transport and delivery service of the gig economy. For instance, the Blue Bird Group, which is Indonesia's largest taxi operator,

owns the fleet of vehicles and applies a commission-based system (*sistem komisi*), whereby drivers' income is scaled according of the amount of money they bring in (Amran Saleh 2017). Express Group, the second largest taxi company in Indonesia, applies a deposit-based system (*sistem setoran*), whereby drivers pay a designated amount of money to the company to use its cars. This system is also used by other minor and less-reputable taxi companies. Express also offers opportunities for drivers to own the cars they have used, which they can sell or use to work privately (Evans 2016). In addition, large taxi companies help cover some costs by providing pools, service stations and maintenance depots.

In the online transport industry, the process of institutionalising previously informal work arrangements in the transport sector also occurs through the registration of a driver on the Grab and Gojek platforms with an individual user account. As registered providers of Grab and Gojek, aspects of drivers' work activities are managed by the firms through digital platforms, as previously discussed. As elucidated by analysts (Nastiti 2017a, Rosenblat 2018, Panimbang 2021), gig economy firms have the authority to set and change the fares paid by consumers and the rates paid to workers. They can also redistribute the existing supply of drivers to high-demand areas by incentivising drivers to work at designated times and at particular locations. Further, they have the power to maintain a desired level of quality in service delivery by influencing workers to modify their behaviour to earn good ratings from consumers. They can also discipline workers by temporarily or permanently suspending them.

These factors allow gig economy firms to standardise the quality of service delivered by workers. Failure to adhere to regulations set by the firms, as discussed previously, can result in a drop in drivers' earnings and deactivation from the system. This is in contrast to the informal way in which the ojek service is organised. For instance, drivers and passengers negotiate the price for each trip in the ojek service through haggling, whereas the Uber model sets the fares based on distance, time of day and available drivers on the road. The informal regulation of the pangkalan can determine drivers' income—for instance, through the use of a queuing system to serve passengers, which prevents conflicts among drivers. However, unlike the online transport industry, where poor performance can result in deactivation from the system, ojek drivers do not need to maintain particular standards of service delivery to keep their job.

While managerial control over workers in the gig economy signifies the institutionalisation of previously informal work arrangements so they are implemented in the formal sector, it does so in a way that is different from the taxi industry, which is also part of the formal economy. Gig economy and taxi companies both have power over workers' employment opportunities.

However, in the gig economy, unlike in the taxi industry, the requirement to contribute assets disguises the employment relationship between the firms and the drivers and underpins the idea that the drivers are their own bosses rather than workers hired under a flexible employment system. In Indonesia, taxi drivers are also hired under a flexible working system as partners instead of employees, and they are precarious workers who lack job security. Yet, because the vehicles used in conventional taxi services are the property of the firms, the employment relationship involved is relatively clear. It is also harder to disguise managerial control in the taxi industry.

As mentioned in the previous section, workers in the gig economy have no or very limited access to employment rights, including those associated with collective bargaining. This poses formidable challenges for workplace-based collective organisations. The workers have used the legal system to further their interests, arguing that they should be classified as company employees and that they are entitled to various rights stipulated in employment law, despite their classification as partners (Tempo 2011). However, to date, these drivers have not had big wins. Firms like Blue Bird Group have engaged in practices to limit independent unionism—for instance, by intimidating drivers and supporting the establishment of company unions to prevent the emergence of genuine driver representation (Detik 2006). Like in the taxi industry, workers' right to collective bargaining is not recognised in the gig economy. The ambiguous employer–employee relationship in the gig economy poses an even greater challenge to unionisation, as will be explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

In summary, this comparison of the ojek and taxi industries explores how the online transport sector has institutionalised the previously informal work arrangements in the broader transport sector so they are implemented in the formal economy, but without improving job security. It does so by registering workers and standardising requirements to obtain a job in the gig economy and the way workers perform their work, thus placing workers and their work activities under state and corporate control. Nonetheless, gig economy firms continue to deny workers the security associated with the SER model, and workers are even obliged to contribute assets to secure their employment. This allows 'corporations and governments to capture and extract value from labor or taxes with minimal risk and expense' (Frey 2020, 41).

In this fashion, as put forward by Woodcock and Graham (2019, 51), the digitisation of work practices ensures that companies pay workers for their productive moments, excluding 'the waiting time between demand'. In addition, digitised control over the work process, with minimal human intervention, ensures a more efficient, reliable and cost-effective form of

control. This allows for the intensification of outsourcing practices, which is supported by some distinctive features of algorithmic management to differentiate it from conventional management, which relies heavily on human managers and supervisors. First, algorithmic management enables the constant tracking of workers' activities. Second, it can facilitate the continued evaluation of drivers' performance. Third, algorithmic management can constantly and automatically make and enact decisions regarding workers. Fourth, it is characterised by low transparency.

Gig economy firms use digital devices that connect workers to the platform to closely and continuously track their activities. Examples of such devices are browsers, cell phone apps and smartphones with GPS (global positioning system) technology and an internet connection (Rosenblat 2018). Here, the use of IT-enabled algorithmic management keeps the cost low, while allowing for the effective management of a scalable workforce. For instance, the Indonesian Blue Bird Group has innovated with an array of technological interventions to monitor drivers' activities, including electronic meters, black boxes and security devices to monitor vehicles' movements (Bluebird n.d.). However, an electronic meter and a security device for a fleet can only provide a company with gross information about the total bookings and the vehicle's location. In contrast, Grab and Gojek can capture detailed information about the specific ways in which a driver structured their day, including the number of trips the driver completed and the time that the driver allocated for working and resting.

Algorithmic management's capability to constantly track workers' activities enables continued and real-time evaluation of large volumes of work on a daily basis (Bluebird n.d.). It does so by automatically converting passengers' evaluations into ratings and ranking them to compare drivers' performance. The information is then used to alert management to behavioural anomalies among drivers (Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017). While companies have used an array of techniques to evaluate drivers' performance, they cannot generate instantaneous and recurrent performance evaluations for large numbers of workers. For example, the Blue Bird Group assigns staff to verify each lodged report on a driver's performance using data collected from taxi meters and other sources. Without the kind of technology that can support algorithmic management, they cannot generate up-to-the-minute information about anomalies in workers' behaviour.

In the gig economy, algorithmic management is also programmed to automatically calculate, form and enact decisions regarding a large number of workers with little or no human intervention (Rosenblat and Stark 2016; Möhlmann and Zalmalson 2017). This enables much

faster enforcement of disciplinary actions than in a conventional workplace. For instance, in the taxi industry, a dissatisfied consumer could complain about a driver's poor service to a big operator like Blue Bird Group. The company then needs time to review, verify and follow up the complaint before forming and enacting a decision regarding the driver (Meliala 2009). In comparison, algorithmic management can automatically suspend a driver when it identifies a violation, sometimes even if, in fact, the system has malfunctioned. Thus, the gig economy *reduces the amount of time* required to discipline workers by providing less room for human managers and supervisors to discuss and revise decisions, often under circumstances not fully captured by the data.

Last, as gig economy firms operate in a highly competitive business environment, they rarely disclose the rules and instructions they develop to design the algorithms. Algorithmic management can also be designed to adapt to minute changes in the patterns of workers' activities. Its deployment in the Uber model therefore allows for a complex and opaque payment and bonus system (Lee et al. 2015, 1606). Here, the value of a ride dynamically changes when passenger demand surges. Further, drivers cannot know for certain how the system distributes orders. Although algorithmic management usually distributes orders based on proximity, it also considers other factors, such as a driver's ratings and login time. In comparison, taxi companies such as Blue Bird Group implement a relatively simple and stable set of rules for payment, including a progressive commission-based system and a minimum target of earnings each day.

Another consequence of the use of digital platforms in the organisation of work in the gig economy is that they give the companies more leeway to operate within grey areas of the law. In the business models of Uber, Grab and Gojek, as discussed previously, the practice of classifying workers as partners and independent contractors and hiring them under flexible working conditions paves the way for the companies to reduce their labour costs by retaining 'only the barest minimum of staff' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 45). The firms do this by reinforcing their image as an intermediary whose main function is to connect micro-entrepreneurs with consumers who are in need of an array of short-term services. In doing so, they maintain the position that they are simply a tech start-up, and thus a technology company, rather than a labour-employing company or a transport entity.

Despite the companies' claim that they are not labour-employing companies or transport entities, real vehicles are still needed for the firms to deliver their services, and real people are still needed to drive the vehicles. Scholz (2017, 124) points out that 'Uber is a labour company, not simply a tech start-up, which means that it is reliant on the availability of an abundance of

cheap labour and a permissive regulatory environment'. The Uber business model is thus typified by its avoidance of 'sales tax, the cost of vehicles, repairs, insurance, and meeting the obligation for social security for its drivers' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 48). As discussed in Chapter 2, the emergence of the business model was preconditioned by socioeconomic changes associated with 'neoliberalism that enabled the deregulation of employment … while also creating an outlet for excess finance capital, allowing it to be poured into these platform companies' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 52).

Gig economy firms like Uber thus take advantage of loopholes in the taxi industry's regulatory structure. Uber's position that it is a technology company provides the company with a way to justify its refusal to abide by the rules and regulations imposed on the taxi industry. For instance, several major cities in the US limit the number of taxis operating on roads through a medallion system, under which those with medallions are given the exclusive right to pick up people off the street for transport purposes (Fasnacht 2017). In Indonesia, the taxi industry is bound by regulations governing minimum and maximum tariffs and fleet quotas for each city. Without the need to adhere to such rules and regulations, Uber, Grab and Gojek can expand in a relatively unregulated market. In various South-East Asian countries (Sopranzetti 2017; Turner 2020), including Indonesia, the Uber model is replicated in the motorbike delivery and transport sector amid the absence of additional regulations.

Although the Uber model outsources capital and labour costs, some aspects are retained by the firm, such as 'methods to extract, analyse, and use data' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 45). Instead of outsourcing these aspects to another company, gig economy firms hoard and use the data. The Uber model essentially relies on 'network effects', which means 'the more numerous the users who use a platform, the more valuable that platform becomes for everyone else' (Srnicek 2017, 59). For Uber, the demand for drivers is guided by an increase in consumers. More drivers on the road means faster pick-up times and lower prices for each ride. This, in turn, increases the number of users, which results in more revenue for the company. Consequently, the Uber model dislikes competition because it diminishes the network effects. Multiple ride-hailing apps in a city would fragment the consumer and driver base and reduce revenue.

In Uber's business model, vehicle ownership does not limit the company's ability to scale up. To expand rapidly and achieve the network effects, Uber needs 'server capacity, effective advertising, and available workers' (Woodcock and Graham 2019, 45). Uber's rapid expansion has also resulted from the company's ability to find loopholes in existing regulations. In Indonesia, Uber, Grab and Gojek have attempted to expand rapidly to attain the network

effects. Backed by prominent national and international investors, they offer cheaper services than taxi and ojek services in a context where the public transport system is less than reliable (Daga and Potkin 2018; Franedya 2018). They also aggressively recruit drivers and, in the early days, they offered heavily subsidised tariffs (Freischlad 2015a; Grab 2015). This offers a way to earn a lucrative income, often where other available jobs are mostly precarious and where income is relatively limited.

To summarise, this section has demonstrated how older practices of outsourcing, which are associated with the use of precarious employment practices in the formal sector, are intensified in the gig economy. The intensification process occurs through the use of algorithmic management to facilitate detailed, yet covert, control over the way work is performed. It is also supported by the way the gig economy exploits regulatory and legal loopholes to expand aggressively.

Replicating the Uber model, the online transport industry has grown to a substantial scale in Indonesia. In the Greater Jakarta area, the number of cars operating in the online transport service was more than 36,000 in 2018 compared with around 24,000 for taxis in 2016 (BPS Provinsi DKI Jakarta 2017). Grab and Gojek attracted up to 20,000 motorcycle drivers at a one-time recruitment event in Jakarta in 2015 (BPS Provinsi DKI Jakarta 2017), whereas the ojek service is organised as small-scale fraternities. The meteoric rise of the new industry has contributed to making precarious work in the formal sector more generalised and pervasive. Drivers in the gig economy and in the taxi industry are similarly hired under precarious work arrangements. However, it is harder to disguise the employment relationship in the taxi industry than in the gig economy. The emerging online transport industry has also institutionalised informal arrangements in the ojek service to expand its market. However, it has done so 'while devolving risk to the drivers' (Frey 2020, 39).

The Contradictions in Being Governed

As discussed in Chapter 2, a particular interest of this study is to explore the effects of the deployment of various interventions under neoliberalism to structure individuals' environment and govern their behaviour. Managerial control in the gig economy is thus viewed here as a technology of governance, through which 'workers are managed as the active, productive and self-directed economic subjects of neoliberalism' (Moisander, Groß and Eräranta 2018, 378). Another interest is to elucidate the type of contradiction in workers' experience of work and their self-identity. In doing so, this section first explores how workers' propensity to self-regulate

themselves to work hard and mitigate various work-related risks is harnessed in the online transport sector in accordance with the firms' goals. It then examines the way in which increased competition and degrading work conditions create collective grievances among workers, which leads to increased awareness about the exploitative nature of their work.

As discussed in the previous sections, the operation of managerial control in the gig economy—which allows for workers' acceptance of their position as the bearers of most of the work-related risks in return for presumed greater freedom, autonomy and flexibility at work—has led to a rise in workers' entrepreneurial identity. This process of identity formation transpires through the gig economy's classification of drivers as independent contractors or partners, amid their exposure to risks associated with capital investment and insecure employment. As revealed in some interviews, in alignment with the firms' objective to transfer most work-related risks to workers, many drivers in the online transport industry view themselves as micro-entrepreneurs because they use their own vehicles and cover all of their costs. They also perceive themselves as partners because they believe that they and the firms are not bound by an employment relationship. They view the array of work-related risks that they are exposed to as a fair exchange for freedom to make choices regarding their working conditions:

> For me [the classification of the drivers as partners] is appropriate. Why? Most drivers want independence. They do not want to be bossed around by their employers or any companies. They want to be micro-entrepreneurs. Why? They have their own motorbike, they cover the cost for the gasoline. (Interview 19, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 22 August 2018)

> As partners we do not get benefits, including year-end bonuses. However, we are free to choose our working hours. Me, I prefer to be a partner, a freelancer, because I can choose my time of working. (Interview 1, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 2 July 2018)

In the distinct work environment in the gig economy, digitised control over work processes sustains the illusion of greater freedom at work. Most drivers in the online transport sector thus perceive themselves as autonomous in alignment with the firms' objective to hire them as self-employed workers. For many of them, their sense of autonomy stems from the freedom to set their own schedule and work whenever they want, and from the fact that they do not need to deal with the conventional hierarchal work environment. Such beliefs acclimatise drivers to think that they can combine work and leisure, as illustrated in the interviews:

> As an online taxi driver, we are free to schedule when we wake up, start working, [and] take a break for praying. I never had such freedom when I worked for other people … Especially when I worked in taxation consulting. I needed to turn my cell phone on 24 hours every day. (Interview 23, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

> After someone experiences how it feels to work as an online taxi driver he or she would not want to work as an employee of other people. Because we are free … Ever since I started to work as an online taxi driver, I can drive my wife and kids, wherever they need to go. I feel like I have my own car, although I rent it … When I worked for Blue Bird I needed to turn the taxi meter on if I ever wanted to take my family with the taxi I drive. If the company found out that we drove our family without turning the meter on, we would be fired. (Interview 24, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

Despite presumed autonomy, workers are exposed to risks associated with investing in assets to be used on behalf of the firms. Although the firms are widely known to attract vehicle owners who seek to make an extra income, they also lure others who do not have their own vehicle (Maulana 2018). The firms offer vehicle financing programs to assist prospective drivers to buy new vehicles (see Aprilianda 2017; Gojek 2017; Lunden 2018; Rei 2019; Supriyatna 2020). However, these loan programs are risky for drivers because their ability to maintain continued usage of the assets depends on various circumstances outside their control, such as automatic suspension by algorithmic management, illness or injuries that decrease their productivity, and an unstable income. The risks are higher for the majority of drivers who depend on driving as their only occupation. As revealed by Perkumpulan Prakarsa, out of 205 online *ojek* drivers surveyed in Jabodetabek, 64% depend on the job as their main source of income (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016).

Drivers in the gig economy are also exposed to risks associated with insecure employment, and therefore bear the costs, risks and insecurity of work variability. The expenses that drivers must cover include those relating to smartphones and internet data access, fuel, vehicle insurance, servicing, repairs and other maintenance costs. There are also rental fees for drivers who lease, or interest and depreciation on the purchase price of the car for those who buy (Zaenudin 2018b). Drivers also need to cover additional costs if they are sick and unable to work because there are no protections in place. These risks place a heavy burden on drivers, as revealed by one of the interviewees:

> When I was a conventional taxi driver, and there was no online taxi services, the condition was better … I did not need to think about my debt to the bank [for taking the car loan] … If I got sick and cannot work for a day, they will take the car from me … The responsibility is higher here. (Interview 44, app-based car driver, male, 2 November 2018)

While presuming autonomy, drivers are in fact limited by the rules of the game laid out by algorithmic management. Drivers' sense of autonomy is induced by the practice of gamification, which allows them to decide the most strategic working pattern to maximise the system for their benefit. For instance, some drivers believe that they can optimise their opportunities to earn bonuses and rest time by focusing on certain services. Other drivers believe that they can balance their work and rest times by chasing longer rides rather than bonuses. Such beliefs are revealed in the interviews:

> I prioritise orders for GoFood [and] rarely take orders for GoRide. I usually take only [up to] four orders for GoRide each day … Because I aim for the bonus points. It is not too exhausting. When I take orders for GoRide I am often stuck in traffic … When I take orders for GoFood, I can take a break while waiting for the food to be prepared. (Interview 13, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 25 July 2018)

> To earn bonuses, we need 19 trips, around one hour each. It means we spend 19 hours a day for driving. We only have 5 hours to rest … We will put ourselves in danger. Sleep deprivation can cause accidents … I prefer to chase longer trips … With five longer trips, like to the airport, we will earn enough, we do not need to chase bonuses. (Interview 26, app-based car driver, male, 24 September 2018)

Managerial control in the gig economy thus creates a condition that harnesses workers' propensity to self-regulate themselves to maximise productivity and navigate work-related risks. Workers' exposure to risks associated with asset investment and employment insecurity motivate them to set individualised earning goals after taking into account their expenses. The rules of the game laid out by algorithmic management direct workers to work long hours and maintain a consistent work schedule while strategically including breaks between their working times. The effect of the whole mechanism is revealed in the interviews:

> I usually start to work around 5.30 am, take a break at around 10 am, start again at 2 pm, [and] stop at 10 pm … [I work] every day, except for Saturday … I need to pay for gasoline and other cost … I have been working long hours, like a horse. If I am being lazy,

> I can only get enough money to cover the monthly car loan repayment. (Interview 40, app-based car driver, male, 2 October 2018)

> In the online [transport industry] it is up to us … Once we reach our bonus goal, we are done … With GoCar app, the target is to collect 17 points. That means I need to drive around 17 passengers. Usually I start to drive at 5 am in the morning. The earliest I can finish working is at 5 pm in the afternoon. (Interview 15, app-based car driver, male, 6 August 2018)

In summary, in the online transport industry, the classification of workers as micro-entrepreneurs and partners, along with the use of algorithmic management as a substitute for direct managerial control, provides workers with a sense of freedom, flexibility and autonomy. However, in reality, workers' ability to make money is dictated by the firms' policies, which situated the workers as the bearers of most work-related risks. This demonstrates how managerial control in the gig economy operates as a technique of neoliberal governance that seeks 'to instrumentalize the propensities and self-regulating capacities of individuals as autonomous economic subjects', and by doing so, align 'the presumed natural tendencies of these subjects with the economic objectives of the organization' (Moisander, Groß and Eräranta 2018, 377–378).

Although managerial control in the gig economy harnesses workers' propensity to self-regulate themselves, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is heterogeneity in workers' subjective experience because of the contradictions within the material circumstances of working and living in the new period of increasing precarity. For instance, based on her research on gig economy workers in the US, Ravenelle (2017, 11) separates these workers into three main categories: success stories, strugglers and strivers. Success stories are defined as those who 'are their own bosses' and who have the ability to 'control their day-to-day schedule', thus making it seem like the sky is the limit 'in terms of how much money they can make' (Ravenelle 2017, 11–12). At the other end of the spectrum are strugglers, who have difficulty making ends meet while relying on gig jobs. Meanwhile, strivers are those who have a stable job but turn to gig jobs for additional cash and a more comfortable lifestyle.

Ravenelle (2017) points out that there is not always a clear-cut distinction between different categories. It is common for workers in the category of strivers to share some of the qualities of the strugglers or success stories. A worker can also shift from one category to another: some workers believe themselves to be success stories until the firms change their policies and

regulations, making them strugglers. Likewise, in the context of this study, managerial control in the gig economy in Indonesia harnesses workers' propensity to self-regulate themselves to maximise their productivity and navigate most work-related risks in alignment with the companies' objectives. However, various circumstances—for instance, rising competition among workers, as well as firms' tendency to abruptly change their terms and conditions for workers—can fuel discontent and unrest, thereby sowing the seeds for resistance, as will be explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the Indonesian context, interviews with drivers in the online transport sector also revealed that, in addition to the two extremes of workers who consent to or resist managerial control, there are others who share the characteristics of strivers in Ravenelle's (2017) typology. This category includes workers who are not entirely dependent on jobs in the gig economy to make ends meet. They take gig jobs for an additional income and thus have more flexibility not to completely adhere to the discipline imposed by management. In this process, some of them become important figures in collective resistance, while others manage to save enough money to fulfil their entrepreneurial aspirations:

> I work in a production company … We make infotainment programs … I am the producer … I (usually) create materials in the morning. Then I brief the reporters so they know what to do … [so] I have a flexible schedule … [I started to drive with the app] in 2016 … some friends at work started before me and they got extra cash to get new cameras. [The gig job itself] is not too bad … I can get some extra income … so I do not need to use my salary … to pay for my holiday, or if I want to get a new pair of new shoes. I just need to drive for two or three days. (Interview 17, app-based motorcycle driver, 13 August 2018)

> I am employed in a property company … I have been working there for 10 years … the company provides health insurance and other benefits … for my wife and kids as well … I only take one or two orders [via the ride-hailing app] after office hours … I can drive the whole day at the weekend … but only when my family is not planning to do anything … I cannot sacrifice the family time … I think you cannot rely on driving [with the app] only … it is a good side job if you have another stable job … especially if you [like me] have paid off the car loan. (Interview 36, app-based car driver, 10 October 2018)

The circumstances that fuel workers' sense of discontentment and grievance include gig economy firms' aggressive recruitment of drivers as part of their strategy to scale up the

business, which results in increasing competition among drivers (Panimbang 2021). Amid tight competition between Uber, Gojek and Grab to dominate the Indonesian market share,[15] thousands of drivers were recruited between 2015 and 2016. For example, in August 2015, Gojek booked the GBK (Gelora Bung Karno) National Stadium in Jakarta to recruit 16,000 motorcycle drivers over four days (Freischlad 2015a). In the same month, Grab announced that it had recruited more than 2,500 motorcycle drivers in just one day (Grab 2015). In their early days, Grab, Uber and Gojek burnt money on incentives for promotions and price cuts to attract drivers and passengers. However, with more drivers and passengers attracted to the digitised transport sector, the firms gradually changed the payment and bonuses mechanism, making it harder for drivers to meet their earning goals (Zaenudin 2018a).

With the recruitment of more drivers, work flexibility has started to become a myth for the majority of drivers, especially those who depend on driving for Gojek or Grab as their main source of income. While drivers in the gig economy enjoy not having fixed hours of work every day, many of them end up working long hours, even spending the night in their car (Paul 2019). Perkumpulan Prakarsa found that most online ojek drivers who participated in its survey worked, on average, between 12 and 18 hours (49.7%) or between 6 and 12 hours (35.1%) each day (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016). Increased competition among drivers makes it more difficult for them to find adequate numbers of passengers and meet their earning goals. The drivers' subsidy has been gradually cut, and the amount of bonuses has slowly decreased (Nastiti 2017a). This pushes drivers to work longer hours and reduce their general work flexibility, which is a source of discontent, as illustrated in the interviews:

> In the past … we could get 500,000 IDR [US$34] in a day. It is impossible nowadays. At the beginning, there were not that many drivers on the streets, perhaps hundreds. Now, there are thousands of drivers. [In the past] we did not need to compete with so many other drivers. Now, drivers have more competitors, while the fare decreases. Drivers cannot earn as much as they earned in the past. We can earn 100,000 IDR [US$6.8] to 200,000 IDR [US$13.6] in a day. Just enough to pay our bills. (Interview 14, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 27 July 2018)

[15] Uber entered the Jakarta market in 2014 and left South-East Asia in 2018 after selling its business to Grab (Jenkins 2016; Hamza 2018). Grab, which established its service in Indonesia in 2014, currently operates in seven other countries in South-East Asia (Grab 2020f). Meanwhile, the Indonesian-based Gojek started expanding to other countries in the region in 2018 (Iskandar 2018).

> Nowadays, within Gojek If you want to earn money, you need to work your ass off. You might talk to a driver who looks happy, it is because his wife works and [financially] supports him. But there are also drivers who look terrible, because they are the only breadwinners … Why? … [Because] there are too many drivers on the streets! It is like several people fighting over a peanut! There should have been a quota system! (Interview 9, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 21 July 2018)

In addition, algorithmic management's low level of transparency creates another condition that fuels drivers' sense of grievance and discontentment. In the gig economy, drivers can never fully comprehend rules and instructions created by the firms to run the algorithms that control the work process (Panimbang 2021). This results in stories and urban legends about how the system works, especially in regard to drivers' suspension, performance targets and rating mechanisms. Interviews with drivers demonstrate negative feelings that arise from the lack of information that drivers need to understand and navigate the intricacies of an algorithm's rules. Drivers' resentment towards the system is also encouraged by the automated system, whereby decisions are implemented automatically and drivers communicate mostly with a chat box instead of human representatives of the companies. For drivers, the system is operated in a way that hampers their capabilities to plan ahead and maximise income:

> It is highly possible that we [drivers] cannot meet Gojek's requirement to earn the bonuses. For instance, we need 1 more point to reach our bonus goal. But then Gojek gives us an order of a 25 km trip. If we take the order, we will be very tired. However, if we don't take the order, our performance rating will decrease. Although we have completed a lot of orders, at the end we end up with nothing. (Interview 12, app-based car driver, male, 25 July 2018)

> The other day I received bad comments from a passenger … I saw it on my Grab account that the passenger gave me 1 star, for driving recklessly … I cried, because it was difficult for me to earn 5 stars … I was automatically suspended … I needed to report my problem to Grab to be able to work again. The suspension costs me 2 days of not being able to work. Imagine how many hundreds of thousands I lost. (Interview 47, app-based car driver, female, 26 November 2018)

> I got suspended [from Gojek because] I was accused of doing illegal actions, like creating fictitious orders.[16] But when I asked the company to prove their accusation, they cannot provide any evidence … I personally think that I got suspended because I represent fellow drivers to reject the agreement made between Mr Nadiem [the co-founder and CEO of Gojek] and Jakarta Deputy Chief of Police in October 2016. (Interview 9, app-based car driver, male, 21 July 2018)

Under these circumstances, drivers view gig economy firms as authorities that act like employers by earning profits from drivers' supply of labour. This provides opportunities for drivers to comprehend algorithmic management not only as an abstract system, but also as a creation that can be adjusted to meet the needs of its creators. Drivers are thus made aware that the firms have the power to set fees and determine their employability (Ford and Honan 2016, 2017). This understanding raises awareness about situations of power asymmetry between drivers and the firms (Rosenblat and Stark 2016). Drivers accept that they are partners rather than employees, yet some of them feel that they are treated unfairly because they have no rights to influence the firms' decisions. Drivers express negative feelings that arise from unfair treatment by the system and the firms based on their experience of dealing with the system, accentuated by interactions with other drivers in online and offline forums, which will be explored in Chapter 6:

> In my opinion, we need the firm, and the firm needs us. Ideally, when there is a problem, we need to open a space for dialogue and we need to have the right to negotiate with the company. However, we do not have the right. Whenever we try to initiate a dialogue with the company, they easily break us. (Interview 17, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 13 August 2018)

> They should not call us partners, because as partners we should be in an equal relation with the companies. They should have asked us, before changing the payment and bonus schemes. (Interview 12, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 25 July 2018)

> I have tried to study Grab's system for a year and I still do not quite understand it. The system is complicated. [And] there is no transparency about the tariff and the bonuses, which also change often … [I realise that] the system is only a game, that can be played (by the company). (Interview 15, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 6 August 2018)

[16] A practice by which a driver game the managerial control to earn more income. This will be explored further in Chapter 5.

Thus, there are variations in the subjective experiences of those who labour in the online transport sector as part of the gig economy. Whereas some workers consent to managerial control that harnesses the propensity to regulate themselves, others—especially those who resort to the gig jobs merely for an additional income—do not need to adhere to the disciplinary mechanism imposed by the firms. At the other end of the spectrum are those who experience grief and discontentment, which stem from the growing degradation of their working conditions.

Summary

As discussed in Chapter 3, socioeconomic changes that started to take place amid rapid industrialisation under the New Order—under which Indonesia's economy gradually began to be incorporated into the mechanics of global capital accumulation—have exposed workers to a new form of precarity. This chapter explored the expansion of a new form of precarious work in the modern formal sector, while the informal sector remains large and most workers remain inadequately protected by social welfare programs. This development, along with the growth of the urban and peri-urban areas, has led to higher aspirations among workers of an urban middle-class lifestyle and a form of entrepreneurial identity. This chapter examined the expansion of the contemporary manifestation of precarious work in the online transport industry in a post-authoritarian setting after the 1997–1998 crisis, which led to the unquestioned implementation of neoliberal reforms.

The new form of precarious work, as demonstrated in this chapter, has expanded in the modern formal economy through new ways of organising work, as observed in the online transport industry. As part of the gig economy, the new industry classifies workers who deliver a service via an app as an independent contractor, a partner and a micro-entrepreneur. By doing so, it shifts most of the work-related risks from the business and the state to workers and their families. This is consistent with the logic of the neoliberal governance that dismantled the SER model. In the gig economy, the practice of hiring workers under flexible work arrangements is justified by the illusion that workers have greater freedom, flexibility and autonomy at work. The illusion is sustained by the use of digital platforms to control the way work is performed, which replaces control by human managers and supervisors.

This chapter also demonstrated how the gig economy in Indonesia has expanded in a context where the informal sector—where work is usually precarious and low paid—has been pervasive in contrast with the experience of advanced economies of the West and East Asia. In Indonesia,

the online transport industry institutionalises work arrangements—applied especially in the ojek service—as part of the informal economy, so they are implemented in the formal sector, to reduce firms' dependency on a permanent workforce. This places workers under corporate control and allows for the extraction of value from workers' labour without improving their job security. In doing so, the new industry intensifies the older practices of outsourcing by relying on a digitised form of managerial control that allows for more detailed, yet covert, control over work activities, and by using loopholes in existing regulations to expand aggressively. These all contribute to the extensive and generalised use of precarious employment in the formal sector to reduce labour costs.

Finally, this chapter explored how the way in which work is managed in the online transport industry contributes to a type of contradiction in workers' subjective experiences and self-identity. Digitised control over work processes in the gig economy sustains the illusion that workers have greater freedom, autonomy and flexibility; however, they are burdened by most work-related risks and limited by rules of the game instituted by the firms. This sense of greater freedom, autonomy and flexibility helps to boost workers' propensity to self-regulate themselves to work hard in alignment with the companies' objective to extract their labour value at a minimal cost. However, there are variations in workers' subjective experience: degrading working conditions can fuel a sense of discontentment among workers. This raises awareness among workers regarding the exploitative nature of their work and the power that firms have vis-à-vis the workers.

This type of contradiction in workers' subjective experience and self-identity, which is created under a distinct work process in the gig economy in Indonesia, has had profound effects on workers' organisation and politics. As Chapter 5 will show, the type of contradiction is connected to the occurrence of individualised forms of resistance among workers, which at the same time undermine attempts at collective organisation and action. Chapter 6 further explores the way the entrepreneurial identity constrains forms of solidarity that may enable workers to stand up for their rights in their relationship with the firms and the government.

Chapter 5:

Consent and Individualised Forms of Resistance to the Gig Economy

Consent to Precarious Work and Resistance to Managerial Control

Chapter 4 explored how managerial control in the Indonesian online transport – which is analysed as a technique of neoliberal governance - produces contradictions in workers' subjective experiences. This form of managerial control harnesses workers' propensity to self-regulate but at the same time creates a sense of discontentment stemming from actual powerlessness that belies the promises of entrepreneurial prowess. This chapter seeks to further illuminate the political-economic underpinnings of the operations of the technique of neoliberal governance, thus applying the analytical framework discussed in Chapter 2. It does so by investigating processes that take place outside the 'workplace' that normalise new forms of precarious work, tied to large-scale capital accumulation, as practised in the online transport sector. In doing so, it reflects on the core tenets of Foucauldian's concept governmentality, on how workers' entrepreneurial identity can be reiterated without eliminating opportunities for resistance to managerial control, at least at the level of the individual. The chapter thus sheds light on how individual-level resistance to managerial control may occur, as well as its effect on undermining workers' solidarity and collective identity.

This chapter shows how workers' preference and desire to act as an entrepreneur contribute to the normalisation of the new form of precarious work upon which the online transport industry depends. Entrepreneurial aspiration and identity are typified by the celebration of the logic of competition and the subsequent prevalence of social inequalities created by the operations of the market. They are affirmed by the workers' biographies of moving in and out of precarious jobs without adequate social safety nets. Concurrently, the gig economy has gained worldwide prominence for promising a solution to the unemployment problem. In South-East Asia, in particular, firms frame the gig economy as a solution to overcome low productivity and wages in the economy, notwithstanding its role in facilitating the extensive and generalised use of precarious employment in the formal sector. In Indonesia, such ideas have gained traction with the public at large in a context where the informal sector has been pervasive and the creation of formal sector employment has been problematic.

This chapter then demonstrates the effect of workers' normalisation of the insecurity, uncertainty and instability of their employment, which sets the conditions for their self-exploitation and dependence on their own resources and networks to cope. Workers' tendency

to deal with work conditions by carrying out individualised strategies that reinforce their entrepreneurial identity contributes to accelerating the fragmentation of the workforce. It also prevents workers from formulating a common collective interest, thereby making collective organisations and actions difficult. In Indonesia, this tendency is nurtured in a context where labour and broader society movements have been relatively ineffective in representing the interests of the working class, and the poor more generally, after previous decades of authoritarianism. Collective bargaining mechanisms have been absent from, or have had little relevance to, the working lives of most workers—especially precarious workers in the formal and informal sectors, from which the online transport sector has recruited the majority of its workers, thus creating a highly individualised work experience for them.

This chapter also observes how the manufacture of the entrepreneurial identity among workers can sow the seeds of resistance. Workers express resistance to managerial control—through which the entrepreneurial identity is stimulated—by 'switching', 'gaming' and 'manipulating' the app. The resistance, which occurs at an individual level, is prompted by discontent with working conditions and is made possible by imperfections in IT-facilitated algorithmic management that are exploited by active and self-reliant workers for their own benefit. Resistance at the individual level disrupts the aim of the labour process; however, it is more difficult for workers to fundamentally challenge the manufacture of the entrepreneurial identity and the normalisation of precarious work. Where union representation and broader society movements are largely ineffective in improving working conditions, this kind of resistance only reinforces workers' tendency to personalise work problems and solutions, thereby accelerating workforce fragmentation.

The arguments of this chapter are constructed through a dialogue with previous studies that examine the operation of neoliberal labour processes—increasingly tied up with precarious work and often involving digital technologies—and their effect on manufacturing workers' consent to their exploitation (Fernie and Metcalf 1998; Malin and Chandler 2016). In particular, some studies draw attention to grievances regarding work situations that enable resistance to the new forms of managerial control—at least at the individual level—as observed in an array of acts deployed by workers, from refusing to work to manipulating the system (Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017; Chen 2018; Bain and Taylor 2000; Panimbang 2021). For Chen (2018), resistance is made possible by technological literacy, which enables workers to comprehend and trick the logic of IT-facilitated algorithmic management. Others (see Woodcock 2017b; Bain and

Taylor 2000) argue that resistance is conditioned by the imperfection of digitised managerial control, which allows workers to guess and manipulate its rules.

These studies fruitfully argue that workers cannot be reduced to simply obedient and passive targets of the labour process (Chen 2018). Therefore, there are always opportunities for workers' resistance, even if expressed only by individuals (Bain and Taylor 2000; Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017; Chen 2018). Examining drivers' tactics to resist algorithmic management's control and rule in the Indonesian online transport service, (Panimbang 2021, 9) asserts that 'these means of everyday resistance clearly show that drivers regularly attempt to circumvent their faceless bosses'. However, the studies indicate a tendency to celebrate the occurrence of resistance, while underexploring the effect of workers' subjection to the neoliberal identity of the entrepreneurial self on resistance. This tendency is partly due to the studies' focus on workers' grievances that motivate resistance, while neglecting the sort of contradiction in workers' subjective experiences, which are created within the neoliberal labour process, as observed in the gig economy. Analysis of workers' resistance therefore needs to be rebalanced by paying more attention to the process that fragmentises the workforce, as presented in this chapter through an analysis of individualised forms of resistance among drivers in the online transport industry in the Indonesian context.

While self-reliant workers have the capability to resist managerial control, they continue to express a preference and desire for precarious work associated with flexible working and self-employment. They also continue to rely on their personal resources and networks to navigate through precarious working conditions. This indicates that resistance to managerial control is not always accompanied by resistance to the neoliberal ideologies that enter into the production of subjectivity. It allows for the reproduction of self-reliant neoliberal subjects in a context where precarious employment practices have long been normalised and working-class and broader society movements have been relatively weak amid socioeconomic changes brought about by neoliberal transformation in Indonesia, as discussed at length in Chapter 3. Such analysis can help to illuminate the processes that challenge workers to comprehend their work problems as structural ones that need to be addressed collectively, which contributes to the acceleration of the fragmentation of the workforce.

In light of the above discussion, this chapter first examines the processes that are conducive to the normalisation of the new form of precarious work—that is, workers' idealisation of entrepreneurialism as a preferable way of life and gig economy firms' framing of precarious work as more productive and rewarding. The analysis is attentive to the link between subjective

beliefs and socioeconomic changes associated with neoliberal transformation in Indonesia. The chapter then examines workers' tendency to personalise work problems and their solutions amid their normalisation of precarious work arrangements. It examines the contribution of such a tendency to fragmenting the workforce. In doing so, it considers the influence of the relatively weak labour and broader society movements in creating a highly individualised work experience for many workers. Finally, the chapter examines individual resistance to managerial control in the online transport industry. It considers the possibility of individualised forms of resistance that do not fundamentally challenge the acceptance of the entrepreneurial identity and the normalisation of precarious work.

The Normalisation of the New Form of Precarious Work

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the SER model in Indonesia has never been the norm, and a state-sponsored welfare system has never been well developed. These form the distinct historical background for the normalisation of precarious work under neoliberal economic globalisation, where precarious work has been truly incorporated into the mechanics of large-scale capital accumulation. This section will explore the process whereby the new form of precarious work in the online transport industry is normalised. It investigates how workers accept the logic of competition and justifies the prevalence of social inequalities based on their idealisation of entrepreneurialism and its effects on normalising precarity. It then examines how an uninterrupted experience of precarity in Indonesia allows the neoliberal ideology to enter into the production of subjectivity. Finally, the section will investigate how the firms' framing of the gig economy as a panacea for the unemployment problem, and for low productivity and poor wages in the informal economy, also contributes to the normalisation of precarious work.

As discussed in Chapter 2, neoliberal governance guides individuals to think of themselves and act like individual economic units driven by their own self-interests. It assumes that people are calculating subjects who can apply an economic cost–benefit analysis to every aspect of their lives, including in the reproduction of their wellbeing (Liow 2012; Weiskopf and Munro 2012). Neoliberal governance conditions workers to the ideals of entrepreneurship, typified by a preference for and desire to 'be able to provide for themselves and their families rather than being looked after by a paternalistic state' (McGuigan 2014, 225). In correspondence with the neoliberal ethos, interviews with drivers in the online transport industry reveal entrepreneurial aspiration as the guiding principle that dictates their personal conduct and working life. The aspiration itself is structured by the motivation to actively and independently reproduce their

own wellbeing using their personal qualities, skills and relations as a form of capital that can be used to their advantage:

> [In addition to driving for Grab] I also have a car showroom in Tasikmalaya … I run it in partnership with another friend, a military officer, whom I know from a car community, [where] we are both members … My vision is, when I am in my 40s, I no longer take [money from an employer], but give [to employees]. If we continue to be dependent to a company, when will be able to be independent? (Interview 16, app-based car driver, male, 7 August 2018)

> [As long as I am still] healthy, can see clearly [and] think sharply, I will continue to drive for Grab … [I will soon be retired from my main job] I need to save some money …to start my own business … we know exactly that our country's capacity to meet its citizens welfare and wellbeing is very low, so we need to maintain a positive point of view, by working really hard. (Interview 31, app-based car driver, male, 31 October 2018)

For neoliberals, entrepreneurship maintains competition as the organising principle of society (McNay 2009). Neoliberal governance is thus exercised to cultivate and maintain an environment that is conducive to fostering competition between individuals (Read 2009). As discussed in Chapter 4, rising competition among drivers in the online transport industry, which results from the firms' strategy to expand aggressively to achieve their growth potential, produces a sense of discontent with working conditions. Nevertheless, governed by the logic of competition, workers perceive flexible work arrangements in the gig economy to be fair because the arrangements allow the workers to receive payments based on the amount of measurable work that is completed. This ensures that those who work harder earn more money, as revealed by one of the interviewees:

> It is fair … In this kind of arrangement [the online transport industry], if we want to work, we will earn money. If we do not want to work, we will not get money … neither the company, not the worker loss anything. (Interview 13, app-based car driver, male, 25 July 2018)

Workers' acceptance of the logic of competition as the organising principle of society goes hand in hand with their consent to social inequalities resulting from market mechanisms. Their aspiration to entrepreneurship renders social inequality invisible and frames individuals' social conditions as their own choices (Hamann 2009). This allows for the normalisation of structural inequalities, under which workers' desire for change is directed away from the social–political

sphere to the self (Scharff 2016). Correspondingly, drivers in the online transport industry respond to pronounced inequalities based on sex, age and health conditions with self-criticism that makes the self the locus for change, as revealed by the interviewees:

> I recently started to wear the head scarf. It was on purpose, because some [male] passengers can act very rude … They look down on me because I am a woman. They will cancel the order, when finding out that the driver is a woman. Sometimes male passengers inappropriately touch me. When I started to wear a headscarf, it seems like they respect me more. (Interview 45, app-based motorcycle driver, female, 14 November 2018)

> I never take any holidays. I work non-stop … [but] I [have to] know my own limit … [because] I am old already [64 years old] … It never crosses my mind to compete with them [younger drivers]. (Interview 23, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

> [I] took a break … for 6 months because I got ill … I had my gallbladder removed … As a driver, I have a bad habit, I eat unhealthy food, and unregularly … I pushed myself too hard until I got ill, because I wanted to achieve my earning target … So [now] I am bringing my own bread, because I am in still in a recovery phase, I need to watch the food I consume. (Interview 19, app-based car driver, male, 1 October 2018)

Most importantly, the aim of neoliberal governance is to direct individuals' lives in a way that does not violate the idea of their autonomous character (Miller and Rose 2008). Chapter 4 discussed the distinct way in which managerial control in the online transport industry—as a site through which neoliberal governance operates—harnesses workers' propensity to self-regulate themselves in alignment with the companies' objective, although at the same time it creates grievances among them. This distinct way of organising work in the gig economy depicts neoliberal governance as expanding instead of delimiting individuals' freedom in the self-management of their wellbeing (McNay 2009). Its acceptance is preconditioned by workers' desire for greater autonomy at the expense of security in an employment relationship (McGuigan 2014), thus enabling the normalisation of precarious work. Interviews with drivers in the online transport industry demonstrate their desire for autonomy, manifested in their preference for self-employment and flexible work, which underpins their consent to precarious work:

> [In the future] my plan is to run my own business, a printing service … because I feel tired working as an employee for other people. I think it will be better if I have my own

> business. It will be up to me, when I want to start and stop working. I can also take a break whenever I want to. I cannot have that freedom as long as I continue working for other people. (Interview 10, app-enabled motorcycle driver, male, 22 July 2018)
>
> My plan is to open a music studio … I want to run my own business … Because, as I told you before, I like the flexibility. I will have more freedom if I have my own business … I do not like other people telling me what to do. I guess that is just the way I am. (Interview 13, app-enabled motorcycle driver, male, 25 July 2018)

In short, workers' acceptance of several neoliberal central principles has contributed to normalising a new form of precarious work, particularly as practised in the online transport industry. As such, workers' desire to and preference for entrepreneurialism harnesses their propensity to self-manage themselves to improve their living conditions. Entrepreneurial aspiration also enables most worker-related issues to be framed as personal failings—even those stemming from social inequalities. These all help to maintain the ideals of competition as the organising principle of society as envisioned within neoliberalism (McNay 2009).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, neoliberal governance operates through various mechanisms that structure individuals' environments and govern them to act as self-entrepreneurs. It involves the transformation of society into an 'enterprise society' based on the logic of the market, characterised by pervasive competition and social inequalities (Lazzarato 2009, 109). In Indonesia, as discussed in Chapter 3, the enterprise society is constituted amid socioeconomic transformation linked to Indonesia's gradual incorporation into the mechanics of global capital accumulation. The transformation, which allows for the expansion of neoliberal ideas and policies, shapes the nature of the labour market and the social protection regime in a distinct way. It reconstitutes social institutions around two specific objectives: to support medium-sized enterprises and promote individual insurance of risks. Under such circumstances, increasing precarity is made an institutionalised condition—an obligatory, instead of a freely chosen, condition—experienced by a collective of individuals (McGuigan 2010).

As explored in Chapter 3, one of the central features of Indonesia's labour market is the pervasiveness of the informal economy, where work has been mostly precarious and low waged, even during the period of rapid industrialisation in the heyday of the authoritarian New Order. Meanwhile, the formal sector, which provides some level of job security, continues to undergo a process of casualisation. The pervasive insecurity in the structure of the labour market produces a distinct individual biography, typified by life-long experiences of moving in and out

of precarious jobs in the formal and informal sectors, as revealed in interviews with drivers in the online transport industry:

> [Before driving for Gojek] I was a welder … When starting, I worked for other people, but then, I had my own team … We did well when we first started [in 2010] … But it became really difficult to cope … We are at the very end of the supply chains, so it is really difficult for us to get a job … We started to get fewer jobs in 2015. That was when I decided to drive for Gojek. (Interview 8, app-based car driver, male, 20 July 2018)

> After graduating from high school, I was employed in a store that sell products for babies … [after two years] I was promoted to become an area manager, I received around 2.5 million IDR [US$176] per month … [It was not enough for me], I [still] needed to look for extra income … [After resigning] I then worked as a cashier in a supermarket for less than a year … I received Jakarta's minimum wage salary … but we often worked until 7 or 8 in the evening, without receiving extra money … [so] I decided to quit and started to drive for Gojek. (Interview 13, app-based car driver, male, 25 July 2018)

Despite the insecurity of Indonesia's labour market, social safety nets cannot adequately sustain those who engage in precarious work, as discussed in Chapter 3. Precarious workers and their families are thus confronted by a range of difficulties, including an inability to plan for the future, and they are made more dependent on, and are more vulnerable to, market forces. These difficulties push precarious workers to be self-reliant and constantly look for the next job opportunity or avenue through which to earn a living (McGuigan 2014), thereby reinforcing the entrepreneurial identity. Under these circumstances, gig jobs are perceived to be a reliable source of income, especially in a time of crisis, as revealed in the interviews with online transport drivers:

> I started to drive for Gojek because I had no other choice after quitting my previous job … If you have no job, and you need to work, the most reasonable thing you can do is to drive for Gojek … It is like performing magic … as long as you have the basic capital: motorcycle, driving licence, gasoline, cell phone, Abracadabra! You would get money to buy formula milk for your kids, only by working for 3 hours. (Interview 14, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 27 July 2018)

> I started to drive for Grab after I got divorced … I was desperate … there was no other job available for me … I needed to earn money to pay for the credit card debt, my ex-husband and I used the credit card together, but the card was under my name … I do

> not like to beg other people to give me money, so I needed to do whatever I could to earn some money, to support myself and pay the debt. (Interview 47, app-based car driver, female, 26 November 2018)

Drivers in the online transport industry also reveal that they find the gig economy attractive because it offers low barriers to entry, flexible hours and a good income. Gig jobs sustain and reproduce workers' desire for greater work autonomy:

> [As a driver] you could wear your everyday clothes, you do not need anything fancy, to make money … those who joined Gojek in its earlier year, like me, can earn good money, if we work hard enough … Some managed to buy 2 motorcycles, pay a down payment for a car loan, even pay off their debts. (Interview 14, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 27 July 2018)

> The good thing [about driving for Grab] is the flexible working hours. We can do other things in between working, as long as we can meet our daily target … I think it is nicer to be a Grab driver [compared with office work]. (Interview 47, app-based car driver, female, 26 November 2018)

Precarious work in the gig economy is desirable because opportunities to secure a decent job are scarce, and many workers cannot afford to be unemployed. Some interviewees admit that gig jobs are the best in a bad situation:

> If there is any company that would hire me, I would work for them … I do not need a high salary … But who would hire me? … If you're old, in your 40s [like me], it is difficult to find a job, let alone one that would pay you well. (Interview 14, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 27 July 2018)

> I do not think there is anyone who envisions him or herself becoming an online ojek driver … People would envision something better, be it a civil servant, a teacher, a doctor, a businessman … but it is the only option that I have now. (Interview 1, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 2 July 2018)

In brief, workers' normalisation of a new form of precarious work in the gig economy is the result of socioeconomic transformations in Indonesia. Workers' life-long experience of moving in and out of precarious jobs without being adequately protected by social safety nets makes precarious work desirable. Their aspiration to become an entrepreneur, which presents

possibilities to manufacture an entrepreneurial identity, is a product of a historically shaped insecure labour market.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, socioeconomic transformation associated with neoliberal economic globalisation started in the mid to late 1970s and 1980s and has contributed to increasing the insecurity of the labour market under various processes across different countries. In the advanced economies in the West, in particular, the effect of the 2007–2009 global financial crisis on increasing precarious work set the stage for the expansion of the gig economy. The reorganisation of welfare states and the implementation of fiscal policies have undermined workers' capacity to recover from the long-term consequences of job losses. Although the crisis officially ended in mid-2009, its effects on job markets persisted long afterwards. For instance, in the US, Barth et al. (2017, 50) note that while employment fell sharply in the midst of the crisis, it increased slowly in the recovery 'so that in 2015, six years into the recovery, the employment-population ratio was 3.6 points lower than in 2007'.

The so-called sharing economy, through which the Uber employment model was born, appeared to address the economic instability of the crisis. In the earlier days of the sharing economy, digital technology was used to facilitate the sharing of underutilised assets, allowing for users' access to low-cost or free products to cut spending. In the process, the focus of the sharing economy shifted from cutting expenses through sharing to increasing incomes by 'renting out one's "surplus", such as an unused room or one's free time on evenings or weekends' (Ravenelle 2017, 9). Under these circumstances, gig economy firms with roots in Silicon Valley, like Uber, often frame their businesses as powerful engines of job creation (Ravenelle 2017, 22). In doing so, they imply that they deserve credit for producing large economic gains for society because they create employment, and thus they should be shielded from the harsh criticism of their methods of hiring workers.

Some countries actively promote the gig economy as a potential source of economic prosperity and progress. In South Korea, for instance, policies and programs are tailored to support digital platform business models, including those that are part of the sharing economy, to realise their potential contribution to economic growth (Kim and Choi 2019, 17–19). In Kenya, the government supported the implementation of the Ajira Digital Program, which was designed to attract young people into gig jobs, as part of an attempt to tackle the unemployment crisis in the country (Ajira Digital 2020). In Indonesia, as will be explored in Chapter 7, Jokowi's administration has also expressed support for the expansion of the online transport industry, partly because of its contribution to attracting foreign investment and creating employment

opportunities, notwithstanding the insecure nature of the jobs being offered. This idea has become popular in a context where employment creation has historically been problematic, as discussed in Chapter 3.

In the South-East Asia region, in particular, gig economy firms promise a way to improve workers' working and living conditions. In Indonesia, the promise has been well received by the public in a context where industrialisation has been insufficient in creating stable jobs in the modern formal sector. This allows gig economy firms to construct narratives about the positive effect of the new business on the workforce. While the narratives contain a grain of truth, they disguise the precarious nature of the work involved in the gig economy, thus contributing to its normalisation. For instance, Grab has developed an annual social impact report that highlights the role of the gig economy in empowering workers. In its 2018–2019 report, Grab writes the following:

> Grab started out in 2012 with just 40 taxi drivers in Kuala Lumpur, and we helped them earn a better living through the Grab platform. As we expanded rapidly across the region in the years that followed, we helped to create more earning opportunities for more people in more cities. Today, we empower the livelihoods of 9 million micro-entrepreneurs across 339 cities and 8 countries. That means that approximately 1 in 70 people in Southeast Asia have earned an income through the Grab platform, whether as a driver, delivery, merchant, or agent-partner. For some, we've created an income opportunity when they had none. For others, a flexible way to grow their earnings. And for many, a way out of lower-paying, labour-intensive jobs. (Grab 2019)

In a similar vein, Gojek writes on its website that:

> Gojek is dedicated to solving the daily challenges faced by consumers, while improving the quality of life for millions of people across Southeast Asia, especially those in the informal sector and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). (Gojek Thailand 2020)

In doing so, Gojek highlights a finding from research conducted by the Demographic Institute of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia, on behalf of the firm. According to the research:

> After joining Gojek, the quality of life of our driver–partners' have increased—100% of them believe that they can provide better well-being for their family. Most also claim

> they can now send their children to school, especially with the fair incentives and policies that Gojek provides. (Gojek 2020a)
>
> Gojek's ecosystem supports the growth of MSMEs in Indonesia. 93% of MSME partners experience an increase in transaction volume and 55% of them experience an increase in earnings. (Gojek 2020a)

In summary, gig economy firms construct the image of a business model that creates new earning opportunities while disregarding the precarious nature of the work on offer. Again, this branding contributes to normalising the use of precarious employment. In the context of South-East Asia, including Indonesia, this brand image has been popularised under circumstances where the informal sector has been pervasive while the formal sector has undergone a process of casualisation. This allows gig economy firms to extract profits from labour at a low cost in an insecure labour market.

The Disruption of Solidarity Among Workers

As discussed in Chapter 2, neoliberal governance aims to direct individuals to behave and act in ways that are in alignment with neoliberal tenets. Workers' normalisation of the new form of precarious work, tied to larger-scale capital accumulation, demonstrates how the exercise of neoliberal governance leads to their compliance with neoliberal ideologies. This section investigates more deeply how workers, who normalise the new form of precarious work, come to perceive work problems as personal and develop individualised strategies to cope with them. Workers' personalisation of work problems and their solutions create challenges for collective organisation and action. This section also elaborates on the point that the shaping of precarious workers' identity is linked to a context in which broader society movements, including those of labour, have been unable to become a significant social and political force. Their absence has been crucial in the atomisation of workers' responses to their precarious conditions.

The purveyors of neoliberal political rationality assume that the navigation of personal conduct and the working life takes place through rational choice and cost–benefit analysis at the level of the individual. Individuals are thus held responsible for shouldering the consequences of their chosen actions (McGuigan 2010). The exercise of managerial control in the gig economy, as a technique of neoliberal governance, directs workers to take responsibility for all of the costs and risks of their employment, because the income they can command depends entirely on the individual's initiative (Webster 2016). Accepting their precarious employment as normal, workers experience feelings of anxiety and guilt when they are overloaded with work, and they

feel that they are unable to meet the demands placed on them. Interviews with drivers in the online transport industry demonstrate that they accept responsibility for ensuring that they earn enough for themselves and their family to live on. Thus, they individualise the problem of meeting their income goal by citing matters of laziness, personal weakness and a lack of luck:

> The income from driving for the online service is quite good. As long as you work hard enough, you will for sure get it [passenger and income]. For instance, if you wait in a place and you do not get any passenger [you just need to] move to another place [and] you will eventually get an order. It really depends on you. If you are lazy, you will not get money. If you are diligent, you will surely get money, so the income you could get [in the online transport services] would depend on how hard you work. (Interview 11, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 24 July 2018)

> In this industry [the online transport service], if you work hard enough, you will earn more, however, [unfortunately] I have physical limitations … I get tired quite easily when driving … I [even] got ill … [However, it] becomes more difficult to get orders [if I take too much break] … on Sunday for instance, I left the house at 6 in the morning. I got only 3 trips, so I decided to go back home at 9 [in the morning]. I spent 2 hours on the road getting nothing other than wasting my gas … But I cannot get lucky every day. I was just out of luck. (Interview 29, app-based car driver, male, 11 October 2018)

Webster (2016, 61) points out that, in the gig economy, workers' tendency to personalise their work problems and solutions results in their self-exploitation, which is justified as a trait of flexible work. As discussed in Chapter 4, managerial control in the Indonesian online transport service, as part of the gig economy, allows for the governance of workers as self-directed subjects. Along with workers' normalisation of their precarious employment, their propensity to self-manage themselves to work hard and take on most work-related risks contributes to a process that might be considered self-exploitation. Interviews with drivers in the online transport industry reveal that they experience a level of discontentment over their work conditions. Nonetheless, they adopt a positive attitude to cope with the subsequent intensification of their labour:

> For me, driving for Gojek means I need to follow the rules. It is true that I sometimes want to complain 'I still need to complete another ride, to earn bonuses, while it is already late'. But I guess that is the risk of the job … it is really up to me, if I want to earn bonuses, I need to have a good strategy. I myself need to decide when and where to

> drive to get enough passengers … I do believe that our fortune has been predetermined [by God], we just need to work hard. (Interview 1, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 2 July 2018)

> I have to work non-stop … because I have a wife and two kids … driving with the ride-hailing apps is my only source of income … So far it is enough to make ends meet … So the most important thing is for me to work hard. (Interview 24, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

Amid the insecurity of the labour market and the unreliability of the welfare system, as discussed in Chapter 3, many workers have to rely on their extended families and social networks to obtain jobs and establish social safety nets (Chen 2018). Under these circumstances, workers who consent to their self-exploitation are motivated to use their personal resources to cope with their work situation. Among the online transport drivers who were interviewed, the most common strategy is to supplement their income by holding multiple jobs, which are mostly found through personal networking. Another strategy they adopt is to borrow money from family members or friends and arrange informal repayments of the loan. These practices again demonstrate that workers adopt highly individualised strategies to deal with work-related problems. While borrowing money from their relatives demonstrates workers' self-reliance in distributing work-related risks, holding multiple jobs indicates their willingness to assume greater responsibility, thus affirming their self-exploitation.

Workers' tendency to carve out highly individualised strategies to deal with work conditions demonstrates the expansion and penetration of neoliberalism into individuals' thoughts and practices. This tendency indicates the effect on workers of the exercise of neoliberal governance in the Indonesian online transport industry. In the process, workers' personal goals are made to align with those set according to neoliberal political rationality (Cruikshank 1999, 92; Armano, Bove and Murgia 2019), which leads to the constitution of certain neoliberal subjects and the 'free and autonomous atom of self-interests' (Hamann 2009, 37). The neoliberal self prioritises personal interests over collective interests; therefore, its reproduction through everyday practices of working paves the way for the corrosive effects of market principles on collective social bonds and values. It can thus disrupt workplace-based collective organisation, which is perceived by the neoliberal model as an impediment to progress (Armano, Bove and Murgia 2019, 2–3).

Self-interest and autonomous neoliberal subjects contribute to disrupting workers' collective organising attempts by accelerating the atomisation of the workforce. In the gig economy, the atomisation process takes place through a distinct work practice whereby digital apps facilitate the breakdown of complex jobs into discrete task elements, evaluate performance, provide bonuses to high achievers and apply sanctions to misbehaving workers, as discussed in Chapter 4. The gig economy model therefore contributes to entrenching a type of labour market where workers are pushed to compete with each other to thrive, thus advancing 'a race to the bottom on wages and other performance expectations' (Healy, Nicholson and Pekarek 2017). Workers in the gig economy are also fragmented across race, ethnicity and skill lines (Van Doorn 2017), which makes it difficult to forge solidarity among them.

In Indonesia, drivers on ride-hailing apps are highly differentiated by the type of vehicle they drive, vehicle ownership and employment status, which signifies that there is a great degree of fragmentation within the workforce. Under such circumstances, workers' dependency on their individual resources to deal with work problems reinforces the division among them. The diversity means that there is a high degree of variation in survival strategies and that these workers do not always have the same needs. The differentiation of drivers based on their employment status, for instance, results in a variation in the hours they spend driving. A 2016 survey conducted by Perkumpulan Prakarsa (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016) shows that while 64% of the drivers who were interviewed rely on gig jobs as their main source of income, 36% have other jobs. The survey also finds a variation in the average hours that the respondents work per day: <6 (9.3%), 6–12 (35.1%) 12–18 (47.9%) and >18 (7.7%).

The diversity within the workforce impedes workers' ability to formulate a common interest and contributes to complicating their self-organising attempts. Therefore, those who were interviewed have developed varying responses to collective organisation and action. Some drivers eschew any form of collectivism, perceiving it to be a risk to their work and income prospects. This type of hostility prevents workers from comprehending their poor work situation as structural in nature:

> No, I do not participate in any form of drivers' association or demonstration … If we participate in a protest, someone can take our picture and upload it on social media. If the companies see the picture, they can terminate our partnership. If that happens, we cannot fight back and we cannot get our job back. (Interview 14, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 27 July 2018)

> To be completely honest, I would also like to join drivers' protests. However, I need to make sure I earn enough money to cover my bills. I have to make sure that I can feed my family. A protest will cost me a day of my working time. It means that there will be a day when I cannot feed my family. That would be impossible. (Interview 32, app-based car driver, male, 4 October 2018)

In contrast, some drivers champion collective organisation and action and place pressure on fellow drivers to participate. They effectively boost drivers' participation, although many of them remain unable to understand the structural underpinnings of their work situation, as well as the possible benefits of responding collectively. Some interviewees admit that they join protests against poor working conditions because of peer pressure from co-drivers:

> Once, I was driving a passenger when a protest [to complain about poor working conditions] took place. Another driver [who participated in the protest] told me, 'Sir, you need to express your solidarity, stop driving, you need to join the protest and support our cause' … I gave him what he asked [and stop working]. Some drivers [who support the protest] often trick us. They pretend to be passengers who request a ride, so they could identify which drivers are unwilling to stop working when a protest take place. (Interview 24, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

> If a protest happens, I usually prefer not to join it, and keep working. However, I would go to places far from the city centres [where the protest usually takes place] … I just feel bad if other drivers find out that I am not joining the protest … I also heard that drivers who were joining a protest were stopped by others who support the protest. Those who participated in the protest punished others who were not participating in the protest by demanding that they do push-ups. (Interview 5, app-based car driver, male, 10 July 2018)

Briefly, workers' acceptance of the use of precarious employment in the gig economy as normal lays the foundation for the personalisation of workers' problems and solutions. Under these circumstances, some workers tend to blame themselves rather than the structural problems that underpin their precarity, and they eschew collective action.

The neoliberal model views the labour movement as an impediment to the reproduction of social and economic inequality that arises from market forces, because the movement unites workers to address the inequality. The aim of the neoliberal model is therefore to dismantle trade unionism. The constitution of the neoliberal self, characterised by exceptional self-reliance

and a lack of capability to organise as a group, is made possible by, and promotes workers' subjection to, perpetual uncertainty in a context where trade union representation has been absent (McGuigan 2014, 236). As explained in Chapter 3, in Indonesia, the advent of rapid industrialisation took place in a context where organised labour movements were heavily suppressed by the authoritarian government. The development of organised labour movements in the exclusionary corporatist social and political framework has contributed to the absence of the movement as a significant social force that can effectively represent the interests of the working class and the marginalised, including the majority of precarious workers.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Indonesian unions remain challenged by their organisational weakness, even after the unravelling of authoritarianism. Many of the rapidly growing plant-level unions are not affiliated to national federations, and their members are scattered across multiple federations and confederations (Caraway 2015, 28). Reports by the ILO highlight increased competition and disputes among unions, as well as a lack of coordination among major union confederations, especially at the national level (Kirkpatrick 2014). This has contributed to weakening trade unions' bargaining power in tripartite negotiations, thereby hindering their ability to influence policies and shape the broader political agenda (Juliawan 2011). In addition, Indonesia's workforce is not tied by a sense of community (Ford 2005). Instead, the working class is fragmented along different groups, with little recognition of their common interests. Workers' growing affinity for consumption associated with a modern lifestyle—as a way of enhancing their social standing and coping with the feeling of alienation (Warouw 2005)—also hinders the formation of a coherent working-class identity.

New developments, such as widespread labour outsourcing practices after the enactment of Manpower Law no. 13/2003, discussed in Chapter 3, has presented more challenges for union movements. The practices have caused unions to lose members, because outsourced workers fear that joining a union will result in the termination of their contract. The differing status between permanent and contract workers has also affected 'their solidarity and common awareness as a group of workers' (Tjandraningsih 2013, 412). Moreover, unions have continued to focus on workers in the formal sector—in particular, in large-scale manufacturing—despite the pervasiveness of the informal sector and the expansion of the service sector. Attempts have been made to organise workers in the service sector—especially banking, hotels and retail—since the fall of Suharto. Yet, union membership in the sector remains low, reaching a mere 4% of the total workforce and 14% of the formal sector in 2007 (Caraway 2015, 34).

Against this backdrop, a survey conducted by Perkumpulan Prakarsa finds that a relatively balanced proportion of drivers previously worked in the formal (51%) and informal sectors (49%) (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016). The data indicate that a large proportion of the drivers are employed in the informal sector, where collective organisation, especially that associated with unionism, does not exist. While many drivers in the online transport sector were previously engaged in the formal economy, the sector has undergone intense casualisation, which has challenged unions' attempts to organise collectively. Collective organisation associated with unionism has therefore been absent from the working lives of most workers, even prior to their engagement in the gig economy. Within the gig economy itself, workers' classification as independent contractors or partners, as mentioned in Chapter 4, exempts the companies from providing workers with the right to unionise. Online drivers who were interviewed describe how this way of classifying workers makes them hesitant to engage with trade unions:

> We registered our organisation [as a union] … However, we faced some challenges … First … [we are classified] as partners … Second [there are some principles that need to be met for us to be classified as employers, therefore entitled to the rights for unionism] … [there must be] a work order, an employer, and wage … the principles cannot be met in this industry, so we cannot establish a union. (Interview 15, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 6 August 2018)

> We registered ourselves [as a union] … [But the companies] consider us as partners, therefore, unprotected by the Labour Law [which stipulate workers' right to form and join a union] … Many drivers also do not realise that we can actually be categorised as employers, because the companies said so … Those drivers would say 'why would we need to join a trade union? We are not employers'. (Interview 35, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 9 October 2018)

Nevertheless, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6, drivers in the online transport industry have established or are engaged in collectives to improve their working and living conditions. The collectives may be in the form of communities and associations that operate as risk-management groups, or union-like organisations that work in a similar way to unions to organise workers to fight against perceived injustices at work. However, organisations that operate like unions have operated under extremely difficult circumstances and have been ineffective in generating enough support to win their demands, as will be explored in Chapters 6 and 7. The ineffectiveness of the union-like organisations in pushing for online drivers' demands creates feelings of hostility and suspicion towards collective organisation and action.

This further constrains the drivers from comprehending collective organisation and action as a way to improve work conditions, as revealed by some interviewees:

> Whenever a protest takes place, the companies can easily say 'just get rid of those who join the protest, we still have other drivers' … [Therefore] I think protests and demonstrations are useless. They would not affect the companies much. They would only interrupt drivers who need to work. (Interview 9, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 21 July 2018)

> Drivers have organised several protests and demonstrations without any results. Instead, some drivers got suspended, and the firms continue to decrease the rate for each trip, so I do not see the purpose of joining them. (Interview 27, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 26 September 2018)

All of this further sustains the belief that workers must and can rely only on themselves to cope, thus shunning unionism and any other form of collective organisation, as revealed in the interviews:

> They [drivers' communities, associations, and labour-like organisations] only express solidarity in certain moments. We, ourselves, are the one who are responsible to solve our own problems … For an instance, if a driver is unable to repay for the vehicle loan, do you think the association and union would help him [or her]? I do not think so. (Interview 8, app-based car driver, male, 20 July 2018)

> If I can speak honestly, I have no interest of joining any drivers' association or community. They always say, 'we work on the road, if you need anything you can ask for help'. We cannot rely on a human, if I ask for their help, but they are all working, will they [stop their work and] help me? I do not think so'. (Interview 23, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

In summary, in Indonesia, workers' propensity to personalise their work problems and solutions is nurtured in a context where they have been unable to rely on collective bargaining mechanisms—especially those connected to unionism—to further their interests. Although some union-like organisations have emerged, they operate in difficult situations because the gig economy denies workers' the right to unionise. This poses a formidable challenge for workers self-organising in the gig economy, especially in a country like Indonesia, where labour has struggled to become an effective sociopolitical force.

The Individualised Forms of Resistance and Their Limits

As discussed in Chapter 2, the process that conditions subject formation is always accompanied by some form of resistance, at least at the level of the individual (Pickett 1996, 458). The various forms of resistance that may emerge amid the creation of the neoliberal subject are worthy of scrutiny. This section will explore workers' strategies for individually resisting managerial control by 'switching', 'gaming' and 'manipulating' the app they work with (Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017). The individual level of resistance is made possible by loopholes in algorithmic management that are exploited by self-reliant workers who experience discontentment with their working conditions. The section will explore the limits of individualised resistance in challenging the normalisation of the new form of precarious work and the manufacture of an entrepreneurial identity. It is suggested that, in a context where broader society movements have been unable to leverage the effect of workers' self-organisation attempts, this kind of resistance only reinforces workers' personalisation of work problems and solutions, which accentuates the fragmentation of the workforce.

Workers resist in various ways, even in a context where managerial control appears to be effective in diminishing the capacity for workplace resistance. Individual resistance, in this regard, occurs when a worker engages in an array of behaviour against the demands of managerial control. While workers act in relation to others—at least by sharing their strategies with fellow workers—the actions discussed in this section are mostly individualised. In the transport and delivery sector of the gig economy, as previously mentioned, the individualised form of resistance is expressed in workers' strategies to switch, game and manipulate the system, as observed by Möhlmann and Zalmanson (2017) in the case of Uber drivers in the US. By engaging in such acts of resistance, workers disrupt the aim of managerial control, which is to harness their propensity to self-regulate themselves, as discussed in Chapter 4.

In the US, an Uber driver can engage in switching behaviour by operating more than one app at a time (Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017, 11–12). A similar strategy has been used by those who use ride-hailing apps in other countries, like China (Chen 2018). Interviews with online transport drivers in Indonesia reveal that some of them use multiple phones with different numbers that operate different apps simultaneously. Operating on a first-come, first-served basis, this strategy allows the drivers to compare ride-service requests in real time and choose the best deals from simultaneous orders. Further, the interviews reveal that some drivers have apps for both cars and motorcycles. When they operate their motorcycle app, they 'lend' the car app and

the associated account to others and then receive payments without reporting it to the relevant firm.

Drivers in different countries also engage in gaming the system by attempting to find loopholes in the IT-facilitated managerial control (Möhlmann and Zalmanson 2017; Chen 2018), and drivers in Indonesia are no exception (Mustika and Savirani 2021). Indonesian online transport drivers demonstrate ways to game the system with and without installing bots, which are 'applications that help drivers automatically circumvent ride-hailing apps rules and algorithms' (Chen 2018, 275). Without installing bots, a driver can create 'fictitious orders' whereby the driver, or a fellow driver, uses a second phone to make an order to maximise their bonus earnings. Drivers can also deliberately ignore a passenger call, which encourages the latter to cancel an order. This way the driver can refuse an order without affecting their performance targets. Some drivers also deactivate the GPS and the app after receiving an order, which allows them to receive the payment from the passenger without paying a commission to firms.

In their attempt to game the system, online transport drivers in Indonesia use bots for a variety of purposes. The most common usage is to fake the driver's current location to make it appear as though the driver is in a certain place (usually a crowded place), whereas they are actually somewhere else (Fauzi 2018). This strategy makes it easier for the driver to receive an order, because the system distributes orders based on driver–passenger location proximity. Drivers can also modify their apps to automatically take incoming orders without having to press a button on the app (Damaini, Nugroho and Suyoto 2018). This strategy makes it easier for drivers to receive orders, and it minimises their idle time. The apps can also be manipulated to make it appear as though the driver has completed an order, be it picking up passengers or delivering items. This strategy allows the driver to earn an income from orders that have never been made and completed.

Drivers in Indonesia also attempt to manipulate the system by maximising their use of the apps to serve their own interests in ways that are prohibited. Interviews with the drivers show that some who have authorised accounts can stop using one of them at any point because they switch to a different type of vehicle (from motorcycle to car, or vice versa), find another job or decide to stick with one app. It is not uncommon for a driver to sell the account they no longer use to another driver, who expects to gain an advantage from passengers who do not notice whether the driver and the vehicle match the profile displayed on the app. There are also drivers who use the apps to reach out to passengers to advertise their service, which leads to picking up passengers on a regular basis. Some of them manage to secure a longer-term agreement

with passengers without using apps, so the firms cannot take a share of the commission from each ride.

Workers' strategies of switching, gaming and manipulating the system, especially in the Indonesian context, show that the aim of managerial control in the gig economy can be disrupted (Mustika and Savirani 2021). Such individualised forms of resistance to managerial control are made possible by the operations of neoliberal governance 'not through the delimitation of individual freedoms but through their multiplication in the context of a notion of responsible self-management' (McNay 2009, 61). As such, individual autonomy becomes a pillar of this technique of governing. Managerial control in the online transport sector operates in a way that facilitates the indirect regulation of workers' behaviour without ostensibly violating their autonomy. This form of managerial control induces workers to think of their actions as being autonomous and favourable to their wellbeing.

This means that the opportunity for resistance to managerial control in the gig economy stems from the constitution of workers as active and self-reliant subjects who are habituated to personalise work problems and their solutions. For instance, pushed by the need to deal with an array of work-related risks that they bear, many online drivers view their act of installing bots to game the system as a way to manage their heavy workload, as explained by an interviewee:

> I can make it appear on the system as if I am close to where you are, while I am still at home, using tuyul[17] [app] … I do not think I cheat the system. The most important thing is I do not fake the order … We need to use [the] tuyul [app] because we often find difficulties [when we need to pick up passengers] … In some places, like shopping malls, drivers are not allowed to stop for longer than necessary to look for passengers … If we insist to wait for passengers in those places, we will be caught by the police … if we wait in another place, we will not get an order … I do not think there is anything wrong from using [the] tuyul [app], only helping us with our work. (Interview 12, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 25 July 2018)

The individual-level resistance is made possible by gaps in the system's functioning and supervisory inconsistency, which makes managerial control imperfect. Despite gig economy firms' attempts to prevent abuse by constantly updating the apps, it is impossible to ensure that they are totally secure and resilient. There are always ways to reverse engineer, and therefore

[17] A GPS spoofing app, used by online transport drivers in Indonesia to create fake locations, named after a mythical creature in local mythology.

hack, the apps. Thus, resistance occurs when active and self-reliant workers find and exploit imperfections in digitised managerial control (Sun 2019). Individuals on both online and offline forums act both individually and collectively to offer their services to hack and modify apps for drivers who lack the technical expertise to do so themselves. The drivers themselves use online and offline communities to share the strategies they apply to switch, game and manipulate the system with others.

Those interviewed explain that their resistance to managerial control is triggered by discontent with their working conditions, as discussed in Chapter 4. They perceive aspects of managerial control—such as rising competition among drivers and the lack of transparency in algorithmic management, which challenges them to meet their income goals—as intolerable:

> For those who are less familiar with the technology [therefore cannot use the bot apps] … they most probably cannot meet the requirement to earn the bonuses. For instance, we need one more trip to get the total bonus for the day, but then Gojek gives us an order of 25 km ride. If we take the order, we would be tired, but rejecting the order would harm our rating. We often end up not getting the bonuses while we already drive long hours. That would hurt your feelings, right? (Interview 12, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 25 July 2018)

> If a driver does not pick up a phone call, it means that he or she does not want to take the order [and drive the passengers] … That is one of the tricks I share with other drivers … You should take all the order the system assign to you. If you do not like the order, you just ignore the passengers' text message or phone call. (Interview 27, app-based motorcycle driver, male, 26 September 2018)

In essence, workers' strategies of switching, gaming and manipulating the system demonstrate individualised resistance to managerial control. This form of resistance is an effect of the exercise of neoliberal governance itself, which aims to shape individuals' way of thinking and behaving without violating their autonomy. Here, individualised resistance to managerial control in the gig economy is a consequence of workers' personalisation of work problems and their solutions. It takes place when self-reliant and active workers find gaps in the system's functioning and supervisory inconsistency and exploit them for their own benefit.

Workers' resistance demonstrates that they are 'far from being passive apps users' (Chen 2018, 2682), and there are always opportunities for resistance (Bain and Taylor 2000; Woodcock 2017). As mentioned, this shows the way in which workers react against the exercise of a distinct

'technology of government—technology for the conduct of conduct' (Foucault 1982, 1981, in Moissaner, Groß and Eräranta 2018, 377). It also indicates workers' response to a specific labour process whereby they 'are managed as the active, productive, and self-directed subjects of neoliberalism' (Moisander, Groß and Eräranta 2018, 377). Despite individual resistance to managerial control in the gig economy, it remains difficult for workers to resist 'the forms of subjection' and 'the submission of subjectivity' (Foucault 1982, 782), which makes the manufacture of the entrepreneurial identity possible. Here, those who resist managerial control continue to be attracted by the presumed autonomy, flexibility and freedom, as well as the opportunity to make good money, in the online transport industry. This is revealed in the interviews:

> I have decided to use only GoCar. I used to also drive for Grab, but in 2016 they did not pay my bonuses … It was a huge disappointment, so I sold my account … I think I will continue to drive for Gojek, although it seems the income will slowly decrease … [the job] gives us flexibility to arrange our own schedule … and there are more opportunities to buy things that we need, including to take out a home loan. (Interview 6, app-based taxi driver, male, 13 June 2018)

> [Although I have another job] I continue to drive for the online transport service … if there is anyone who need to 'fix' their cell phone and install the tuyul apps, I can also help them. I am good at that. I get some money for the job … For those like me, who have additional expertise I can use to earn money [in addition to drive for the apps], we manage to survive. But the condition is bad for others who rely solely on driving with the apps as the main source of income. (Interview 12, app-based ojek driver, male, 25 July 2018)

While performing an array of practices to resist managerial control, these workers continue to normalise their precarious employment. Although they can disrupt managerial control, it is more difficult to challenge their subjection to an entrepreneurial identity, especially where the labour market is highly insecure and most workers live without adequate social safety nets. As such, research by Perkumpulan Prakarsa (Fanggidae, Sagala and Ningrum 2016) finds that while the largest share of respondents (43.3%) left their previous employment for the prospect of a higher income, 55% of those who rely solely on the apps earn less than Jakarta's minimum wage. Nevertheless, more than 60% of drivers agree that they are more satisfied with their current job than their previous job. These data highlight the attractiveness of gig jobs for workers in a context where other available jobs provide an even more limited income.

While workers share coping strategies with others in offline and online forums, the acts of shifting, gaming and manipulating the system provide ways for them to individually deal with problems at work. Workers are again hindered by their inability to comprehend the structural aspects of their problems, which require collective measures. However, at the same time, there are also workers who view gaming and manipulating the system as dishonest and harmful to those who prefer to follow the rules of the game dictated by the firms. Under these circumstances, the different strategies that workers adopt to cope with the pressure of the labour process can conflict with one another. Some drivers believe that they are being harmed by others' gaming and manipulating of the system. For them, such actions create unfair competition, with some drivers being able to obtain passengers and earn bonuses more easily:

> Sometimes a driver [acts as if he is a passenger] and requests a ride from another driver, let's say X. However, there are times when the system passes the request not to X but to other unrelated drivers, like me. It disappoints me when I find out that the order was not a real one [but instead made by a driver to help their friend]. That kind of order cost me [my time and effort]. (Interview 23, app-based taxi driver, male, 13 September 2018)

> Those drivers (who use bots) cost drivers like us, who prefer to follow the rules, a great deal … They can make it appear to the system that they are in another place [making it easier for them to get an order] … I think they use the apps because they are forced to … It is probably difficult for them to repay for the car loan if they do not use the apps. But they still cost us a great deal. (Interview 29, online taxi driver, male, 1 October 2018)

These drivers are discouraged from gaming or manipulating the system, stating that they want to earn money in an honourable and legitimate way. Consequently, these drivers are hesitant to join a drivers' community or association, perceiving it as an avenue for sharing strategies to cheat the system:

> Those who join drivers' communities often cheat [the system] … they do something to the cell phone … or change the apps … they can reject an order, while maintaining a good rating … I am not into that kind of thing … I prefer to be honest. (Interview 36, app-based car driver, male, 10 October 2018)

> Those who are active in drivers' communities often make up orders, to help their friends [fellow drivers] who need more passengers to get bonuses … the more the drivers try to trick the firms, the more the apps becoming smarter … at the end of the day it cost us a great deal. (Interview 23, app-based car driver, male, 13 September 2018)

The interviews demonstrate the hostility of some of the drivers not only towards the behaviour of others who game and manipulate the system, but also towards collective organisations associated with such actions. This hostility indicates that the opportunity for workers to perform individualised forms of resistance can become a source of conflict between them, which hinders attempts to stimulate collective organisation and action and accelerates the process that fragmentises the workforce. In Indonesia, such individualised resistance occurs within a distinct context where trade union representation is non-existent and broader working class and pro-poor movements have been historically ineffective, as previously discussed. Here, the lack of a collective memory of effective and consolidated organisation and action contributes to pushing the drivers to resort to a highly individualised strategy to cope with problems at work.

This section examined the limitations of individualised resistance to managerial control in the online transport sector as part of the gig economy. This form of resistance can indeed disrupt the goals of managerial control, but without fundamentally challenging the normalisation of precarious work and entrepreneurial identity. In fact, it reinforces workers' tendency to individualise work problems and solutions, and it contributes to the fragmentation of the workforce.

Summary

This chapter started by examining the process through which the new form of precarious work, which is linked to large-scale capital accumulation, is practised in the online transport industry. This new precarity has been normalised as part of the broader gig economy. Here, precarious work arrangements are normalised through workers' desire for and preference to navigate their lives as entrepreneurs. Such entrepreneurial aspirations have risen amid workers' uninterrupted experience of living precariously, where the SER model has never been the norm and the welfare system has been unreliable. At the same time, the inability of the industrial sector to absorb the chronic oversupply of labour has also contributed to the rising popularity of the gig economy as a panacea for the unemployment problem and as a solution for low productivity and poor wages in the informal economy. This, too, contributes to the normalisation of the new form of precarious work.

The chapter then explored the effects of the normalisation of precarious employment in the online transport industry on workers' personalisation of their work problems. Workers' acceptance of their precarity harnesses their tendency to carve out individualised strategies to cope, thus preventing them from comprehending their problems as being structural in nature

and needing a collective response. This tendency has been further nurtured in a context where broader society movements, including those of labour, have been unable to consolidate as a significant social force. As such, collective bargaining mechanisms connected to unionism have been particularly unavailable or unreliable for many workers, including those who use ride-hailing apps. Under these circumstances, work has become a highly individualised experience for these workers, requiring them to be vigilantly self-reliant.

Finally, this chapter investigated the occurrence of individual resistance to managerial control in the online transport sector through workers' actions of switching, gaming and manipulating the system. This type of resistance is a product of the exercise of neoliberal governance itself, which directs workers' conduct without violating their autonomy. It is thus a consequence of workers' tendency to carve out individualised strategies to deal with work problems guided by their own entrepreneurial aspirations. Although this type of resistance can indeed disrupt the goals of the gig economy's managerial control, it inadvertently contributes to the further fragmentation of the workforce.

In summary, this chapter elucidated that resistance against managerial control in the gig economy—at least at the level of the individual—can take place without fundamentally challenging the normalisation of precarious work and the imposition of neoliberal ideas. This type of resistance inadvertently bolsters workers' entrepreneurial identity and disrupts their attempts to forge the kind of solidarity that would enable them to collectively challenge the structural underpinnings of their precarity. Despite these challenges, workers have expressed solidarity by establishing and engaging in various collectives to improve their work conditions, as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. However, attempts to forge solidarity against perceived injustices at work are constantly challenged by the workers' own entrepreneurial practices, which are nurtured in the same collectives that provide their members with ways to deal with precarious living. The next chapter will further demonstrate the effects of the individualisation of work on workers' solidarity and collective identities.

Chapter 6:

Workers Solidarity in an Age of Precarity

Challenges to Workplace Solidarity

Chapter 5 illuminated the contradictory effects of the individualisation of work that enable individualised resistance to managerial control while reinforcing workers' tendencies to personalise work problems and their solutions, thereby undermining attempts at collective organisation. This form of resistance occurs amid workers' continued normalisation of their precarious working conditions and difficulties in challenging the manufacture of their entrepreneurial identity. This chapter deals with further issues in applying political-economic analysis to the Foucauldian governmentality lens, by investigating the effects of the individualising mechanisms as observed in the online transport industry. It scrutinises, in particular, attempts to forge solidarity, in efforts by workers to defy management and the government to improve their working conditions. Challenges to the formation of solidarity stem from workers' own entrepreneurial practices, which emphasise self-sufficiency and are nurtured in communities that provide their members with ways to deal with precarity. These practices promote individualisation, whereby workers are rendered responsible for a task that would have been the purview of the state and business under welfare capitalism (see Wakefield and Fleming 2009).

This chapter shows that the common representation of workers as solidaristic is upheld by the mushrooming of drivers' communities. These communities operate as a type of risk-pooling group and assist their members to share responsibilities in navigating everyday precarious living. This mechanism reproduces a form of collectivism whereby individuals are 'empowered' to share responsibilities with others in the attainment of their wellbeing. Such collectivism has long been practised in the Indonesian context, where formalised welfare schemes are ineffective. Under these circumstances, the vast majority of precarious workers—in particular, those in the urban informal sector—often face common threats in the form of harassment and eviction from certain locations. The collectivism instils individualisation in a collective experienced situation by assisting workers to be self-sufficient in the improvement of welfare and work-related security. By doing so, it accustoms workers to roles as active participants in their own risk-reduction mechanisms.

This chapter also demonstrates that some umbrella organisations and associations, which connect dozens to hundreds of communities, have acted in a way that is similar to unions. They

have represented workers in collective attempts to bargain with management and the state to improve working conditions, while also assisting workers to be self-sufficient in addressing some of their socioeconomic insecurities, albeit to varying degrees. By doing so, the union-like organisations condition the formation of another form of collectivism, which enables workers to see the structural underpinnings of their poor working conditions, before addressing them as a collective. They allow workers to develop solidarity associated with labour–capital struggles, whereby they could potentially challenge not only the managerial control efforts, but also the normalisation of their precarious working conditions. The potential lies in the linkage between union-like organisations, unions and NGOs that work with urban poor communities, which allows for the adoption of precarity as discourse that frames workers' organising.

Additionally, this study observes how the individualising mechanisms that operate in drivers' communities condition workers to accept their precarious working conditions. Such mechanisms habituate workers to personalise and depoliticise their dissatisfaction over their conditions of work. They challenge the development of solidarity in labour–capital struggles that enable workers to stand up against management and the state in attempts to address the structural roots of their poor working conditions. Amid these internal tensions, the fluidity of digitally mediated organisational forms challenges drivers' communities, umbrella organisations and associations from developing strong ties among their members. These workers' self-organising vehicles also employ different (and often conflicting) tactics to attain benefits for those they represent, thus reproducing patterns of fragmentation. In the Indonesian context, where trade union and broader civil society movements had been weakened by decades of authoritarianism, they can do little to reconcile tensions within the workers' movement in the gig economy.

The arguments here are constructed through a dialogue with studies that explore the possibility of radical transformation through the effort of precarious workers, where they would organise and unite around a shared identity before addressing the structural underpinnings of their precarious work conditions (Standing 2018). There have been concerns about the effect of increasing precarity on workforce disorganisation (Standing 2011, 214). The gig economy is emblematic of a new digitally mediated workplace under precarity, whereby workers are hired on a temporary basis, which makes organising or joining collective actions a risky business (see Webster 2016). The flexible work arrangements, entwined with the digitally enabled new forms of intensive management, atomise and fragmentise the workforce. Overall, digitisation makes

the individualisation of work experience more generalised, which obstructs workers from seeing the structural roots of their problems (see Gregg 2013).

Conversely, others have documented how gig economy platforms in different countries have become epicentres of labour unrest (Greenhouse 2016; Webster 2016). Such observations provide the basis to argue that precarious workers can build new solidarities and resist precarity in a variety of different ways (see Paret 2016a, b). Thus, researchers attempt to explore some conditions that enable collective organisation among precarious workers in the gig economy—especially in transport and delivery services. Woodcock (2017a) argues that workers' collective organisation is conditioned by their face-to-face meetings in different parts of the city. Tassinari and Maccarrone (2020) assert that the emergence of solidarity among workers is facilitated by their interactions in spaces that are partly free from managerial control, and where they can frame a collective identity as workers and mobilise collectively. Researchers have also highlighted the role of social media in facilitating the formation of online communities and the transmission of information about strikes and protests (see Lee et al. 2015; Rosenblat and Stark 2016; Chen 2018; Rosenblat 2018).

In Indonesia, as discussed in Chapter 4, studies have demonstrated how the gig economy's institutionalisation of precarious work arrangements—which underpin conventional informal transport services—contribute to conditioning workers' collective organisations in the online transport service (Ford and Honan 2019; Frey 2020). In the employment relationship in the online transport sector, workers can see that the firms have power over their continued employment and income, even if the firms deny the existence of such a relationship. The employment relationship makes firms an identifiable target for workers' mobilisation (Ford and Honan 2019). Within this employment relationship, the firms' use of digital technology to organise work practices has contributed to improving workers' technological savviness. The technology-savvy workers, in turn, use their smartphones and social media to establish tactics to attain greater control over their work, including by forging online collaboration and socialisation (Frey 2020).

The studies argue that there are opportunities for precarious workers in transport and delivery services to organise collectively. As will be explored in this chapter, collective organisation among these workers is facilitated by meeting in different parts of the city, supported by their social media usage and motivated by their need to navigate day-to-day precarity. In particular, some works have started to explore the limits of solidarity in the gig economy that can result from managerial counteraction, as well as workforce fragmentation and organisations'

differentiation across goals and strategies (Collier, Dubal and Carter 2017; Wood, Lehdonvirta and Graham 2018; Tassinari and Maccarrone 2020). Focusing on the Indonesian case study, Ford and Honan (2019) assert that mutual aid-based forms of organising that are practised by drivers' communities in the online transport sector have helped to enhance their members' collective organising capacity. Yet, their potential to push for structural changes is hindered by companies' anti-union tactics, division within the movement and unions' failure to provide sufficient support (Ford and Honan 2019).

Studies that explore the limits of collective organisation among precarious workers in the gig economy tend to see all forms of collectivism as the triumph of solidarity over fragmentation and atomisation. As such, they view the emergence of collectivism as evidence of gig workers overcoming the individualising mechanisms that operate in their day-to-day work experiences. Thus, they overlook that some forms of collectivism, such as those that operate in drivers' communities, can also instil individualisation among workers. As will be explored in this chapter, in the Indonesian context, such forms of collectivism condition the reproduction of the entrepreneurial identity, which challenges the formation of solidarity that enables the labour–capital struggle among workers. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to draw attention to the contradictions between the forms of collectivism established by gig workers. In doing so, the chapter attempts to offer a more nuanced picture of the fragility of workplace-based solidarity forged amid the neoliberalisation of the economy.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on tensions within forms of collectivism that emerge among gig workers in the Indonesian context. It is presented in three parts. The first part explores the operation of workers' communities as a type of risk-pooling group that enables the individualisation of most work-related risks among workers. The second part explores the development of another form of collectivism that has been established in umbrella organisations and associations that operate like trade unions, despite the gig economy's denial of workers' rights to unionisation. These union-like organisations enable workers to challenge management and the state. Last, the chapter examines the tensions between these forms of collectivism. One type of collectivism that enables workers to self-manage most work-related risks could nullify another that makes the labour–capital struggle possible. This shows how the effects of the constitution of entrepreneurial identity in relation to the individualising mechanisms at work intervene in the formation of workers' solidarity and collective organisation.

Individualising Mechanisms in a Collectively Experienced Situation

As previously noted, the emergence of drivers' communities indicates that precarious workers in the gig economy are not entirely disorganised. However, this does not automatically indicate the triumph of solidarity over fragmentation and atomisation in the contemporary workplace. This section first explores how these communities operate as a type of risk-pooling group. By doing so, they facilitate the establishment of a form of collectivism that enables workers to share responsibilities to improve welfare and work-related security. The section then turns its attention to the way such collectivism aligns with neoliberal political rationality, which pushes individuals to be responsible for their own wellbeing. The collectivism has long been practised in Indonesia, where the majority of workers entering the urban labour market have ended up in precarious work. Workers' understanding of solidarity through mechanisms that assist their self-sufficiency in navigating day-to-day precarity provides justification for the neoliberal individualisation of major work-related risks.

Drivers' communities have mushroomed in different parts of Indonesia, with online *ojek* and taxi drivers mostly being organised separately. Their development has been facilitated by the drivers' use of social media platforms—especially WhatsApp and Facebook—which enable them to establish and maintain regular interactions with each other, despite the absence of physical contact. However, most importantly, work practices in the transport and delivery service allow gig workers to meet at various points around the city. Rather than becoming completely fractured across digital platforms, drivers are embedded within the streets and roads (Woodcock 2017). Therefore, drivers often run into each other at busy junctions; shopping centres and restaurant chains (when picking up food or goods for delivery); and Gojek and Grab's offices, to present documents or appeal against their deactivation decision. They also establish connections at 'shelters' and 'basecamps', making use of a *warung* (small-scale kiosk) or any other spaces adjoined to parking spots to take a break in between and/or after completing rides.

Among drivers in the Indonesian online transport industry, the communities are given names and logos by their founders, thereby providing a sense of identity and belonging to members. Their members also produce stickers, patches (to be worn on a motorcycle rider's vest or jacket), t-shirts and jackets with the community's name and symbol. While organisations may vary, they typically consist of a head, deputy head, treasurer, secretary and URC (*Unit Reaksi Cepat*; Quick Reaction Unit), which serves as a point of contact concerning emergency situations. The communities, which are formed exclusively for either online taxi or *ojek* drivers, range in size, having around 15–75 people as members. In general, a community is typified by a smaller

membership than in an association—as will be discussed in more detail in the next section—and it is often territorially based.

This mode of organising, as practised by worker-initiated communities, allowed the formation of a kind of collectivism that helped members become self-sufficient in addressing socioeconomic insecurities associated with precarious work arrangements. The communities do so by operating as a type of risk-pooling group that helps its members share responsibilities for their mutual interests. They function by pooling members' monetary and non-monetary resources, which were managed according to agreed rules to help their members cope and to mitigate various work-related risks. In doing so, they allowed individuals to perceive their contribution to the group as a form of investment under the expectation that they would be helped in times of need. They thus provide motivation for self-interested individuals to engage in a form of cooperative action, while at the same time sustaining their feeling of responsibility to support others who are in a difficult situation (ter Meulen 2016).

Communities formed by drivers in the online transport industry are self-organised and operate on a mutual aid logic (Ford and Honan 2019). They rely on members' contribution of resources to a common pool to support their activities. They collect regular monetary contributions from their members and provide support for each other per agreed rules. The pooled resources can also be in non-monetary forms such as information, expertise and equipment. As such, they provide their members with an informal social protection system that is accessible in times of need (Midgley and Hosaka 2011; Sirojudin and Midgley 2012). They also help their members deal with the precarious nature of their job by providing protection to improve safe driving, assistance in the event of accidents, information to help navigate the streets, labour practices in the online transport service, and connectedness with fellow drivers and the larger societies in which they are embedded.

Drivers' communities play an informal social security function by supporting their members in the event of adversity, such as illness, accidents and death. During times of illness and in the event of accidents, the communities use regular monetary contributions from their members to help other workers or their families by supplementing income or meeting medical costs. They also provide non-monetary support—for instance, assisting those who experience difficulty in accessing medical treatment under the national BPJS scheme and reaching out to people to raise money to cover medical costs. Another common use of regular monetary contributions is to help members or their families pay for funerals, which can be elaborate and expensive, in the event of a death. The communities also mobilise their members to escort fellow drivers' funeral

processions out of respect for them, especially when they have died in a work accident, which occasionally happens (Umasugi 2019).

Drivers' communities also help to improve the safety of their members to go wherever necessary, including in the wee hours and to parts of the city they are unfamiliar with. They do so by using WhatsApp's group chats to keep in touch with fellow members and to maintain contact with drivers from different communities. It is common for a community to require its members to post updates to the group chat when they start and finish each ride. Members of the communities also use WhatsApp's live location-sharing menu to follow each other's routes and provide updates as soon as they reach their destination. Those who have concerns about their safety can ask drivers who are within reach to escort them to the designated location. They can also obtain information about the nearest shelters and basecamps within their reach, where they can pull over and unwind.

It has become increasingly common for drivers to use support they receive from communities when incidents occur. As mentioned, the URC is contacted when a driver needs assistance on the road. It is tasked with using the WhatsApp group chat and mobilising nearby drivers to respond to the incident accordingly. In the case of a vehicle breakdown, the URC ensures that the driver receives help to temporarily resolve the problem or arrange a tow to a repair shop. In the case of illness and accident, the URC helps the driver receive proper medical care, including arranging transport to a nearby hospital. In cases where ride-hailing drivers experience intimidation from others who drive for conventional public transport, the URC mobilises others to come to their aid.

Drivers also increasingly use communities to access and share information on the locations of passenger hotspots, traffic jams and road construction through WhatsApp group chats. They also rely on group chats to crowdsource information about new pricing and bonuses schemes, a discrete experiment and emergent company or government policies. By doing so, drivers' online and offline forums provide avenues for members to share tips about their job, including mechanisms to trick the system. Thus, such forums allow drivers not only to connect with each other, but also to share strategies to find loopholes in the system that they can exploit for their own benefit. Through such mechanisms, drivers' communities provide an avenue for members to access and share information about an array of issues that can help them navigate the street and managerial control.

In the gig economy, the digital mediation of work results in workers' physical separation from each other. However, drivers' communities provide an avenue for workers not only to meet but also to maintain regular contact with each other. WhatsApp group chats make it easier for drivers to maintain day-to-day interactions. Still, it is common for communities to organise a fortnightly or monthly *kopi darat* (ground coffee).[18] When an umbrella organisation or association initiates a special meeting—usually annually on the anniversary of their founding—they can attract hundreds of drivers from dozens of communities. Drivers' communities also organise activities that connect their members to the larger society in which they are embedded. One of the most common activities of the organisations is to collect money from their members and provide donations for orphans, which is part of the tradition of giving that is valued in Indonesian culture.

To summarise, Indonesian online transport drivers engage in communities that provide them with a sense of identity and support when dealing with precarious working conditions. They do so by organising various activities, including: 1) pooling and redistributing financial and non-material resources to members in times of need; 2) maintaining online communication to improve driving safety, sharing work-related information and providing support when incidents occur; and 3) maintaining regular offline interactions. As such, they allow for the development of a kind of collectivism that motivates drivers to work together to be self-sufficient in addressing socioeconomic insecurities. Table 6.1 provides examples of the communities discussed here. Although it only lists five drivers' communities, app-based transport drivers estimate that there are hundreds of these organisations in Jabodetabek (interview with app-based transport drivers from June 2018 to January 2019).

The manifestation of collectivism through cooperation to achieve self-sufficiency in the provision of welfare and work-related security is also common in the advanced economies of the West. Before the development of welfare states, labourers established 'an independent mutual support fund from their modest wage' (Companje et al. 2009, 21). Such forms of collectivism decreased in importance as the welfare state developed, and the responsibility for welfare provision shifted to employers and the government, as discussed in Chapter 2. Meanwhile, under neoliberalism, the notion of collectivism has been reframed by renewing 'its relationship with individual and community responsibility' (Nousiainen and Pylkkänen 2013, 75). Thus, communities emerge as a regnant focus in neoliberal governance (Herbert 2005), aiming to shift the management of risks from the state to community members. In doing so, neoliberal

[18] The term is used to refer to in-person meetings between members of online forum communities.

governance seeks to foster self-organised communities by operating in a way that facilitates individuals to participate in their own risk-reduction mechanisms.

Table 6.1. Examples of Drivers' Communities in the Indonesian Online Transport Service

Vehicles	Name	Time of Formation	Membership Size	Some Distinct Features
Ojek	UGB (Uber Gandaria (Ke) Bayoran)	2015	78 members	Gandaria and Kebayoran are two districts in South Jakarta where the community's base camps are located.
	Dewi Sartika	2015	56 members	Dewi Sartika is one of the main roads in East Jakarta.
Taxi	Tumbleger	2018	30 members	Membership comprises online drivers who prioritise driving passengers from and/or to the airport.
	Monster	December 2016	64 members	Monster stands for Mobil Online Sarana Transportasi Ekonomis Rakyat or Online Car Cost-Effective Mode of Transport.
	Sisters	July 2018	20 members	Membership comprises female drivers only.

Source: fieldwork conducted between June 2018 and January 2019

While driver-initiated communities provide avenues for their members to share responsibilities to improve welfare and work-related security, they also function as a site where workers' entrepreneurial identity is reiterated. They do so by conditioning members to accept that they are the ones who are morally responsible for the attainment of their own wellbeing (Miller and Rose 2008, 214). Under such circumstances, the communities become the 'means by which individuals and their choices can be made responsible for themselves and to those to whom they owe allegiance' (Nousiainen and Pylkkänen 2013, 75). The operations of such communities thus link workers' personal goals with those of neoliberal governance—namely, to harness workers' capacity to self-govern (Cruikshank 1999). In doing so, they foster 'new forms of individualised collective-action' (Barnett 2005, 9) in which individual workers are 'empowered' to take responsibility to deal with major work-related risks. Such communities therefore condition the operation of individualising mechanisms in a collective situation (Fernández 2018).

Communities that enable individuals' active participation in their own risk-reduction mechanisms are more common in Indonesia and other middle-income economies of South-East Asia, although they operate in diverse ways and have different functions. As discussed in Chapter 2, formalised social safety nets have been largely absent and/or ineffective in the region. Meanwhile, as examined in Chapter 3, the majority of those who move to urban centres to seek better jobs end up in precarious jobs in the formal and informal sectors. Some of them have limited access to stable jobs and income. Meanwhile, those with stable jobs often find that

their income is rarely enough for a household to live on (Lont 2000). Although their income is unstable and money is relatively tight, the workers aspire to a modern urban lifestyle, which is associated with increased consumption. They are thus reluctant to allocate money to access formal private insurance schemes.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, while Grab and Gojek facilitate drivers to register for private and government-provided health insurance, whereby drivers are required to pay premiums, many drivers, see the insurance premiums as an extra burden. Although the companies provide drivers and passengers with accident insurance, many drivers have inadequate information about the claims process. These all make insurance programs unreliable, as mentioned by the interviewees:

> Many drivers refuse to participate in the [private] insurance program … [I myself] don't participate in it … it's a loss, for our income to be deducted by the firm [to pay for the insurance premiums]. (Interview 11, app-based two-wheeler driver, female, 24 July 2018)

> Many drivers don't know [about the claims process] … [for instance, they don't know that] if an accident happens when a driver is already on his way [to work], but the app is off, and the driver has yet to accept any trips … the driver won't receive any benefits. (Interview 27, app-based two-wheeler driver, male, 26 September 2018)

The majority of Indonesian workers have been forced to rely on longstanding community savings and insurance schemes. In general, these schemes are governed by the same principle, whereby collected financial resources are used to provide benefits for members in times of need. Three types of arrangements are commonly found in Indonesia (Lont 2000, 160): *arisan*, which is a form of rotating savings and credit association; *simpan pinjam* (save and borrow), which allows members to take loans from organisations and repay them at a modest rate of interest; and the 'special fund', in which collected funds are disbursed to members in need. The most common type of arrangement found in online drivers' communities is the special fund. In some cases, the communities can also use the fund to provide loans to members. By doing so, the communities facilitate risk- and burden-sharing among members. Individual participation in the communities can consequently be viewed as a form of self-insurance, although it is expressed as community-wide participation (Townsend 1994).

These organisations are especially common among self-employed informal workers who operate in public spaces in urban areas, including street vendors, waste pickers and informal

public transport providers. The formation of the organisations is driven not only by the need to manage risks associated with income instability, but also the need to come together when facing a common threat, such as competition, harassment and eviction from certain locations (Mather 2012). An example is the self-governing organisations formed by *becak* (pedicab) drivers. Dahles and Prabawa (2013) document the operation of such an organisation in Yogyakarta, called *Persatuan Pengemudi Becak Prawirotaman Yogyakarta* (P2BY; Yogyakarta Prawirotaman Pedicab Driver Association). Established in the late 1970s, the organisation facilitates its members to share responsibilities in the provision of welfare and security, and to protect themselves from the competition of outside *becak* drivers. To do so, it requires members to contribute a certain amount of money, which is used to arrange *simpan pinjam*, as well as special funds to support members in times of crisis.

Organisations that are established to assist workers to be self-sufficient in the improvement of welfare and security are also common among drivers of the conventional *ojek* service. Amin (2012) demonstrates that among these drivers, the organisations are usually formed in a *pangkalan* (a station) occupied by a group of drivers, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Similar to organisations formed by *becak* drivers, those established by *ojek* drivers require membership levies, which are used to finance members' healthcare needs and assist in case of accidents. The organisations also develop strategies to refuse or keep away other drivers who pick up passengers from a *pangkalan* other than their own. The formation of the organisations in the *pangkalan* facilitate the establishment of mutual solidarity among *ojek* drivers, conditioned by 'a common interest in crucial matters that might be experienced, like accidents, illness, motor breakdowns and credit instalments' (Amin 2012, 42–43).

The examples show that community support mechanisms—some of which are formed to improve conditions of work—existed well before the emergence of the gig economy. They even predate the advent of rapid industrialisation (Ingleson 1993), the neoliberalisation of Indonesia's economy and the expansion of new forms of precarious work tied to the expansion of large-scale capital accumulation, as explored in Chapter 3. In principle, they operate in a way that is similar to the type of communities formed by online taxi and *ojek* drivers: they help precarious workers manage various work-related risks, including those associated with threats from competitors. Among drivers in the online transport industry, the threats come from conventional public transport providers (Ford and Honan 2019). Conventional *ojek* drivers are reported to have banded together, putting up banners and using intimidation tactics to prevent those who drive for Gojek and Grab from entering certain areas (Freischlad 2015b).

Conventional taxi providers have also been reported to threaten, attack and harass online taxi drivers (Jacobs 2018).

Intimidation by conventional public transport providers created the need for online drivers to come together and face the threat as a collective, just as similar experiences had earlier motivated the *becak* and *ojek* drivers to form collectives. The common threat contributes to a sense of mutual solidarity among the drivers, whose chance to safely navigate the road is higher when they receive support from their communities. Nonetheless, *becak* and *ojek* drivers' communities are forged in work situations that are different from those in the gig economy. In the former, workers are part of the self-employed groups in the informal sector, although they are bounded by rules that regulate the service. Meanwhile, as explained in Chapter 4, the gig economy institutionalises work arrangements in the informal sector, to be adapted to the needs of the formal sector, without improving job security. The functioning of online communities in a way that enhances members' capacity for self-regulation is in alignment with the companies' goals to extract value from labour at a minimum cost.

Against this backdrop, those who were interviewed express their belief in the importance of solidarity in working life. They define solidarity as the readiness of the drivers to support each other in times of need—particularly when they experience problems on the road. This highlights their motivation to engage in collective organisation:

> Solidarity is at the core of drivers' communities. For instance, in the event of an accident … If a friend of mine [who is also a fellow member of a driver community] got into an accident, we will definitely come to help him or her. We will communicate with each other to identify the location of the accident and go there. Together. If he or she needs an ambulance, we will call the ambulance, then escort the ambulance on the way to the hospital … That is how we express our solidarity. (Interview 11, app-based two-wheeler driver, 24 July 2018)

> The bond between ride-hailing apps drivers is really strong … I almost got robbed … two motorcycles drove really close to my car. They were at my left and right sides. My car was in the middle. They broke the side mirrors of my car … All of a sudden, thankfully, a couple of two-wheeler ride-hailing apps' drivers came into my way. They asked me 'is everything all right'? I told them that 'it seems like they will rob me'. Seeing other drivers coming, those who broke the side mirrors of my car ran away. (Interview 6, app-based four-wheeler driver, male, 13 July 2018)

The way online *ojek* and taxi drivers practice collectivism to improve their own welfare and work-related security indicates their acceptance of the role as the bearer of major work-related risks. Members of the communities can thus be seen as self-seeking responsible economic agents who have the capacity to actively participate in their own risk reduction. The communities believe that drivers can only rely on themselves and each other in navigating the precarious nature of their job. This legitimises the shift of responsibilities to improve welfare and work-related security from business and the state to workers, as revealed in the interviews:

> I myself have established a community for four-wheeler ride-hailing apps drivers … If a driver is not a member of a community, if something bad happened … who should he or she contact for help? … If a driver is a member of a community, we have our procedure to deal with emergency situations. The driver only needs to report the incidence to the community WhatsApp group and I myself will share his or her message to others and look for any driver in the nearest location who could come to provide help. (Interview 26, leader of a drivers' community, male, 24 September 2018)

> In principle, as a community we want to provide our members with things that cannot be provided by the firms … This is one of our ambitions, perhaps somewhere in the future … We have been covered by BPJS [state-subsidised health insurance and workers' social security, as discussed in Chapter 4]. So, it has become the government's business. However, there are no pension schemes or support for the education of our kids. We hope that in the future, the community can support its members with pensions and support for children's education. (Interview 18, leader of a drivers' community, male, 15 August 2018)

In short, drivers' communities contribute to reinstating members' entrepreneurial identity by acclimatising them to bear sole responsibility for their own wellbeing. In Indonesia, where precarious work is pervasive, many workers have long relied on self-organised communities to cope. However, in the gig economy, where arrangements in the informal sector are institutionalised to adapt to the needs of the informal economy without improving workers' security, workers' communities could support the companies' goal to extract value from labour at a minimum cost.

Fighting Workplace Injustices Together

As previously mentioned, drivers in the Indonesian online transport industry also initiate and engage in a form of collectivism that enables solidarity in the labour–capital struggle. This form

of collectivism provides ways for drivers to see the structural roots of their work problems, thus motivating collective actions. It indicates opportunities for precarious workers in the gig economy to overcome the individualisation of their day-to-day work experiences. The first subsection provides examples of umbrella organisations and associations that connect smaller communities and make larger-scale mobilisation of drivers possible. The second subsection discusses how some organisations that operate in ways that are similar to labour unions mobilise drivers to engage in protests and legal actions to fight workplace injustices together. The third subsection explores the social circumstances that highlight the development of solidarity associated with the labour–capital struggle. It examines three types of union-like organisations: relatively independent organisations, those connected to trade unions and those linked to NGOs that work with urban poor communities.

Online drivers have formed and engaged in umbrella organisations that connect dozens of drivers' communities (some of them are described in Table 6.1). Their roles have been especially important in connecting drivers across different parts of Indonesia where Gojek and Grab operate, thus making larger-scale mobilisation possible. Some of them, including Laskar Online (Online Troops), Korwil Jaktim (*Korwil Jaktim*; Coordination of East Jakarta Region) and Tiber (*Timur Bersatu*; East Jakarta United) are not formally registered with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. They operate in ways that are similar to drivers' communities; they provide support for members, especially in the improvement of driving safety and during incidents. Umbrella organisations, such as Tiber, have mobilised their members to engage in street protests and legal actions. Others, such as Laskar Online and Korwil Jaktim, prefer not to engage in such forms of collective organisation; instead, they prioritise the improvement of drivers' self-sufficiency.

Some umbrella organisations that have taken the form of associations have officially registered themselves with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. In general, they have been better able to engage with management and the state than the small-sized and unregistered communities. Hence, Ford and Honan (2019, 535) assert that the organisations gain the mobilisation power and legitimation to carry out the activities of the communities. In the absence of unionism in a gig economy, some registered associations, along with unregistered umbrella organisations, such as Tiber, have operated in ways that are similar to trade unions.[19] Some of these union-like

[19] Ford and Honan (2019, 534) provide an analysis of the difference between online drivers' communities and associations, noting that communities 'operate at the grassroots', while associations are 'broader scale organisations'. They also note that in communities, drivers are involved in the everyday functions of the organisation, including providing support to members in the event of incidents. Meanwhile, members

organisations have become the force behind protests and legal actions to improve working conditions. At the same time, the organisations often continue to support the improvement of workers' socioeconomic security, albeit to different degrees.

Among online *ojek* drivers, examples of the organisations are GARDA (*Gabungan Aksi Roda Dua*; United Actions of Two Wheelers) and TEKAB (*Tim Khusus Anti Begal*; Special Anti-Robbery Team), which were founded by the same people but registered with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights as two different entities. In 2018, at the time of the fieldwork, GARDA was in the process of being formally registered. GARDA serves as an umbrella organisation for drivers' communities that attempt to negotiate with firms and the government to have a greater say about their job. Therefore, its leaders established connections with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and the Ministry of Transport. Meanwhile, TEKAB—officially registered in 2017—was formed to support drivers when facing the threat of criminality, including robbery. When an incident occurs, TEKAB helps to mobilise other drivers to come to their aid. Its leaders have established connections with the police and the army to provide drivers with the needed support (interview 15, TEKAB/GRAB leaders, male, 22 August 2018).

Another example of an association that attempts to organise online *ojek* drivers is ASOOI (*Aspirasi Serikat Ojek Online Indonesia*; Aspiration of Indonesian Online Ojek Drivers' Union). ASOOI has 120 members, a relatively low number when compared with other associations, which could have thousands (as demonstrated in Table 6.2). In 2017, ASOOI attempted to register itself as a union that represents drivers in the online transport industry; however, it failed to do so because of the gig economy's denial of workers' rights to unionise, as discussed in Chapter 4. In 2018, at the time of the fieldwork, ASOOI was in the process of officially registering itself with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. ASOOI was established by ex-members of G99, an organisation that mobilises Gojek's drivers to pressure the company to improve working conditions. Its founders aim to expand ASOOI's membership to include not only Gojek's drivers but also those who drive for Grab (interview 15, ASOOI leader, male, 6 August 2018).

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of associations and unions tend to have little engagement beyond attending occasional meetings, protests and strikes. However, the distinction has not always been rigid. The umbrella organisations and associations discussed here have initiated some forms of industrial action, thus providing a vehicle for collective bargaining while organising workers to support each other to improve driving safety and support in the event of incidents.

An example of an association among online taxi drivers is ADO (*Asosiasi Driver Online*; Association of Online Drivers), which was registered with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in 2017. Before this, some drivers staged a demonstration in 2016 against the plan to regulate them with several rules applied for conventional taxis. As a result of the protest, the drivers were granted an audience with Commission V of the national parliament, responsible for transport (Ford and Honan 2019, 536). Members of the commission suggested that the drivers form an association so they could effectively put forward their views. Thus, ADO's mission is to be 'an association that plays an active role in formulating policies … connected to information technology mediated land transport'. While attempting to influence policies related to the online transport service, ADO also attempts to improve members' independence. This is achieved by creating job opportunities for members to ensure that they have more options outside of driving with ride-hailing apps (interview 38, ADO leader, male, 11 October 2018).

Another example of an association formed by online taxi drivers is PAS (*Paguyuban Angkutan Sewa*; Association of Rental Transport), which was registered with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in 2017. It was established by one of ADO's founders after he split off from the association because he envisioned an association that prioritised the creation of income-generation activities while continuing to represent drivers in negotiations with the government and firms. PAS links its members with parties that need their services, usually in the transport and delivery sectors. Its leaders negotiate and develop partnerships with various local firms, securing jobs for their members to cater to the needs of the firms, while providing freedom for them to continue driving for Gojek and Grab. The association also provides an avenue for members to brainstorm business ideas, prompting some to start their own informal vehicle rental business. They offer their services through a word-of-mouth strategy, thus refraining from the need to operate under firm management (interview 46, PAS leader, male, 16 November 2018).

In summary, in the Indonesian online transport service, umbrella organisations and associations have connected smaller-sized drivers' communities (as summarised in Table 6.2). By doing so, they have made larger-scale mobilisation possible. Some of them—in particular, Tiber, GARDA, ASOOI, ADO and PAS—have attempted to represent the collective interests of workers in negotiations with firms and the government.

Table 6.2. Examples of Umbrella Organisations and Associations in the Indonesian Online Transport Service

Members	Name	Time of Formation	Membership Size	Official Registration
Four-wheeler drivers	ADO	October 2016	Thousands of people across 23 provinces in Indonesia; connected to dozens of communities, including Monster, as described in Table 6.1	Yes
	PAS	2017	500 people across Indonesia	Yes
Two-wheeler drivers	TEKAB GARDA	2017	Thousands of people linked to dozens of communities across Indonesia	Yes (in the process)
	ASOOI	End of 2017	120 people in Jabodetabek	In the process
	Laskar Online	2015	72 communities in Jabodetabek, West Java and Lampung, including UGB as described in Table 6.1	No
	Korwil Jaktim	October 2016	25 smaller communities in East Jakarta; Korwil Jaktim is part of a larger association called Admin Jabodetabek or Jabodatabek Administrative	No
	Tiber	March 2017	Around 2,000 people connected to 70 communities in South and East Jakarta and Bekasi, including Dewi Sartika, as described in Table 6.1	No

Source: fieldwork conducted between June 2018 to January 2019

One of the earliest protests by online *ojek* drivers broke out in November 2015 in Jakarta in response to Gojek management reducing payments to drivers (Mukti 2015). In December 2016, online *ojek* drivers organised another strike following Grab's introduction of a lower rate (Damar 2016). Throughout 2017 and 2018, organisations representing online *ojek* drivers continued to demand that Gojek and Grab raise the per km tariff (CNN Indonesia 2018b; Purba 2018). Nevertheless, the per km tariff continued to decline: from 4,000 IDR (or US$0.28) per km in 2015 to 1,200 IDR (US$0.09) per km and 2,300 IDR (US$0.16) per km for GoRide and GrabBike, respectively (Thomas 2018; Zaenudin 2018). Online taxi drivers also voiced demands that the companies lift the per km tariff for taxis. For instance, in an October 2018 protest, ADO pushed the companies to implement 'humane tariffs' (CNN Indonesia 2018b).

Another issue repeatedly brought up against the companies is that of account suspension. In December 2015, a series of protests broke out in Jakarta, Bandung, Denpasar and Makassar following Gojek's mass suspension of 7,000 accounts of online *ojek* drivers who were accused of creating fictitious orders (Panji 2015; Pasya 2015). Similar protests took place in Jakarta in January, June and July 2017, with protestors demanding that Grab management revoke the suspension of accounts of hundreds of online *ojek* drivers (Priyasmoro 2017; Saputri 2017). Between 2017 and 2019, organisations that represented online taxi and *ojek* drivers continued

to demand that the companies lift the ban and suspension of drivers (CNN Indonesia 2018b; Marison 2019). Despite drivers' protests, Grab and Gojek stood firm on the ban. They argued that the suspensions were due to concern for the safety of passengers and drivers (CNN Indonesia 2018a).

Performance targets, deemed by many drivers as 'tricky', result in their failure to receive bonuses, which prompts them to hit the streets and protest management policies. The earlier demonstration to protest the incentive mechanism broke out in Jakarta in October 2016, where online *ojek* drivers of Gojek urged the company to revoke the performance assessment requirement (Wijaya 2016). They accused the company of cheating them by making it incredibly challenging to earn the promised incentives. They also argued that the company treated them unfairly by denying their rights, as partners, to be involved in the decision-making process, including bonus arrangements (Putra 2016). Drivers continued to press demands on Gojek and Grab to revise and change the incentive mechanism. This issue was brought up by online *ojek* and taxi drivers' organisations in protests that took place between 2017 and 2019.

Drivers also protested the unfair 'partnership' in their relationship with the companies, along with bonuses arrangements and tariff decisions. The issue was first brought up by G99, an organisation that represents online *ojek* drivers of Gojek. In October 2016, the organisation approached LBH Jakarta (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta*; The Jakarta Legal Aid Institute) to report Gojek to the National Commission on Human Rights (Belarnimus 2016). The drivers argued that they never had a chance to discuss the partnership agreement with the company before signing up. Technically, there are no physical contracts in the online transport service because everything is electronically conducted. However, the apps require drivers to sign a set of terms and condition before they can start driving. Between 2017 and 2019, a coalition that represents online *ojek* and taxi drivers, Gerhana, which has been discussed previously, brought up the demand for an equal partnership in their protests (Nailufar 2018; Marison 2019). Nevertheless, nothing has been done to revise the company–drivers partnership agreement. The companies remain adamant that those who object to the partnership agreement can freely withdraw from it at any time.

Gojek and Grab drivers have also targeted an array of other issues in their protests. In August 2019, for instance, online taxi drivers held a demonstration against the Jakarta administration's

plan to extend the odd–even number plates traffic policy,[20] which contributed to smoother traffic management during the 2018 Asian Games (Siddiq 2019). In response to the protest, the government promised to find the best solution for online taxi drivers (Hamdi 2019; Rosana 2019). In October 2018, the drivers brought up the demand to stop the recruitment of new online taxi drivers in a protest to Grab management (CNN Indonesia 2018b). In August 2019, the drivers brought up a similar demand in a protest against Gojek management (Marison 2019). They argued that the recruitment of new drivers makes it increasingly challenging for them to get passengers. The demand was prompted by the company's continued recruitment drive despite the Transport Ministry's request for them to do the opposite (Paramaesti 2018; Rakyat Merdeka 2019).

In some other cases, online taxi and *ojek* drivers of Gojek and Grab used protests to pressure the government to take initiatives to improve working conditions in the online transport industry. For instance, some protests were organised to take place at government offices to draw the government's attention to drivers' concerns (CNN Indonesia 2018b). The drivers' protests also target issues relating to specific regulations that can improve their working conditions. In November 2017 and March 2018, online *oj*ek drivers called on the government to legalise the online transport service because it lacked the operating permits required of conventional transport providers and was therefore considered illegal under Indonesia's Transport Law (Wijaya 2016; Mamduh 2018). Meanwhile, throughout 2016 and 2018, the Indonesian Ministry of Transport's plan to implement regulations on online transport services attracted pros and cons among online taxi drivers, as demonstrated by the protests to defend and oppose it (Sicca 2018).

Adding to these protests, online *ojek* drivers of Gojek and Grab took legal action. In May 2018, KATO (*Komite Aksi Transportasi Online*; National Committee of Online Transport) requested a judicial review of Article 47, Section 3, of Law on Land Transport, which aimed to legalise online *ojek* as a means of public transport (Wijaya 2018). Adding to the legality aspect, KATO expected the government to step in to push companies to improve the welfare of the drivers—for instance, by contributing to an insurance scheme on their behalf. It also asked the government to protect them from sudden suspensions. The result of the judicial review was not in favour of

[20] The policy was formulated to limit the number of cars that operate in Jakarta. Under the policy, cars whose license plate ends with an odd number are given permission to travel on and through certain roads and tollgates on odd dates only, and vice versa.

the drivers, with the Supreme Court ruling that the online *ojek* service is not a means of public transport (Akbar 2018).

In brief, union-like organisations have brought up various collective issues: the falling price per km, the ban and suspension of drivers' accounts, unfair partnerships between drivers and firms, tricky incentive mechanisms, and a demand to legalise the online transport service. From September 2015 to February 2017, at least 50 protests and strikes were held by Gojek drivers across Indonesia (Nastiti 2017b). Between 2015 and 2019, at least 15 collective actions ensued in Jakarta. The following table summarises the collective actions and their links to union-like organisations discussed previously (Tiber, GARDA, ASOOI, ADO and PAS).

Table 6.3. Examples of Online *Ojek* and Taxi Drivers' Collective Actions Between 2015 and 2019[21]

Issue	Actor	Organisation	Timeline
Tariff per km	*Ojek*	G99, connected to ASOOI	November 2015
		GrabBike's drivers, FGGB (*Forum Gabungan GrabBike Bersatu*; GrabBike United Forum), connected to Tiber	September 2016 January 2017
		Drivers associated with FSPMI (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*; Indonesian Metal Workers Union Federation), connected to Tiber	May 2017
		Gojek's drivers	November 2017
		FPTOI (*Forum Peduli Transportasi Online*; Forum of Concerns on Online Transport), connected to ASOOI	April 2018
		GARDA	October 2018
	Taxi	ADO	October 2018
Suspension of accounts	*Ojek*	Gojek's drivers Grab's drivers	December 2015 December 2016 May 2017
		FDO (*Forum Driver Online*; Online Drivers Forum)	July 2017
		FKDOI (*Forum Komunikasi Driver Online*, Online Drivers Communication Forum), connected to ASOOI	October 2018
	Taxi	ADO	October 2018
		Gerhana (*Gerakan Hantam Aplikasi Nakal*; Destroy Bad Application Movement), connected to PAS; Oraski (*Organisasi Angkutan Sewa Khusus Indonesia*; Special Car Rental Service Organisation)	August 2019
Incentive and bonus	*Ojek*	Gojek's drivers	October 2016
		GARDA	March 2018
		FDO	July 2017
	Taxi	Oraski; Gerhana, connected to PAS	August 2019
Unfair partnership	*Ojek*	G99, connected to ASOOI	October 2016
		Drivers associated with FSPMI, connected to Tiber	May 2017

[21] The issues identified in the list are not mutually exclusive because a protest could target more than one issue, brought up by more than one organisation at a time.

Issue	Actor	Organisation	Timeline
		FPTOI, connected to ASOOI	April 2018
		GARDA	October 2018
	Taxi	ADO, Gerhana	October 2018
Other issues	*Ojek*	GARDA	October 2018
	Taxi	ADO	October 2018
Specific regulation for ride-hailing industry	*Ojek*	Drivers associated with FSPMI, connected to Tiber	May 2017
		GARDA	November 2017
		FPTOI, connected to ASOOI	April 2018
		KATO, connected to Tiber	May 2018
	Taxi	ADO ALIANDO (Aliansi Driver Online, or Driver Online Alliance) FDOI (Front Driver Online Indonesia, or Indonesian Online Driver Front).	January 2018

Source: author's summary from newspaper articles and interviews

While they have often failed in attaining their objectives, in organising drivers to engage in protests, strikes and legal actions, union-like organisations have facilitated the formation of a kind of solidarity that enables labour–capital struggles to flourish. It has a distinct characteristic, marked by an adversarial relation, that situates workers in opposition to employers (Bayertz 1999, 17–19). It is also characterised by indignation to perceived injustice at work, which provides the bond that enables workers to band together in the battle for their rights (Smith 2014, 163). This form of solidarity provides the foundation for a class-based political imagination to flourish, whereby workers articulate 'the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men [employers] whose interests are different from [and usually opposed to] theirs' (Thompson 2013, 3). For Tassinari and Maccarrone (2020, 39), solidarity at work is developed when workers are made aware of their shared interests and purpose, thus developing collective feelings of reciprocity and responsibilities toward one another. It then prepares workers to act upon the feelings and engage in solidaristic actions.

Atzeni (2010) refers to this kind of solidarity as embryonic solidarity, which can be transformed into active solidarity when the preparedness to act is translated into collective actions (Tassinari and Macarone 2019, 39). Active solidarity refers to the process whereby workers act collectively after developing a sense of unity on comprehending the structural underpinnings of their problems (Lucio and Stewart 1997). The mushrooming of self-organised communities among drivers in the online transport industry provides them with free space where they can define common goals, inspired by shared grievances and discontent over working conditions (Tassinare and Maccarrone 2020). The transformation of some of them into union-like organisations is

conditioned by the realisation that the political struggle was a means to address common problems.

As such, street-level politics in the form of protests and strikes, organised by union-like organisations, are the archetypal form of resistance at work (Woodcock 2017b, 99). This form of collective action, which is achieved through workers' withdrawal of their labour, results in the temporary suspension of the labour process. The continuous occurrence of strikes and protests for better working conditions also sustains a kind of non-instrumental cooperation (Jaeggi 2001; ter Meulen 2016). Here, people act together not merely because they are motivated by individualised short-term goals—for instance, to deal with the increasing precarity in everyday life—but because of the aim to attain common long-term goals, such as just and favourable conditions of work. This helps workers to comprehend their problems as structural ones that need to be addressed collectively. It challenges the formation of the entrepreneurial identity that accelerates the atomisation and fragmentation of the workforce, which is associated with the reconfiguration of work practices under neoliberalism.

For Tassinari and Maccarrone (2020, 39), solidarity at work is developed when workers are made aware of their shared interests and purpose, thus developing collective feelings of reciprocity and responsibility towards one another. It then prepares workers to act upon these feelings and engage in solidaristic actions. Thus, free space provided by drivers' communities allows members to define common goals, inspired by shared grievances and discontent over working conditions. The transformation of some of these communities into union-like organisations is highlighted by drivers' realisation of political struggles by way of the workers' movement as a means to address work problems. Under such circumstances, workers engage in collective organisations and actions because they believe they would attain their common goals, even if only incrementally. This is revealed by some interviewees:

> I joined the protests because of my solidarity with fellow ride-hailing drivers … I think protests help us to negotiate. It is our rights as a partner, so the companies could know, what our demands are. (Interview 1, online *ojek* driver, male, 24 September 2018)

> I always join the protests … to show my solidarity. If other drivers engage in protests, I do not think it is possible for me to not to stop driving and join them … we also have a meeting with other members, discussing the protests and the demands … They also sell stickers, to collect funds for the protests … I bought them, of course, to express solidarity … Seems like the protests have achieved some success, the government delayed the

> regulation on four-wheelers ride-hailing apps. (Interview 26, online taxi driver, male, 24 September 2018)

This distinct way of conceptualising solidarity, associated with labour–capital struggles, has European roots. It emerged as a 'source of political mobilisation by way of the workers movement in the 19th century' (Smith 2014, 155). Analyses that links solidarity with work have explored its articulation at different levels, such as the workplace, the union and the broader working class (Bild, Lassen and Madsen 1997). As discussed in Chapter 2, in the advanced economies in the West, where the organised labour movement has been relatively stronger, the decline of stable employment and the incompatibility of jobs with traditional union approaches has brought about new forms of solidarity-making activities, as expressed by precarious workers (Standing 2014). Union and broader society movements have provided support for this section of workers, including those in the gig economy, thereby shaping the precarious workers' agenda and strategy (Collier, Dubal and Carter 2017).

For instance, in the US, Collier, Dubal and Carter (2017) show that Uber drivers are too dispersed and atomised to carry out effective collective mobilisation. Many driver-led protests against Uber are sporadic and often small, attracting up to 30 drivers. Therefore, they are yet to build the sustained pressure needed to promote fundamental change, despite a few successes, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Given the circumstances, most workers' self-organising attempts have been supported by unions and/or alt-labour organisations. Unions that have demonstrated efforts to support these workers include Teamsters Local 117 in Seattle, Teamsters Joint Council 7 in Northern California and the International Association of the Machinist and Aerospace Workers in New York (Machinist NY). Efforts to support the workers have also come from several alt-labour groups, such as the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA) and the Freelancers Union in New York.

In another example, in the UK, the self-organising attempts of a group of bicycle couriers for Deliveroo, a British food delivery company, have been supported by Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the IWGB. The IWGB and IWW, which are rank-and-file independent unions, have helped Deliveroo couriers to organise collectively in some prominent strikes, such as in Brighton and Leeds (Braithwaite 2017). In Italy, bicycle couriers for Foodora, the German food delivery company, autonomously self-organised public protests to improve their working conditions. However, following the escalation of the workers' dispute with the company, in 2016, the riders sought the support of the SI-COBAS, a rank-and-file independent union. To date, attempts to support workers in the Italian gig economy have come mostly from rank-and-file

independent unions, such as the SI-COBAS, without the involvement of more established trade unions (Tassinari and Maccarrone 2017).

Among drivers in the Indonesian online transport service, solidarity activities that enable the labour–capital struggle to flourish take place in a civil society sector that has grown since the unravelling of authoritarianism. They have gained an advantage from a greater space to organise more freely with less fear of direct repression from the state apparatus (Hadiz 2010). Some of them have increasingly used popular protests as a well-established mode of political expression in an attempt to make their voices heard in the public sphere (Aspinall 2013). As in the advanced economies of the West, gig economy workers' self-organising vehicles in Indonesia have had connections with union and broader society movements. Yet, decades of depoliticisation under authoritarianism has challenged the movements' influence on workers' self-organising vehicles. Vehicles such as GARDA, ADO and PAS (which are summarised in Table 6.2), like most similar organisations, have continued to be relatively independent. They have instead joined forces in more fluid coalitions, formed to work together for a limited time only, as exemplified by Gerhana, a coalition formed by ADO, PAS and another association.

The connection between union-like organisations and trade unions has been established through the attempts of SPDT-FSPMI (*Serikat Pekerja Dirgantara dan Transportasi—Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*; Aerospace and Transport Workers division of FSPMI) to work with online *ojek* drivers since late-2016. Amid the absence of workers' rights to unionisation in a gig economy, SPDT-FSPMI has become the main union that has attempted to mobilise workers (Ford and Honan 2019, 538).[22] By approaching the leaders of Tiber, SPDT-FSPMI has managed to unionise several members of Tiber-affiliated communities. SPDT-FSPMI also initiated the establishment of KATO, the committee that led the attempts to legalise online *ojek* as a means of public transport, as discussed earlier. KATO itself was formed to link drivers' communities with broader society movements, including students and the press. In the process, the link has been made possible by the role of Tiber leaders in mobilising the communities to support KATO (interview 34, Tiber leader, male, 9 October 2018; interview 35, Dewi Sartika leaders, male, 9 October 2018).

[22] Established after the downfall of authoritarianism, FSPMI emerged as one of the largest and most respected union federations in Indonesia in terms of organisational capacity (Ford 2013). The federation's efforts to organise gig economy workers indicate an attempt to broaden its appeal outside its traditional stronghold of industrial workers.

The link between union-like organisations with NGOs working with the urban poor has been established through the attempts of FAKTA (*Forum Warga Kota*; Jakarta Resident's Forum) to work with online *ojek* drivers. FAKTA was formed in 2000 to voice the concerns of the poor, including street vendors, the disabled and public transport drivers in Jakarta (Padawangi 2014). Although using street protests as a method to voice the concerns of the urban poor to the public, FAKTA also relies on lobbying and direct grassroots empowerment activities. In this context, FAKTA has been the motor of FPTOI, which has been active in organising protests and strikes to push the government to improve online *ojek* drivers' working conditions (as summarised in Table 6.2). Like KATO, FPTOI was formed to link drivers' communities with broader society movements. FPTOI thus relies on the capacities of two drivers' associations—ASOOI and FKDOI—to mobilise members to support its cause. As such, FPTOI can only act when it receives support from ASOOI and FKDOI.

Unions and NGOs that work with the urban poor have the potential to inspire union-like organisations to adopt a precarity-based discourse to frame their political actions. Their involvement has influenced union-like organisations to raise issues that offer a challenge to the normalisation of precarious work. These issues include the unfair partnership relationship and regulation that allows for the legalisation of the online transport service. Organising vehicles with connections to SPDT-FSPMI and FAKTA (which are summarised in Table 6.2) have consistently given their attention to these issues. Here, rising concerns about the issue of unfair partnerships could potentially challenge some of the effects of the 'misclassification' of drivers as partners, instead of employees of the companies, in the gig economy. Meanwhile, the demand for the legal recognition of the online transport service could potentially be expanded to pressure for more government involvement in improving job security.

In short, union-like organisations in Indonesia encourage the development of solidarity among drivers. In a similar manner as gig economy workers' self-organising vehicles in the West, some of those in Indonesia have been connected to trade unions and broader society movements, thus providing opportunities for the adoption of precarity as a discourse to frame workers' political actions. In the West, even when the established unions have been less reliable, workers' self-organising vehicles have been connected to rank-and-file unions and/or alt-labour organisations. In contrast, in Indonesia the majority of workers' self-organising vehicles retain their independence from unions and NGOs.

Precarious Solidarity

The last section aims to examine constant tensions in forms of collectivism emerging among precarious workers in the gig economy. It also seeks to comprehend the effect of such tensions on collective organisations to resist precarity. It first explores contradictions between forms of collectivism that enable self-sufficiency in the navigation of precarious living, while also encouraging solidarity associated with labour–capital struggles. However, it is clear that the benefits of workers' engagement in political struggles to improve working conditions can only be attained if these are to be sustained. This sustainability continues to be challenged by the other forms of collectivism that provide workers with short-term solutions for their socioeconomic insecurities. The section then explores the contribution of internal tensions, coupled with the fluidity of the digitally mediated organisational forms, in reproducing patterns of fragmentation within the workers' movement. In Indonesia, where labour and pro-poor movements have continued to be challenged by legacies of authoritarianism, they can do little to help gig economy workers to resolve such issues.

As previously discussed, there are opportunities for Indonesian online transport drivers to develop solidarity associated with labour–capital struggles. The solidarity, formed in the context of labour relations, indicates opportunities for workers to resist the instilment of the entrepreneurial identity. However, its formation has constantly been challenged by individualising mechanisms that operate in communities that encourage workers' self-sufficiency in navigating everyday precarious living and working conditions. As such, some communities, umbrella organisations and associations have encouraged drivers to accept their precarity. They habituate workers to personalise and depoliticise their grievances over working conditions, putting the responsibility to improve working conditions on individuals. In doing so, they discourage workers from engaging in strikes, protests and legal actions, and instead encourage them to work harder to achieve more earnings. The tendency of communities, umbrella organisations and associations to normalise and depoliticise workers' precarity is revealed in an interview with their key figures:

> I often say to our members … we do not need to join the protest, just be grateful of what we could earn. It depends on yourself, if you take a lot of breaks, you will not earn much. (Interview 27, Public Relation Division of *Laskar Online*, male, 26 September 2018)

> I always tell our members … you don't need to complain. Just enjoy what you are doing now. You will find a way to earn enough money. If you join the protest, the management

> will suspend your account and then what will you do to earn for a living? (Interview 10, UGB leader, male, 22 July 2018)

In all, there are tensions in the forms of collectivism manifested among drivers between the need to sustain their everyday survival and to push firms and the state to improve working conditions. The goals to improve working conditions can only be achieved through a long-term struggle, while in the short-term, it poses risks to workers' livelihoods. As discussed in Chapter 5, risk associated with collective organisations has caused many drivers to entirely eschew them. Still, some engage with union-like organisations, believing they can help address work problems. Nevertheless, many are more attracted to the opportunity to influence issues directly linked to their income, such as tariff per km, incentive mechanisms and the suspension of accounts. They have less interest in issues indirectly related to earnings, such as specific regulations on app-enabled ride-hailing services and their 'misclassification' as partners instead of employees of firms, as revealed in interviews with ASOOI leaders:

> Drivers prefer that form of solidarity … for instance, when they collect donations for the earthquake victims in Lombok … Also when they escort a driver's funeral procession. With that kind of solidarity, there is no need to be afraid that the firms will terminate them as partners … But for solidarity in protests [to the companies or the government] … they are worried that the companies will permanently suspend their account … It is difficult … We need to support the organisation. [However,] we need to make sure that we earn enough income, to make end meets, for us and our family. (Interview 18, ASOOI leader, male, 15 August 2018)

> When we can unite our forces, [for instance], during the protest outside the Presidential Palace [on 27 March 2018], thousands of drivers [came to support the protest] … [Some issues], for instance, the decrease in tariff or the changes in bonus mechanism … would definitely trigger drivers to act collectively … Drivers can easily digest such forms of issue. When we start to involve them in discussion about a [specific] regulation [on ride-hailing apps] it becomes more difficult … They say, 'we do not want to talk about regulation, it is too complicated'. That is why we start from issues most drivers find easy to digest. (Interview 15, ASOOI leader, male, 6 August 2018)

Solidarity activities that enable workers to confront management and the state to secure positive outcomes from their point of view (Smith 2014, 163), such as the ones embraced by union-like organisations, provide little certainty that individual goals can be immediately

achieved. In comparison, collectivism that provides workers with assistance in the provision of welfare and work-related security allows them to gain immediate payoffs. Under such circumstances, union-like organisations are pushed to resolve internal tensions by providing support for their members who want to start a business or make an extra income, as shown in interviews with the leaders of ASOOI and PAS:

> For the fight for a [specific] regulation [that allows for the legalisation of ride-hailing service] we cannot determine how long it will take … We will still keep fighting for that. But there is another thing that will also become out priority, drivers' welfare … Therefore, we attempt to grow a business unit … [We have been trying to] establish partnership [among others] with a noodle company. (Interview 18, ASOOI leader, male, 15 August 2018)

> We use around 40% of our energy to fight [to demand the companies and the government to improve working conditions], we use 60% of the rest, to look for alternatives … The realistic struggle is to earn money … For instance, one of our members used to have a garment business [before going into] bankruptcy … Our association provides him with an avenue to meet with other drivers, who are willing to support him and start a new business. (Interview 46, PAS leader, male, 16 November 2018)

As explored in Chapter 5, drivers in the online transport service as part of the gig economy are conditioned to shoulder the cost and risks of their employment. Under such circumstances, long-term organising, which is required to maintain the longevity and stability of solidarity associated with the labour–capital struggle, hampers their ability to maintain a stable income. This challenges efforts to build a sustainable movement, despite the vibrancy of street-level politics, as demonstrated in interviews with key figures of SPDT-FSPMI and KATO:

> It is challenging [to organise drivers and attract them to join a union] … In principle, they will not earn money if they stop working. When we asked them to come for a meeting, I told them 'please turn off your apps'. Why? So, they could gain a good knowledge about the union … They said, 'okay', yet they still kept the apps on … one … two of them start to leave … from 300 people, we had 50 people left. (Interview 7, SPDT-FSPMI unionist, male, 14 Juni 2018)

> We have around 100,000 members. But whenever we discuss concepts [for instance, the one related to the classification of motorcycle taxi as a form of public transport],

> only the same 5 people will show up … More people will come for fun activities. A community anniversary or a *dangdut* concert,[23] for instance, would eventually attract more drivers to come, just like flies. (Interview 17, KATO secretary general, male, 13 August 2018)

In summary, the collectivism that emerges through drivers' communities and is reproduced in umbrella organisations and associations, albeit to varying degrees, contributes to conditioning members' personalisation and depoliticisation of dissatisfaction with working conditions. This kind of collectivism challenges the formation of solidarity associated with the labour–capital struggle, which in turn hinders attempts to sustain and improve the efficacy of the workers' movement.

Amid these internal tensions, umbrella organisations and associations employ different tactics to attain benefits for their members. Their strategies are linked to the types of relationships between labour and management, ranging from cooperative to adversarial. The differences create a wedge that divides workers, reproducing patterns of atomisation within their movement. Some umbrella groups and organisations manage to gain informal access to management. Their relatively cooperative stance in relationships with companies, allows them to secure financial or in-kind support for their members. They also become a vehicle that voices the concerns of their members, although they are not as meaningful as an independent organisation that serves as a pressure group that advocates for workers' rights, as demonstrated in an interview with a key figure of an umbrella organisation:

> Gojek itself has acknowledged our community … The management organises a fortnightly kopi darat … [We can express] our complaints, on order, on the apps … They will take a note, make a report, and make some improvements … [The management also donated] the green umbrella, for our basecamp, to decorate it … [We also received] a banner, a first aid box, a water dispenser, and a cable roll … We also got a free jacket, to replace the old ones … We are also invited to participate in some activities, like free movie at the cinema … Gojek now has 2 units of ambulance, it is one of the inputs we gave to the management … the drivers can use them for free. (Interview 37, Korwil Jaktim leader, male, 10 October 2018)

Such umbrella organisations, and those that take a more neutral stance on companies, prioritise collectivism to assist their members to self-manage most work-related risks over demanding

[23] A type of Indonesian popular music that combines elements of Malay, Arabic and other folk music.

that management and the state improve working conditions. They tend to eschew solidarity activities that enable the labour–capital struggle, doubting the motive and the effect of such forms of solidarity, as revealed in the interviews with leaders of some umbrella organisations:

> [When there is a call to join a protest] we need to check, who are the organisers … Some groups organise protests to attract the attention of political [elites]. They don't genuinely represent drivers' interests … They are active in organising protests, but never showed up to assist in time of accidents, or to escort a driver who pass away … A lot of protests broke out [after 2016], but we never took part in any of them. They are not pure. (Interview 37, Korwil Jaktim leader, male, 10 October 2018)

> We prefer not to participate in protests … Except for those that demand [the government to legally] acknowledge [online *ojek* service] as a form of public transport … When the government legally acknowledge our existence, we can demand for protection. (Interview 27, Laskar Online leader, male, 26 September 2018)

Consequently, such organisations are often in direct opposition to others that prioritise solidarity acts to fight for better working conditions. One of the major sources of conflict is the intimidation tactics they use to attract drivers to participate in a protest, as demonstrated by an interview with one of their leaders:

> In principle, we give freedom to our members, if they want to join protests, go ahead, if they don't want to, it is also fine … However, we disapprove of those who force and intimidate others to participate in a protest … It is each person's right … [Therefore]if we find out that someone has been forced or intimidated to join a protest, we will look for the person who did so … It happened last time; the person apologised to the victim. (Interview 27, Laskar Online leader, male, 26 September 2018)

The road to a sustained political struggle is also obstructed by friction among union-like organisations. Protests and strikes organised by such organisations have often been prompted by similar reasons, and some have taken inspiration from each other (as summarised in Table 6.3). While some have joined forces to advance their goals, others have refused to work together. One of the main sources of division is the form of organisation they chose to achieve their goals. As mentioned, some organisations resort to a union-organising model, despite the challenges, perceiving it as the best strategy to push negotiations with management and the government. However, there are others that resent unionism because their leaders see drivers as micro-entrepreneurs instead of employees of companies; therefore, they are outside the

traditional target of unions. They also question the labour movement's effectiveness, independence and genuineness in representing workers' interests. They thus opt to organise drivers under the umbrella of associations, as demonstrated in interviews with their leaders:

> Our unions have been compromised by political interests … For instance, [in several companies], workers join unions, formed by the companies themselves. It makes the unions the firms' accomplice … Every organisation needs money to survive, serving a certain political interest helps the organisation to survive. (Interview 12, G99 (ex) leader, male, 25 July 2018)

> Up to this day, unions have not yet managed to solve problems with labour, therefore, we have more confidence when we develop our own association … [Other than that] unions have often been compromised by political interest … When there are disputes, they may reach a deal after a negotiation. But it is rarely implemented. (Interview 46, PAS leader, male, 14 November 2018)

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, the gig economy provides an example of a site where organising through the traditional trade union model has become increasingly challenging, particularly in the advanced economies of the West, where the SER used to be the standard. However, unions, as well as broader society movements in the West, have had greater opportunities to support gig workers' self-organising attempts, as discussed in the previous section. As mentioned in Chapter 2, several political actions against the expansion of precarious work have been spearheaded by unions and labour-oriented NGOs (as part of formal civic organisations). The unions and the labour-oriented NGOs have had previous experiences of organising precarious workers in the transport sector and other industry. The strategies, taken to respond to the decline of union membership, help them to have an effect among precarious workers in the gig economy.

In the US, unions and alt-labour organisations, discussed in the previous section, had experience in organising precarious workers before the advent of the app-enabled transport service. For instance, since 1998, NYTWA has represented taxi workers, who have not had employment status since the mid-1970s (Dubal 2017a). Machinist NY has also been organising drivers in the black car industry, referring to luxury rides with professional drivers in New York since the 1990s (IDG n.d.). Meanwhile, the Freelancers Union has become the representative for independent contractors in various industries since 1995 (Freelancers Union n.d.). In another example, in Britain, the IWGB, the rank-and-file union mentioned in the previous section, was formed in

2012 to represent sections of the workforce that have traditionally been non-unionised. The IWGB was started after a dispute with more established unions—UNITE and UNISON—stemming from a disagreement over how to improve working conditions for precarious workers. The IWGB has won some important victories, including improved sick pay entitlement, increased holiday pay and access to the pension scheme for outsourced cleaners who work at the University of London (Woodcock 2014).

In Indonesia, SPDT-FSPMI is the only union that has made significant progress in organising online *ojek* drivers (Ford and Honan 2019). However, FSPMI's involvement with workers in the transport sector is relatively new, with SPDT being established in 2016 to expand the union's membership into the aerospace and transport sectors. Union membership in the online transport industry has thus remained low compared with associations, as the former has continued to experience difficulties in recruiting members. As revealed in the interviews above, many drivers continue to resent unions, partly because of unions' inability to affect workers' lives in the post-authoritarian environment. Although there have been some significant changes in the regulatory framework of employment relations, union busting has continued to be practised by employers (Ford 2013). Cases of employers setting up unions to compete with independent ones and limit their influence have also been common (Ford and Sirait 2016). In addition, the industrial relations courts have continued to be unreliable, showing the tendency to rule against workers (Caraway 2011).

Internal divisions also plague umbrella organisations and associations that similarly opt for a union-organising mode, thus undermining attempts of consolidation. An example is ASOOI, which aspires to be a union despite not having any previous experience in union or related organising or campaigning. As previously explained, ASOOI's key leaders failed to transform the organisation into a union, thus forming an association instead. However, they refused to join its forces with SPDT-FSPMI, which would have made ASOOI part of the union movement, owing to a disagreement with FSPMI political manoeuvres[24] during the 2019 presidential election, as demonstrated by the statement below:

> FSPMI seems to move toward a political orientation … we chose to be neutral, because we don't have the guts to take a risk … if we support a certain candidate, and he won, then perhaps he would help us reach our goals, although we would still need to wait … but what would happen if the candidate we supported lost the competition? Should we

[24] FSPMI openly supported the 2019 presidential candidacy of Prabowo Subianto, who is a former military general accused of committing many human rights abuses, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

> ask the winning candidate to meet our demands? I don't think they will listen to us. (Interview 18, online *ojek* driver, male, 15 August 2018)

The advent of democracy has indeed given unions more opportunities to attain their collective goals. In the local, provincial and national parliamentary elections, unionists put forward their own candidates and strike deals with those running for executive positions (Caraway and Ford 2014). In several union-dense districts, some union candidates have also been successfully elected to parliament, allowing them to influence policymaking with the workers' agenda (Ford and Sirait 2016). However, as discussed in Chapter 3, unions remain unable to consolidate themselves to be a significant social and political force. They are unable to mobilise as one unified group that is strong enough to be impactful, where their interests are accommodated by a political party, for example, that seeks to gain control of the state and its system of policy formation (Habibi and Juliawan 2018). They are also unable to broaden their appeal and gain support beyond a traditional base: the industrial workers. Many workers even grow suspicious of the model of political engagement embraced by unions, doubting its chance of succeeding.

With union-like organisations finding it challenging to overcome their differences, solidarity in the labour–capital struggle that emerges among drivers in the online transport industry can be easily broken down, challenging the formation of coherent identity and solidarity. Allegiances can easily end for various reasons, such as a disagreement over who should represent workers in negotiations with the firms and the government, or over the functioning of an association as a business entity while continuing to be active in the fight for better working conditions. The fragility of the solidarity can also be attributed to the fluidity of the organisational form of the communities, umbrella groups and associations, whose development has been facilitated by social media platforms. Without specific requirements for membership, a driver can easily enter and exit the communities, umbrella groups and associations. A driver can also be a member of more than one community, umbrella group and association at a time. Thus, difficulties in maintaining a loyal membership and problems of divided loyalties continue to challenge workers' self-organising attempts.

As previously discussed, union-like organisations that enable workers to engage in solidarity to stand up to management and the government have established connections not only with unions but also with NGOs that work with urban poor communities. As explored in Chapter 3, the post-authoritarian environment has provided NGOs with more freedom to organise protests and demonstrations, as well as access to the media and the courts to press their demands. Nonetheless, after decades of demobilisation under the New Order, it has remained difficult for

them to maintain a strong support base. Their actions have also tended to be pragmatic and unideological. The ineffectiveness of the broader pro-poor movement means that it can do little to unite umbrella organisations and associations established by drivers in the online transport industry.

In short, tensions in the collectivisms that emerge among drivers in the online transport industry contribute to reproducing a fragile type of solidarity within the movement. The movement is also divided by different modes of organising. The fluidity of their organisational forms also inhibits the movement from achieving sustainability. Under these circumstances, the weak unions and NGOs have had little effect on precarious workers in the gig economy. This is in contrast to the experience in the West where, prior to the expansion of the gig economy, unions and labour-oriented NGOs had some experience in organising precarious workers across different sectors of the economy.

Summary

The chapter has explored the forms of collectivism that have emerged among drivers in the Indonesian online transport industry as part of the gig economy. It has explored collectivism formed in drivers' communities as the kind that encourages individualisation in a collective situation. The communities encourage the formation of such collectivism by functioning as a vehicle that helps their members share the responsibility of improving their own welfare and work-related security. They accustom their members to the roles of active participants in their own risk reduction, thus reinstating the entrepreneurial identity that undermines collectivist strategies. However, at the same time, some communities have become associated with umbrella organisations and associations that operate in a way that is similar to trade unions. They allow for the development of solidarity associated with labour–capital struggles, facilitating workers to come together and challenge the structural underpinnings of their precarious working conditions. This form of solidarity brings out workers' potential to challenge the entrenchment of the entrepreneurial identity.

Moreover, this chapter has explored the effects of the individualising mechanisms in drivers' communities that hinder the sort of solidarity that enables labour–capital struggles. As explained, the communities habituate their members to personalise and depoliticise their dissatisfaction over their precarious working conditions. They also provide opportunities for members to gain immediate payoffs from sharing responsibilities in the improvement of welfare and work-related security. These continuously challenge the longevity and stability of solidarity

activities that enable drivers to stand up to management and the state. Against such a backdrop, umbrella organisations and associations, whose formation is facilitated by digital platforms, find it challenging to develop strong ties among their members. They are also internally divided, employing different strategies to attain benefits for their members. In the Indonesian context, the relatively weak unions and broader society movements cannot do much to reconcile the division among umbrella organisations and associations, thereby reproducing patterns of fragmentation within workers' attempts to self-organise.

In a nutshell, this chapter has shown how mechanisms that promote individualisation can operate in a collective situation. By doing so, it has illuminated the fragility of new forms of solidarity formed in the new era of precarity, despite the vibrancy of attempts at self-organising and the opportunity to push for labour–capital struggles. It has also shown that such fragile solidarity is a product of a specific historical process. In Indonesia, drivers in the online transport industry have largely depended on self-regulating communities to navigate precarious working and living conditions. Meanwhile, union and broader social movements have been unable to adequately support their self-organising attempts. Chapter 7 will discuss how such fragility helps to further weaken workers in their relationships with the firms and the government. It will explore workers' attempts to mobilise themselves during the 2019 presidential election, without having a significant effect. It will also explore workers' continuing weakness in pressing for regulations that could provide better protection for them.

Chapter 7:
Challenging the Expansion of Precarious Work in the Gig Economy: An Assessment of Workers' Politics

Policymaking and Election as Arenas of Struggle

The discussion in Chapter 6 shed light on the fragility of workers' solidarity in the Indonesian online transport industry. It examined tensions in forms of collectivism in drivers' organisations that accentuate fragmentation within workers' self-organising attempts and hinder the pursuit of a broad range of objectives. It pointed to the inability of the organisations to use precarious work as a discursive strategy, thereby weakening the organisations' bargaining power with the firms and the government in the policymaking process—a theme that is further explored in this chapter. In addition, Chapter 7 also explores the difficulty the organisations have in taking advantage of opportunities from electoral politics, although they have often become the target of mass mobilisation strategies by competing candidates aiming to generate support and votes. In doing so, the chapter provides evidence of the effects of the technique of neoliberal governance in shaping the direction of workers' politics in the Indonesian gig economy.

The Foucauldian governmentality lenses is applied here to examine the effects of the formation of entrepreneurial identity in undermining workers' attempts to influence the policy-making arena for their own benefit. The link here with overtly political-economic issues is especially overt. Regulatory and policy regimes are typically the product of the dynamic interactions between competing actors – not equally endowed with power – pursuing their respective interests and goals. In Indonesia, regulations on the emerging online transport industry were developed amid competition between the emerging industry and the traditional taxi cartels. However, online drivers' immersion in the entrepreneurial identity and the precarious solidarity that emerge among the drivers mean that they can do little to influence the policymaking arena, despite the vibrancy of their street-level politics. These dynamics, demonstrating that collective organisations do not always lead to an effectively organised anti-precarity movement, are also influenced by the fact that working-class interests in Indonesia have been historically subordinated to state–business alliances.

The same problem affects attempts to gain a strategic advantage from engagement in electoral politics. In Indonesia, the pervasive urban informal sector, which set the conditions for the development of the online transport industry, has historically made possible the formation of a mass of precarious workers. Self-organising attempts have helped these workers to attract

competing elites most intensely during election periods, leading to the receipt of money and/or material goods in return for support they give to competing elites. However, the historical fragmentation of workers as a social force and the absence of a coherent anti-precarity identity in their movement have hindered organisational effectiveness in the gig economy, especially in terms of successfully pushing for reforms in the interest of workers. What is again obvious is that the effects of the normalisation of precarious work has hindered workers from developing the kind of critical instruments necessary to challenge neoliberal structures that underpin work precarity.

The arguments in this chapter are constructed in a continuing dialogue with studies that focus on the emergence of collective organisations, especially in the transport and delivery service of the gig economy, which is the archetypal form of contemporary digitally enabled precarious work (see Greenhouse 2016; Webster 2016). Chapter 6 discussed the tendency of those studies to treat the flourishing collective organisations as evidence of the triumph of solidarity over atomisation while downplaying its limitations. This chapter elaborates on the observations of Chapter 6 by focusing on two issues. First, it delves into the challenges faced by drivers' organisations in the online transport industry to influence policymaking and the establishment of regulatory frameworks in their interest. Second, it examines the difficulties experienced by the organisations in attempting to gain a strategic advantage from engagement with competing elites in electoral politics. It contends that, despite the opportunities that were available for drivers' organisations to influence policies and electoral politics, the drivers' bargaining position remained weak in relation to the firms and the government. This weakness prevents drivers from uniting their forces and challenging the expansion of precarious work in the gig economy.

The Struggle Over Policies on the Online Transport Industry

In Indonesia, drivers' organisations in the online transport industry have to operate in an exclusionary social and political environment, where the interests of the working class and the poor are typically subordinated to those of the state and business. This is the case even in the post-authoritarian era, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The exclusionary nature of this environment can be discerned from the way in which policies on the online transport industry have been typically set up. The influence of the taxi cartel on such policies is explored in this section, as well as the way it interacts with interests within the Jokowi government and those of app-based transport companies. This influence can be contrasted with the limited ability of drivers' organisations and their allies to further their interests in the policymaking arena. These

matters are examined in relation to drivers' organisations' inability to coalesce around a shared anti-precarity identity.

App-Based Transport Service and Traditional Taxi Competition

Protests to demand improvement in working conditions in the online transport service began within a few months of the service's operation in 2015, as detailed in Chapter 6. At around the same time, attempts were made to tighten regulations governing the service, largely aimed at protecting the taxi industry, which was threatened by the aggressive expansion of the online transport service. The attempts did nothing to respond to app-based drivers' demands to improve their conditions of work. For instance, the Transport Ministry announced a ban on all forms of app-based transport and delivery services in December 2015. The ban was based on the Transport Minister's claims that the app-based services violated Traffic and Land Transport Law No. 2009, which requires public transport to have at least three wheels, legal standing, and a business permit (Parwitasari 2015).

The ban represented an attempt to subject app-based transport companies to requirements associated with those of the taxi industry. It caused the drivers to lose their jobs rather than improve their working conditions. Although the Transport Ministry subsequently withdrew the ban, it enacted Regulation No. 32/2016 in the following year, which was similarly designed to protect the traditional taxi market (Tempo 2016). The regulation specifically targeted app-based car services, requiring app-based transport companies to have 'at least five vehicles, [which is] proven to have company-owned vehicle licenses'; 'vehicle pools'; 'vehicle facilities [which are] proven by ownership documents of cooperation with other parties'. It also forced the companies to employ 'drivers with general driving licenses based on their vehicle class, and other administrative requirements' (Adyatama 2016).

The lack of visibility of labour issues in negotiations to regulate the online transport industry is partly a result of many drivers' organisations being disconnected from unions, the major force behind the anti-precarity struggle in Indonesia more broadly. In Indonesia, as mentioned in Chapter 6, a few legal actions occur to address issues related to precarious labour—for example, by LBH-connected G99 in 2016 and FSPMI-related KATO in 2018. In comparison, in the West, attempts to declare Uber illegal were similarly initiated to protect the monopoly of taxi industries (Estes 2012; Digital Platform Observatory 2017). Nonetheless, legal actions have occurred in a number of countries to challenge workers' classification as independent contractors. Some actions have originated outside the labour movement. For instance, in the

US, legal action to certify Uber drivers as employees for wage purposes has occurred through the efforts of private plaintiffs' attorneys that have acted on behalf of the drivers. 'Wage settlements can yield a financial windfall for these attorneys, therefore incentivising them to 'settle court cases without a resolution to the underlying issue of employee status' (Adyatama 2016).

Still, the role of unions and formal civic organisations in addressing workers' rights in the gig economy remains central in the West. In the US, NYTWA (an alt-labour organisation mentioned in Chapter 6) mobilised Uber drivers in California to object to attempts by private attorneys to settle a lawsuit against the drivers' classification as independent contractors. Despite these legal actions, to date, the issue of unemployment status is unresolved. Dubal (2017b) challenges the widely accepted assumption that the victory of the lawsuits can reverse the growth of insecure work. The post-litigation stories of some victorious misclassification lawsuits in the US show the difficulties in enforcing companies' compliance. Workers' rights continue to be evaded, and workers laboured without protection. Similar legal battles have taken place in the UK. In 2016, GMB union (a general trade union) helped Uber drivers in legal battles to be categorised as employees. The case was taken over by IWGB (an independent union mentioned in Chapter 6) in 2017, and by the App Drivers & Couriers Union in 2020 (Booth 2020; Croft, Venkataramakrishnan and Lee 2020; GMB Union 2020). In 2021, the UK supreme court ruled that Uber drivers are workers who are entitled to minimum wage and paid holidays. The ruling is an important victory of workers in the gig economy.

In Indonesia, where most drivers' organisations are not connected to unions, big taxi companies are among the actors whose interests shape the dynamics surrounding regulations on the online transport services. The big taxi companies are threatened by the newer service, which has shaken up the market. These newcomers caused Blue Bird and Express Group, the first and second largest taxi operators in the country, to experience a significant decline in their revenues (Rahmiasri 2017). The Blue Bird Group and Express Group's interests are represented by Organda (*Organisasi Pengusaha Angkutan Darat*; Transport Business Organisation), which operates as a nationwide government-sponsored association of land transport owners (DPP Organda 2015). Operating as a lobbying vehicle, Organda's role is to align business interests with those of the state. Organda's lobbying power is so significant that it managed to determine taxi rates based on an agreement among its members. Such practices of price-fixing represent cartel-like behaviour, which prevents competition between taxi firms and protects them from market uncertainties (KPPU 2010).

Organda's lobbying power partly comes from the affluence of its leaders—businesspersons whose businesses are entangled with major state players. This mirrors the pattern of state–business alliances that was established under authoritarianism and that has continued to survive into the post-authoritarian era (Hadiz and Robison 2013). In general, political connections make it easier for companies to obtain credit from banks and leniency in matters of law and taxation. Organda's board of advisors, which includes Noni Purnomo and Sigit Djokoseotono, and its chairman, Adrianto Djokoseotono, have held several key positions in Blue Bird Group's subsidiaries (DPP Organda 2015). They are key members of the Djokosoetono family, which founded and control the Blue Bird Group. The company was established by Mutiara Djokosoetono, whose husband, Djokosetono, served as the foundation dean of Indonesia's Police Academy (Capital Profile 2015). Djokosetono's son, Chandra Soeharto, also served in the police force before becoming President Commissioner of the Blue Bird Group (Detik 2015).

Thus, the initial attempts to tighten the regulators' stance were partly the result of pressure from the transport lobby. In 2015, for instance, Organda reported Uber for violating several laws and regulations on transport (Rudi 2015). Before the Transport Ministry's ban on app-based transport and delivery services in 2015, Organda's pressure had resulted in the confiscation of several Uber cars in Jakarta through joint operations that involved Organda, the police and Dishub DKI Jakarta (*Dinas Perhubungan DKI Jakarta*; Jakarta Transport Agency) (Carina 2015). The pressure had also been amplified by the demands of less-influential public transport owners and drivers, such as those driving buses and minibuses, whose income significantly declined amid the expansion of the online transport service. In March 2016, for instance, thousands of less-influential public transport owners and drivers staged a protest to demand the illegalisation of the service (Hanifyani 2016). The protest, which turned violent, was joined by thousands of Blue Bird drivers, who allegedly received payment from the company (Alvionitasari 2016). Although Organda denies any connection with the protest, it made reference to the protest in its argument for a tighter regulatory framework (Kurnia 2016).

To summarise, taxi cartels in Indonesia have fought off competition from the online transport services, resulting in a ban of the services in 2015 and the enactment of Regulation No. 32 in 2016. Meanwhile, partly due to their disconnection from unions, most drivers' organisations can do little to influence regulation-making, resulting in the absence of labour interests at the negotiating table. This contrasts starkly with the experience of many countries in the West, where most initiatives to organise app-based drivers are connected to unions or alt-labour

organisations, thus ensuring that issues of job insecurity are addressed, at least in court, albeit with limited effect.

The Jokowi Administration

The Transport Ministry's attempts to tighten regulations on the online transport service have also been challenged. The ministry's ban of the service prompted angry netizens—many of whom were consumers—to react with rage. In response, President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) released a tweet stating that:

> I will summon the Transport Minister. [Online] *ojek* is needed by the people. Don't let the regulation trouble the people. It needs to be adjusted. (Carina 2015)

This led the Transport Minister to revoke the ban 24 hours after it was announced (Hanifyani 2016). In mid-2016, large-scale protests staged by conventional public transport drivers against the online transport service prompted the Transport Minister to request a ban on the service from the Communication and Information Minister (Alvionitasari 2016). However, the Communication and Information Minister stated that he stood behind the growing online transport industry, thus echoing Jokowi's own support (Kurnia 2016). Jokowi's position shows his desire to avoid irritating the voting public, whose support was particularly important to sustain Jokowi's personal popularity, especially in his early years as president. It was much less the result of successful pressure from app-based drivers and their organisations.

Further, the Indonesian Government's indecisiveness must be understood in light of the challenges faced by the Jokowi administration (Hanifyani 2016). Although Jokowi operates in a system of oligarchy, where private wealth and public authority have been enmeshed, he did not command his own political party upon ascending to the presidency, nor any independent political machinery. Nor did he have strong independent financial backing. Hence, Jokowi relied largely on his popularity as a figure who got things done, gained through his success in addressing 'concrete problems' that matter for the middle class and the poor (when he has governor of Jakarta and, previously, mayor of Solo in Central Java). He was aware that, where conventional public transport was unreliable and traffic jams posed a major issue, the online transport services added convenience to the lives of many Indonesians, especially those living in urban areas. Jokowi's support for the service appeased many Indonesians whose lives have been made easier by the service, which in turned eased the pressure on the government to improve public transport infrastructure.

The expansion of the online transport service also provided a means for the Jokowi government to deliver on its promises of transforming Indonesia's economy. Whereas Jokowi's campaign was heavily marked by nationalistic rhetoric, Indonesia's interconnectedness with the global economy meant that, in reality, attracting foreign investment remained critical. The digital economy provided the opportunity to reproduce nationalistic sentiment while opening up the country to foreign money. With Gojek itself touted as *karya anak bangsa* ('a creation of Indonesians'), government officials often refer to the company as a source of national pride (Harsono 2019). Meanwhile, Jokowi announced Grab's plan to open its second headquarters in Jakarta in mid-2019. This will make the Singaporean-based company the fifth unicorn categorised as belonging to Indonesia, after Gojek, online booking platform Traveloka and e-commerce platforms Tokopedia and Bukalapak (Muskita 2019, Firmansyah 2017).[25]

Although it boosts nationalist sentiment, the digital economy's landscape is dominated by foreign investment, which accounted for 72% of the total investment value between 2012 and 2016 (Marzuki 2017). Hence, the sector grew impressively within a short period, from US$44 million in value in 2012 to US$1.4 billion in 2016 and then to almost US$3 billion in 2017 (Kearney 2017). The expansion of the digital economy is shaped by changing global forces—in particular 'investor capitalism', whereby companies are increasingly 'diversifying from their core business activity and seeking rents and returns from financial investments' (Dundon 2019). Amid the global expansion of neoliberalism, the shift to investor capitalism affects work in various ways. For instance, Uber, whose strategy is followed by Gojek and Grab, attracts big investors, such as the Public Investment Fund that invests Saudi Arabia's vast oil wealth (Davies and Carrie 2019). It does so by nullifying many of the greater costs of running a traditional taxi service—particularly those associated with labour (CB Insights 2020).

In addition, the online transport industry creates new job opportunities, where barriers to entry are low because the jobs require no specific education level or specialised experience. With Jokowi promising to create two million jobs annually during his first term (Ariffin 2019), the expansion of the industry provides his government with short-term solutions for unemployment problems. Jokowi often boasted about his achievement in reducing unemployment and the poverty rate (Afriyadi 2019). Meanwhile, government officials often applaud the industry for its contribution to improving employment prospects. For instance, BPS (*Badan Pusat Statistik*; Statistics Indonesia) reported a significant decrease in Indonesia's unemployment rate from

[25] The term 'unicorn' is used to refer to a privately held start-up company with a minimum current valuation of US$1 billion (Firmansyah 2017).

6.18% in 2015 to 5.61% in 2016, linking it to the rise of Uber, Gojek and Grab (Diela 2016). This masks the challenges that Indonesia continues to face in creating an adequate number of higher-quality jobs, as discussed in Chapter 3. Whereas the gig economy firms create accessible jobs, they attract workers because the labour market is highly uncertain and there is a lack of alternative opportunities.

The Jokowi government's support for the online transport industry must also be viewed in the context of a broader political economy where major businesses have required the maintenance of political alliances with state actors (Hadiz and Robison 2013). The emerging industry's sources of finance have been dominated by foreign investment, but it has also received significant financing from Indonesian conglomerates connected to political elites. Among an early investor in Grab is one of Indonesia's largest conglomerates, the Lippo Group (Freischlad 2016). Lippo is also the founder of OVO, a digital payment service that has been partnering with Grab since late 2017 (Jakarta Globe 2019). James Riady, the founder of Lippo Group, was among the media moguls that backed Jokowi in the 2015 presidential campaign (Diela 2016). Support from media moguls had contributed to making Jokowi the most popular presidential candidate in 2014, even though he had not originated from within the oligarchy (Tapsell 2014).

It is in Jokowi's interest to cultivate goodwill among prominent members of the business community, and Riady's Lippo Group has been one of Jokowi's most ardent supporters (Carney and Hamilton-Hart 2015). At the same time, Gojek has had friends in high places since its early days, which has created leverage to safeguard its interests. Among members of Gojek's Board of Commissioners is Pandu Patria Sjahrir, who serves as one of the directors of PT Toba Bara Sejahtera, a mining and forestry business, cofounded by his uncle, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan (*The Jakarta Post* 2019; Tobabara 2021). A former military general, Luhut is Jokowi's long-time business partner and campaign donor (Mietzner 2016). During Jokowi's first term, Luhut was appointed as the president's chief of staff in December 2014 and then as the Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security in August 2015.

In summary, the Jokowi government has developed an interest in facilitating the continued expansion of the online transport industry. Originating from outside the New Order–cultivated oligarchy, Jokowi has opted to appease the middle class and the poor, who depend on the new industry, in an attempt to maintain their political support. The expansion of the industry has also provided his government with the means to attract foreign investment even while reproducing nationalist rhetoric. It also provides a short-term partial solution to chronic unemployment problems. Another factor is the vested interest of some Indonesian conglomerates in the

industry, including those that have supported Jokowi, and which continue the pattern of state–business alliances established firmly under the New Order.

Fragmentation Within Drivers' Organisations

Amid competition between app-based transport firms and taxi companies, as well as the Jokowi government's interest in facilitating the continuous expansion of the digital economy, newer opportunities were opened for online drivers to influence policies on the online transport service. The Transport Ministry postponed its plan to enact Regulation No. 32/2016, which specifically targeted app-based car services, as mentioned in the previous section. The ministry did so ostensibly in response to protests staged by drivers' organisations, including ADO (Purba 2016). Thus, the drivers' organisations' success was conditioned by the convergence of their interests with those of the app-based transport firms, which is to maintain the app-based transport and delivery service's competitive advantage over taxis and those of the government. The implementation of the regulation would harm the interests of both drivers and companies in the online transport industry. Pressured to provide a level playing field for taxi drivers and ensure the growth of the online transport industry, the Transport Ministry's only option was to delay the implementation of the regulation.

The government's stance was changed not just because of protests by drivers, but also in deference to the business enterprises that had come to forge an alliance with the president. This alliance provided fresh opportunities for app-based drivers to advance their own interests. Nevertheless, drivers' organisations' responses to regulations on app-based car services were fragmented. Therefore, the plan to enact Regulation No. 26/2017, a revised version of Regulation No. 32/2016, was supported by some organisations, including PAS and ADO (Nathaniel 2017). For them, regulations on app-based car services would provide drivers with legal recognition (Sholih 2018), thereby providing protection for app-based drivers, who were often harassed and attacked by public transport drivers. However, the regulation was again opposed by Uber, Grab and Gojek (Herman 2017). Nevertheless, a group of app-based car drivers made an appeal to the Supreme Court to annul 14 articles in the regulation, resulting in another postponement (Kholid and Fatmawati 2017).

Drivers' organisations were again split into factions in their response to Regulation No. 108/2017, a revised version of Regulation No. 26/2017. Although organisations such as ADO and PAS supported Regulation No. 108/2017, other organisations, such as Aliando and FDOI, rejected it (Hamdani 2018; Sholih 2018). For Aliando and FDOI, some requirements in the

regulation would harm the app-based drivers' livelihood. The regulation was once again delayed after the Supreme Court again annulled some articles in the regulation following an appeal made by a group of online taxi drivers (Purnama 2018). At this juncture, the interests of some of the app-based drivers, which are represented by organisations such as ADO and PAS, intersected with those of the app-based transport companies that sought to maintain their competitive advantage over traditional taxis. The dynamics resulted in repeated delays in the implementation of the regulation. However, on the whole, segments of drivers' organisations were unable to push for the incorporation of meaningful labour issues in regulations on the online transport service, despite some opportunities.

This being the case, the Transport Ministry finally passed Regulation No. 118/2018 in late 2018, targeting app-based car services (Jannah 2019). The ministry then subsequently enacted Regulation No. 12/2019, which oversees app-based motorcycle services (Yasmin 2019). It incorporated inputs from app-based transport companies in the development of these regulations to prevent another delay (interview 55, PAS leader, 30 December 2019; interview 56, ASOOI leader, 8 January 2020). Nonetheless, the interest of drivers' organisations was only accommodated to a limited degree. The regulations provide legal protection for drivers, especially from harassment from conventional public transport drivers. Further, the regulations set a quota on the number of drivers in any given period, thereby reducing the threat of competition among the drivers themselves. They also set a new rate for various online transport and delivery services, although it was still below what had been proposed by drivers' organisations.

Nonetheless, inconsistency in the implementation of regulations remains a major issue in Indonesia. In addition, the regulations contribute very little to contest the extensive use of precarious work in the online transport service as part of the gig economy. Drivers' organisations in Indonesia have a long way to go before they can emulate the achievement in California, for example, which became the first US state to pass a bill that incorporated an anti-precarity agenda to regulate the gig economy for companies such as Uber. The California Assembly Bill 5 (AB5), which was passed in late 2019 made it difficult for companies to misclassify workers as independent contractors. AB5 'standardizes the legal test for employee status under California law' and 'gives greater power to city attorneys to enforce it' (Dubal 2019b). The bill also tightens regulations imposed on companies such as Uber and challenges the classification of app-based drivers as independent contractors.

The enactment of AB5 was partly the result of campaigns by Rideshare Drivers United, an association of app-based drivers with more than 5,000 members in California only (Ghaffary and Campbell 2019). The fact that associations such as RUD only have weak links with trade unions did not seem to prevent it from waging a successful campaign. However, it should be acknowledged that the anti-precarity movement is still weak, and therefore, such successes achieved by Rideshare Drivers United are relatively rare (Collier, Dubal and Carter 2017, 23). Indeed, following the enactment of AB5, gig economy firms, including Uber and Lyft, spent US$200 million to support Proposition 22 (Prop 22) on a state ballot, which passed with 59% of the vote and granted the companies exemption from AB5, thus allowing them to classify the drivers as independent contractors (Murphy 2020).

Even in some European countries, where unions tend to embrace radical political strategies, attempts to influence legislative arenas continue to be dogged by union weakness. In Italy, the mobilisation of drivers by Riders Union Bologna, a workers' association, with the support of some unions, prompted the adoption of the Charter of Bologna in 2018. The charter stipulates a list of app-based transport companies' duties to protect drivers. However, it was only signed by local services; large players refused to sign it (Digital Platform Observatory 2017; Veronese et al. 2019). In France, since 2015, several unions have aimed to introduce minimum fees for services in the gig economy. However, they have never met with success in the app-based transport service. Since a law adopted at the end of 2019, gig economy firms are allowed to set up arrangements with workers to allow them to obtain a decent price for their services. However, what it is considered a 'decent price' has never been detailed (Veronese et al. 2019).

Thus far, this section has explored the inability of workers in the Indonesian online transport industry to shape the policymaking arena with an anti-precarity agenda. Although some drivers' organisations have influenced the regulations governing their industry, these have had little to do with challenging the extensive use of precarious work. In the advanced economies of the West, by contrast, there have been opportunities to mobilise precarious workers to influence the policymaking arena with an anti-precarity agenda, even if their effects have been limited.

Fragmentation within drivers' organisations, which weaken their bargaining power in relation to the business and the state, can be attributed partly to drivers' organisations' inability to resolve collective identity problems in their movement. Collective identity problems persist because these organisations are unable to use precarious work as a discursive strategy that frames their political action and unites their forces. In Indonesia, the majority of drivers' organisations in the online transport industry view precarious work as app-based drivers in a

positive light. These organisations represent the dominant belief among app-based drivers, who embrace the greater flexibility offered by the emerging industry as positive for individual workers, as discussed in Chapter 4. Therefore, such organisations accept the companies' classification of app-based drivers as partners, micro-entrepreneurs, freelancers and self-employed, although some believe that drivers must be given the right to choose whether they would prefer to be classified as partners or employees.

These include PAS, ADO and GARDA, which have protested the terms and conditions of the partnership agreement that bind drivers to companies, as discussed in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, these organisations approve the practice of the precarious work arrangement in the online transport industry as part of the gig economy. Separate from unions or NGOs, as discussed in Chapter 6, they are content to seek legal status for app-based drivers, as shown in the following statements by their leaders:

> We are entrepreneurs, partners, micro-entrepreneurs … [but] we tend to be the victim … We have a partnership agreement with the firms. But it is unclear. That is why the company can treat us badly … That is why we need a regulation. (Interview 46, PAS leader, 16 November 2018)

> Some [drivers] want to retain the classification as partners. But there are also others who think that the firms should be classified as public transport companies. That means the drivers will be classified as employees … I think the drivers can be classified as employees or partners. It does not matter … What is more important is for the state to play its role … The state should implement a regulation that stipulate our relationship with the companies [to make it fairer]. (Interview 19, GARDA leader, 22 August 2018)

Without being directed by a clear anti-precarity agenda, the organisations struggle to articulate what they mean by an equal partnership. For instance, for ADO, an equal partnership means that app-based drivers are given the right to have a say on fares, bonuses and incentive mechanisms, as well as account suspensions. Consequently, the firms should not be given the (sole) right to make decisions on such matters (interview 38, ADO leader, 11 October 2018). Meanwhile, GARDA thinks that in an equal partnership, the drivers should be given the sole rights to determine the fare and the firms should only get the fee for providing the software. GARDA proposes that the firms act as public transport companies that are obliged to pay rental fees to drivers operating their own vehicles (interview 19, GARDA leaders, 22 August 2018).

Thus, these organisations face grater challenges in formulating a clear program of action. Some of them become involved in reactive protests to respond to an outrage that is often unrelated to workplace grievances, rather than aiming towards specific goals. For instance, in August 2019, GARDA laid out a plan to protest the founder of a Malaysian taxi company for labelling drivers as poor amid Gojek's expansion in the country, although it subsequently cancelled the protest (Mufti 2019). In late 2019, GARDA protested a singer who allegedly insulted their occupation (Kumampung 2019). Some organisations have managed to negotiate changes in companies' policies, but these have been of the less substantial kind and/or have affected only the members of a specific association. For instance, Grab agreed to organise a thrice-monthly meeting with a drivers' organisation, where the organisation can express its concerns to management. This resulted in the management adding a new feature in the app, which makes it easier for drivers to navigate the bonus system (Ford and Honan 2019).

In summary, without connections to unions or NGOs, drivers' organisations have found it difficult to solve the collective identity problems. Experiences in the West suggest that links to unions and alt-labour organisations—which specialise in improving workers' job security and welfare—could be beneficial, as these have spearheaded the development of associations and alliances to lobby on behalf of app-based drivers and provide services for them, despite some limitations.

For instance, CoopCycle in France was created as a platform cooperative—digitally enabled online businesses jointly owned and managed by bicycle deliverers (Veronese et al. 2019). It brings together drivers from 12 European countries to help them overcome precariousness by guaranteeing a minimum number of working hours and providing bicycles as well as other equipment. Despite the opportunity offered by platform capitalism, such as CoopCycle, to improve working conditions, it is not particularly lucrative to investors in a highly competitive context. In addition, the economic model is too unstable to attract funding supported by public organisations (Boudes, Compain and Ozman 2019). In the US, the Machinist Union created the Independent Drivers Guild (IDG), which is a workers' association that represents app-based drivers in New York city. The IDG has won some important victories, including securing workers the following: a minimum US$27.86/hour minimum wage; a seat at the table to advocate for better working conditions; and the right to a deactivation of appeal process. Nonetheless, this type of an association 'is not as powerful as an independent union with full collective bargaining rights' (Sachs 2019). The association could also impede the development of a fully independent union (Dubal 2019a).

App-Based Transport Drivers and Electoral Politics

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, precarious work has long been the norm in Indonesia, and working-class and broader social movements have ineffectively voiced the concerns of precarious workers. Here, the workers have established or engaged with self-organised communities in attempts to improve their own welfare and work-related security, as discussed in Chapter 6. The collectivism that has emerged among precarious workers makes them a feasible target of mobilisation by competing political elites (Yasih 2017). The collectives are especially important in electoral democracies, whereby mass mobilisation play a significant role in determining the outcomes of elections. Against such a backdrop, this section explores how drivers' organisations establish connections with competing political candidates as a means of protecting their own interests through involvement in the mechanics of electoral competition. The point would be to influence political parties and actors to support an anti-precarity agenda. However, taken together, this section scrutinises the inability of the drivers' organisations in Indonesia to gain a strategic advantage from their involvement in electoral politics.

Paths to Electoral Politics

One way a drivers' organisation in the online transport service can establish connections with a candidate for political office is through a union that would endorse their candidacy. This method is practised by drivers' organisations that associate themselves with SPDT-FSPMI, the major union that organises app-based drivers in Indonesia. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the organisations include Dewi Sartika, Tiber and KATO. Leaders of the organisations are convinced that drivers in the online transport service need to engage in practical politics as part of the attempt to improve working conditions. In doing so, the drivers need to align themselves with FSPMI, which is the main affiliate of KSPI (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*; Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions). Leaders of drivers' organisations turned to KSPMI/FSPMI because it is known for being the most well-organised of the unions (interview 17, general secretary of KATO, 13 August 2018; interview 34, Tiber leader, 9 October 2018).

During the 2019 presidential election, the leaders of drivers' organisations believed that their best bet to improve working conditions rested with Prabowo Subianto, supported by KSPMI/FSPMI, and who was then the sole challenger to incumbent president Jokowo. Following KSPMI/FSPMI's lead, these organisations championed Prabowo as the only candidate who was willing to sign a political contract that included meeting several workers' demands. Prabowo promised to legalise app-based motorcycle services and protect drivers' rights to unionise

(interview 17, general secretary of KATO, 13 August 2018; interview 34, Tiber leader, 9 October 2018). The organisations' leaders subsequently rallied app-based motorcycle drivers to publicly demonstrate their support for Prabowo. For instance, KATO-affiliated communities and associations expressed their commitment to contribute to Indonesia's Volunteers Home (*Relawan Rumah Indonesia*), a group of presidential election campaign volunteers formed out of FSPMI/KSPI initiatives (Putra 2018). They also joined FSPMI/KSPI's workers' march, which was organised to support Prabowo's registration with the KPU (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*; General Elections Commission) to run in the election (Koran Perdjoeangan 2018).

Another way to connect with competing candidates is through political parties and individual so-called success teams (*tim sukses*). *Tim sukses* refers to groups constructed by a political candidate to organise brokers and mobilise voters prior to elections, usually outside the structure of political parties (Aspinall 2014a, 2014b). They are basically networks of political brokers with varying skills and capacities. They include people 'who possess intimate connections to local communities, networks, and neighborhoods' (Aspinall 2014, 553). In the 2019 presidential election, this group of people, along with political parties, approached actors with skills and capacities to mobilise communities and associations formed by drivers in the online transport service. They actively approached leaders of some of the largest online drivers' associations, including ADO, ALIANDO and GARDA, in attempts to sway voters (Rahadian 2018); therefore paving the way for the association's foray into practical politics.

In Jabodetabek, PPOIR (*Persatuan Pengemudi Online Indonesia Raya*; Association of Online Drivers of Great Indonesia) and Forgab Roda 02 (*Forum Gabungan Roda 02*; Forum of Consolidation of 2 Wheels) emerged as app-based drivers' associations that supported Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election. Being formed only a few months before the election, PPOIR attracted up to 3,000 online *ojek* drivers. PPOIR's engagement in electoral politics was facilitated by the personal network its leader established with PPIR (*Persatuan Purnawirawan Indonesia Raya*; Association of Retired Military Officer of Great Indonesia). PPIR itself is a wing of the Gerindra Party (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*; Great Indonesia Movement Party), led by Prabowo. Likewise, Forgab Roda 02 organised around 5,000 online *ojek* drivers to support Prabowo's candidacy. The organisation's entrance to electoral politics was made possible through the personal network established by its leaders with Partai Berkarya (*Berkarya Party*) (interview 54, leader of PPOIR, 20 December 2018). Led by Tommy Soeharto, who is the youngest son of former president Soeharto, Berkarya Party was among the coalition of parties that supported Prabowo.

We then witnessed drivers' organisations that were aligned with FSPMI/KSPI, along with PPOIR and Forgab Roda 2, declared their support for Prabowo on several occasions (Anggriawan 2018; Gardaindonews 2018). PPOIR and Forgab Roda 2 also defended Prabowo against an allegation of insulting the online *ojek* drivers' profession (Lesmana and Sari 2018). However, the organisations refused to join forces. PPOIR distinguished itself by recruiting online taxi drivers too, whereas Forgab Roda 2 only targeted online *ojek* drivers. PPOIR's leader also refused to join forces with KATO because he disagreed with FSPMI/KSPIs attempts to unionise online *ojek* drivers (interview 54, leader of PPOIR, 20 December 2018). On the whole, the dynamics show the differing ways in which drivers' organisations connected themselves to the presidential race despite supporting the same candidate. The variations indicate the high degree of fragmentation within drivers' organisations amid their attempts to gain a strategic advantage from electoral politics.

In Indonesia, drivers' organisations in the online transport service enter practical politics in a context whereby electoral politics are characterised by the intertwining of 'programmatic' and 'clientelist' politics (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019, 22). Programmatic politics occur when politicians 'offer broad policies that confer benefits to large categories of person', whereas clientelist politics occur when candidates 'offer benefits in the hope and expectation that recipients will reward them with political support' (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019, 2). Amid fragmentation within their movement, drivers' organisations in the online transport service expected improved work conditions in return for their support of Prabowo. The organisations' engagement in electoral politics therefore appeared to be influenced by programmatic politics. However, clientelist politics also influenced them, as the organisations were also approached by political brokers associated with both candidates. For example, members received an offer of 100,000–150,000 IDR (around US$6–9) to attend campaign events (interview 57, leader of ASOII, 8 January 2019).

In short, drivers' organisations attempted to gain a strategic advantage from engagement in electoral politics, both through programmatic and clientelistic politics. Yet, the pervasiveness of clientelistic politics appears to inhibit drivers' associations' achievements in pushing for a robust anti-precarity agenda. In general, most associations are prone to be lured with private gifts and personal donations to their communities. Clientelism also distracts the organisations from efforts to build stronger alliances within civil society—in particular, with the labour movement.

This is the case even as an alliance established by FSPMI/KSPI with Prabowo paved the way for the incorporation of an anti-precarity agenda into Prabowo's campaign platform. Prabowo

signed a political contract that included promises of better protection of drivers' rights in the online transport industry. Thus, the alliance opened opportunities for drivers' organisations—which actually have no connection to unions, including PPOIR and Forgab Roda Dua—to use anti-precarity rhetoric to mobilise online *ojek* drivers to support programmatic politics. The leader of Forgab Roda 2 stated that his organisation decided to support Prabowo's candidacy because 'referring to point 8 of the political contract, Mr. Prabowo will fight for online *ojek* drivers and [the creation] of regulations [to protect their rights]'. Prabowo's campaign team responded to the drivers' concerns by promising 'changes in policies on the online transport service, to leverage online *ojek* drivers' position, so they can have a say in decisions concerning fares' (Erdianto 2018).

Additionally, drivers' organisations in the online transport service were approached by politicians competing for local level positions. Attempting to exercise a programmatic kind of politics, their leaders again believed that they could benefit from engagement with competing candidates by advocating policies that improve working conditions in the online transport service. However, clientelism continued to challenge the programmatic thinking, because drivers also expected other kinds of rewards, including access to side jobs to make extra money and financial assistance from candidates to support the activities of their organisations.

Disconnection from Unions

On the whole, drivers' organisations remained separated from unions in the midst of electoral contests. Major unions, such as FSPMI/KSPI, have been at the forefront of struggles to improve workers' rights and have had much more experience in articulating coherent messages in the demand for improved job security. In addition, FSPMI/KSPI had already proven their worth to app-based transport drivers, for example, by applying pressure for the legal recognition of the online transport service, as mentioned in Chapter 6. However, drivers' associations' weak links to unions compromised their ability to seek out deals with individual candidates for public office, which could have benefited drivers in the online transport service. It should be recalled that the weak link between drivers' associations and union movements, which are struggling to be more effective in the democratic period, is attributed to drivers' tendency to embrace their self-image as autonomous entrepreneurs and to eschew unionism.

Therefore, engagement in electoral politics appears to have had little influence in advancing an anti-precarity agenda, as demonstrated in the following interviews with drivers' organisation leaders:

> Last time I went to Manado, PAS members in the city were approached by [someone who is connected to] a politician … who will run for deputy mayor in 2020. I think it is not a problem if the candidate makes PAS members his promotional device … as long as we get some sort of benefits … For instance, the candidate [who will run for the position of deputy mayor] could use PAS members' cars in his campaign [who will accept some money from 'renting out' their cars] … There could be also some sort of political contract, for the candidate to accommodate online drivers' aspirations. (Interview 56, leader of PAS, 30 December 2018)

> We were approached by some political parties. We could ask as them for some money, as long as we vote for the candidate … [We] refused the offer … [However,] we will soon celebrate our association's anniversary and we need around 26 million IDR [around US$1,586) … [so I asked members of Korwil Jaktim] 'whether they would prefer us to [ask] our members to contribute a certain amount of money, or, we could just engage in politics, so we could get money, and we could have our celebration for free'. I left the decision to them. (Interview 37, leader of Korwil Jaktim, 10 October 2018)

As pointed out in Chapter 6, SPDT-FSPMI has become the main force behind attempts to mobilise app-based drivers to overcome the precarious nature of their work, despite its tenuous links with many drivers' associations. When doing so, SPDT-FSPMI has taken the standpoint that the relationship between the firms and the drivers in the online transport industry should be defined as one between employers and employees. The union argues that the firms and the drivers are bound by an employment relationship, as stipulated by Indonesian Labour Law. The relationship is characterised by three elements, including 'the job [that the worker has to do], the worker's wage, and orders and instructions [that the worker has to carry out]' (Article 1, People's Representative Council and President of the Republic of Indonesia 2003). SPDT-FSPMI has sought to obtain legal protection for app-based drivers using this argument. For the union, the drivers' current classification as partners—which many drivers embrace as part of their own self-image—instead of employees means that they are outside the scope of Indonesian Labour Law.

Thus, SPDT-FSPMI's mobilisation of app-based motorcycle drivers to support Prabowo during the 2019 presidential race can be analysed as part of the union's strategy to contest the expansion of precarious work in the online transport service. SPDT-FSPMI viewed Prabowo's promises to legalise app-based motorcycle services and protect drivers' rights to unionise in the partnership agreement as a way to obtain legal recognition for app-based drivers to bargain

collectively with employers through their unions. App-based motorcycle drivers' support of Prabowo, through SPDT-FSPMI's attempts, can thus be analysed as a strategy to provide app-based drivers with protection and benefits that are available to workers who are engaged in standard employment. The strategy is consistent with the legal action initiated by the FSPMI-affiliated KATO to legalise online *ojek* as a means of public transport, as mentioned in the previous section. FSPMI-affiliated KATO viewed such legalisation as a way to push gig economy firms, such as Gojek and Grab, to improve working conditions for their drivers (interview 7, SPDT-FSPMI unionist, male, 14 June 2018).

The fight for the right of app-enabled drivers as employees and for collective bargaining through unions challenges the core of the gig economy by making a reference to the SER. As discussed in Chapter 2, the SER provides the foundation for the collective bargaining system and labour law regulations in advanced economies of the West and, to some extent, East Asia. Therefore, FSPMI's resistance to precarious work arrangements in the online transport service is not new. Many well-established unions in the advanced economy of the West have taken a similar approach when engaging with gig-based workers across different sectors (Johnston and Land-Kazlauskas 2018). For instance, AFL-CIO,[26] which is the largest union federation in the US, takes the stance that Uber drivers are employees of the firms (Collier, Dubal and Carter 2017). This approach extends strategies that have historically been taken by unions towards app-based drivers—classified by the firms as independent contractors—to avoid financial liabilities associated with organising independent contractors.

In the US, where unions have traditionally been an ally of the Democratic Party, politicians have offered programs that include anti-precarity rhetoric to target workers in the gig economy. For instance, 2016 and 2020 presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders incorporated programs to counter the expansion of precarious work associated with the gig economy in various regulatory proposals that he would have sought to enact if he became president. One of his promises was to end the ability of corporations to misclassify workers as independent contractors (Sanders n.d.). The promise is in alignment with the agenda of some unions, including the AFL-CIO, which work to represent the interests of workers in the app-based transport and delivery service. Although the organised labour movement has been in general decline globally, it appears that politicians would have more incentive to align their campaigns with an anti-precarity agenda were it supported by a broader labour movement.

[26] AFL-CIO was formed in 1955 when the AFL and the CIO, discussed in Chapter 3 merged.

In Europe, various left-wing political parties with traditional links to labour movements have helped to ensure that some degree of attention is devoted to workers' rights in the gig economy (Dyer-Witheford 2020). In France, La France Insoumise (LFI), a small democratic socialist, left-wing populist political party established in 2016, declared that uberisation causes the erosion of workers' rights and contributes to deterioration in conditions of work. LFI's proposal is for self-employed workers to be presumed to be an employee so they can enjoy the rights attached to it. In a similar tone, Jeremy Corbyn, in his position as the leader of the UK's Labour Party (from 2015 to 2020) stated that the gig economy undermines labour rights. His labour government also promised to make it easier for unions to go on strike and extend full employee rights to all workers in the gig economy, such as sick pay, parental leave and protection against unfair dismissal.

Organised Labour Movement Weakness and Struggles Outside Unionism

In Indonesia, FSPMI/KSPI has grown to become one of the largest and most established union federations in the post-authoritarian era. Thus, it has been in a relatively good position to lure candidates that compete in elections to incorporate programs influenced by the anti-precarity agenda in their campaign platform. Here, SPDT-FSPMI's mobilisation of app-based motorcycle drivers in the 2019 presidential race is consistent with its important role in struggles against widespread precarious work in Indonesia. FSPMI/KSPI was among the major unions that acted against the provisions of labour outsourcing in Manpower Law No. 13/2003 (Caraway and Ford 2020), which contributed to the growing casualisation of the formal sector. FSPMI/KSPI also led KAJS, a committee that played a significant role in pressuring the government to legislate social security protection for formal and informal sector workers, as mentioned in Chapter 3 (Industriall Global Union 2011). FSPMI/KSPI was also vocal in protesting the implementation of an omnibus bill on job creation in 2020, which would expand outsourcing and uncontracted work and eliminate social protections for workers, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Faiz, 2020).

SPDT-FSPMI's important role has been to promote new ideas and actions that challenge the expansion of precarious work. These ideas and actions, which are connected to the use of precarious work as a discursive strategy to form political action, have been nurtured through FSPMI/KSPI's engagement in the struggles against the expansion of precarity. It is possible that such new ideas and forms of action, which require historical and theoretical reflections (Barker, Johnson and Lavalette 2001), could yet contribute to the formation of a stronger anti-precarity identity among app-based transport drivers. Therefore, SPDT-FSPMI's connections with drivers' organisations could potentially help the organisations unite their forces around an anti-precarity agenda and address the collective identity problems within their movement. Nevertheless, union strategies and actions to challenge precarious work, which stem from the goal to achieve the SER, appear to be unpopular among app-based drivers themselves due to their immersion in the neoliberal-inspired entrepreneurial identity.

The Indonesian labour union movement's endemic weakness exacerbates the problem, as does the historically tenuous links between the labour movement and broader civil society. Ford and Honan (2019, 544) thus identify some difficulties that arise from SPDT-FSPMI's use of traditional union strategies, which have not succeeded in bringing many drivers in the online transport service to join the union. The union tends to adopt a top–down strategy whereby drivers' communities are targeted merely as intermediaries, which are tasked to pass information to their members. The union also fails to embrace the mutual aid approach that operates in drivers'

communities; thus, the union becomes unattractive for most drivers. In another example, the union refused to support protests and demonstrations organised by some drivers' organisations that were not linked to the union. The refusal contributed to inflaming the union's already troublesome relations with non-unionised drivers' organisations.

Unions also struggle to gain a strategic advantage from their involvement in electoral politics because the contemporary political space has been dominated by non-program-oriented political parties that are typically embedded within political–business alliances. Here, KSPI/FSPMI made the problematic decision to support Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election. A former military general under the authoritarian government, Prabowo has been accused of committing many human rights abuses; thus, he has a reputation that contradicts the union movement's ideals. Because Prabowo lost the election, whether his commitment to his labour constituency was genuine cannot be ascertained. Even if Prabowo had won, it is unclear whether FSPMI/KSPI could pressure him to keep his promises given FSPMI/KSPI's failures in the past. For instance, after signing a political contract with a coalition of unions, including FSPMI/KSPMI, Anies Baswedan, the winner of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, failed to deliver on his promise to increase wages above those mandated by recent government regulations (Lane 2019).

Meanwhile, drivers' organisations are challenged by weak institutional capacity and intense fragmentation. Therefore, it is difficult for them to gain an advantage from electoral politics, even when they align themselves with a well-established union, such as KSMPI/FSPMI. In any case, KSMPI/FSPMI would prioritise issues relevant for labourers in the industrial sector, which is its traditional (and largest) base. After the 2019 election, SPDT-FSPMI continued to attempt to improve the rate of unionisation among online *ojek* drivers. SPDT-FSPMI, together with KATO, also planned to push Anies to make online *ojek* drivers eligible for the Jakarta Workers' Card (*Kartu Pekerja Jakarta*), which provides various benefits for workers whose salaries are no more than 10% above the provincial minimum wage. However, KSMPI/FSPMI has bigger issues to address—for instance, challenging the implementation of the omnibus bill on job creation, which is expected to accelerate the expansion of precarious work. Therefore, the improvement of online *ojek* drivers' working conditions would be low on KSMPI/FSPMI's list of priorities (interview 58, general secretary of KATO, 14 January 2020).

For drivers' organisations that eschew unionism, such as PPOIR and Forgab Roda 2, their ability to mobilise app-based drivers to support candidates who promise to improve workers' rights in the online transport service has provided opportunities to gain an advantage from electoral

politics. It has become increasingly common for interest groups that represent the working class and the poor, including app-based drivers, to negotiate with candidates, who compete in elections in post-authoritarian Indonesia, to secure political contracts to gain tangible benefits in return for the groups' support. Savirani and Aspinall (2018) argue that the links with competing candidates and their supporters through political contracts are usually ad hoc and pragmatic. However, in the negotiation process, interest groups often make their demands as practical as possible to ensure their achievability, thus sacrificing the push for fundamental reforms. Moreover, even with the reduced demands, such deals are vulnerable to abrogation.

The effectiveness of the interest groups in pressuring for the realisation of the political contracts also depends on the capacity for mobilisation (Savirani and Aspinall 2018). Organisations such as PPOIR and Forgab Roda 2 did not rely on traditional union-organising modes; therefore, they managed to attract more online *ojek* drivers than organisations connected to SPDT-FSPMI. However, plagued by institutional weakness and chronic fragmentation as much as other organisations, PPOIR and Forgab Roda 2 have failed to reorganise their forces to gain the optimal advantage from other political moments, such as local elections, after Prabowo lost to Jokowi in the 2019 presidential election. PPOIR ceased to operate because its leaders believed that Prabowo's defeat meant that they had lost the chance to push for substantial reform in the online transport service (interview 66, leader of PPOIR, 9 January 2020). Forgab Roda 2 failed to further capitalise on connections with Prabowo, even as the latter made peace with Jokowi and subsequently entered his cabinet as Minister of Defense, thereby ensuring that Gerindra joined the political bloc supporting the president. The organisations appeared to gain only small amounts of money, which were given to attract drivers to show up at campaign events, as a reward for their mobilising behind Prabowo.

Although drivers' organisations (e.g. Dewi Sartika, Tiber and KATO) that are affiliated with SPDT-FSPMI can better articulate their demands around an anti-precarity agenda, their ability to mobilise app-based drivers during electoral contests is limited by the drivers' misgivings about trade union-organising modes. Therefore, their capacity to benefit from mobilising behind a nationally renowned candidate, such as Prabowo, is also quite limited. In view of this, Amin (2012) shows how *ojek* drivers have been approached by competing candidates running in local elections. The drivers have often played roles as organisers of public rallies and, more crucially, as contributors of votes. Some candidates successfully mobilised the drivers and won positions at the local level of government. Yet, again, the drivers could only obtain small amounts of money from the competing candidates in return for their support—especially for boosting

attendance at campaign events. At best, they have received funds to renovate their ramshackle shelters or basecamps.

Given the wide gulf between them and the organised labour movement, most drivers' organisations in the online transport industry continue to normalise precarious work arrangements rather than challenge them in any fundamental sense. Their leaders find it difficult to formulate coherent ideas and actions that can challenge the expansion of precarious work. They have thought small. As pointed out earlier, the leader of Korwil Jaktim, for example, considered accepting money from competing elites just to cover the cost of the organisation's anniversary celebration (interview 37, leader of Korwil Jaktim, 10 October 2018). Leaders of PAS simply view local elections as little more than a period when online taxi drivers can earn an extra income by renting out their cars for campaign purposes (interview 56, leader of PAS, 30 December 2018).

Indonesia's circumstances contrast with those in countries where some political parties have developed an interest in showing some support for anti-precarity movements. In the US, when Joe Biden became the Democratic Party's nominee for the 2020 presidential election, he promised to 'ensure workers in the "gig economy" and beyond receive the legal benefits and protections they deserve' (Biden 2021). He proposed to 'establish a federal standard modelled on the ABC test [stipulated in the aforementioned AB5, enacted in California] for all labour, employment, and tax laws'. Biden's regulatory proposal would force gig economy companies to classify workers as employees. This would help unions to attract more members amid the expansion of the gig economy, which has added challenges to workers' unionisation. However, Biden's subsequent victory did not necessarily mean a victory for gig economy workers, as unions may lack the power to push for the delivery of his campaign promises. Even if the AB5 were to be replicated at the federal level, its enforcement would be challenged by a lengthy legal battle, as was the case in California.

In another example, this time from the UK, a proposal to improve working conditions in the gig economy was surprisingly initiated by the Conservative Party government, which had outpolled Labour among working-class voters in the 2017 general election. Under the premiership of Theresa May, the Taylor Review, concerning the changing labour market and the protection of workers' rights, was published in 2017. The review proposed several recommendations to improve conditions of work in the gig economy and reflected May's attempt to convince voters that she would keep her promise of 'being a friend' of workers (Thompson 2019, 106–107). Indeed, the report's recommendations appeared to be business-friendly and produced very few

changes in employment regulations in the gig economy (Spencer 2017). Yet, the Taylor Review could be said to have further helped to mainstream debates about precarious work in Britain. Indonesian political parties have thus far felt no need to even pay lip service to such debates.

Summary

The chapter has explored how drivers' organisations face difficulties in resolving collective identity problems to unite their movement around a coherent anti-precarity agenda. The difficulties contribute to ineffectiveness in pressing demands for regulatory measures to improve app-based drivers' work-related security. App-based drivers' interests, which are represented by these organisations, tend to be subordinated to those of the taxi cartels, whose business is threatened by the expansion of the online transport service. The interests of app-based drivers are also subordinated to politico-business elites in the Jokowi government, whose interests are entangled with app-based transport companies. Under such circumstances, app-based transport drivers can still, to some degree, push for the incorporation of their interests in regulations on the online transport service. However, they can do so only when their interests intersect with those of business and state actors.

Without the capability to resolve collective identity problems, which are required to formulate a concerted anti-precarity agenda, it is also difficult for app-based transport drivers to gain meaningful benefits from their engagement in electoral politics. They have become an easy target of mobilisation by competing political elites, but they are unable to use the opportunity of engaging in practical politics to push for reforms. The drivers' difficulties in resolving collective identity problems influence the different ways in which they connect to competing politicians—through unions and political parties/brokers. Drivers' organisations also lack the coherence to join forces to support the same candidates in electoral politics. Organisations without connections to unions find it difficult to formulate policy recommendations in return for their support of competing elites, thus gaining only minor material rewards. Those with direct or indirect connections to unions have a greater chance to engage in programmatic forms of politics in return for their support of political elites. Yet they do not appeal to large numbers of drivers who see themselves as autonomous entrepreneurs.

Consequently, drivers' organisations find it challenging to sustain solidarity among a fragmented workforce in the online transport service. The challenges indicate the effects of the instilment of the neoliberal entrepreneurial identity through processes that have been discussed in the previous chapters on undermining workers' attempts at collective organisation. The challenges

are particularly difficult in the Indonesian context, whereby unions, which have been shown to spearhead most anti-precarity struggles globally, have been historically weak. The absence of organic links between unions and broader society movements also adds to the challenge of uniting app-based transport workers around a shared identity, which is influenced by the goal to challenge the precarious nature of their employment.

The discussion in this chapter has centred around the larger themes of collective identity formation, policymaking processes and electoral politics. It has connected workers' workplace-based politics, in the online transport service, as part of the gig economy, to the broader context in which it is embedded. By doing so, this chapter demonstrates the effect of workers' inability to challenge the instilment of the entrepreneurial identity, collectively and effectively, on their bargaining power in relation to business and state institutions. It illuminates nuances in different attempts to organise precarious workers to challenge the structural underpinnings of their own precarity, while supporting the argument that these workers are not entirely disorganised (Lazar and Sanchez 2019).

Chapter 8:

Conclusion

The gig economy - the focus of this study - has been analysed here as the new frontier of precarious work. In the online transport and delivery industry (as part of the broader gig economy), workers are classified as partners and/or individual contractors. Therefore, they have no or very limited access to economic and social benefits associated with SER. Meanwhile, the delivery and supervision of work performance through digital apps make employer-employee relationships rather ambiguous. It is clear that the growth of the online transport and delivery industry in Indonesia follows a recent trend of the expansion of new forms of precarious work, amid economic globalisation since the 1970s. Kalleberg (2018, 197), attributes such transformation in the world of work, which include 'the expansion of digital platforms creating short-term and poorly protected jobs (the 'Uberization of the economy')' to the combination of an array of forces, including 'globalization', 'technological changes' (especially those related to information and technology), 'the financialization of firms' organization of work' and 'weak workers power' (Kalleberg 2018, 197).

In contrast to many prominent studies guided by the premise that the expansion of precarious work—associated with the neoliberal revolution—produces a general consciousness of relative deprivation among workers (Standing 2011; Hsiao, Kalleberg and Hewison 2015b; Herod and Lambert 2016; Kalleberg 2018), this study has pointed to complexities in workers' subjectivity and political inclinations. To deal with these complexities, the approach developed in this study - equipped with theoretical concerns that combine insights from the work of Foucault as well as Resnick and Wolff - pays attention to the mutually reinforcing relationship between the material and the ideological effects of neoliberalism. The approach allows for the presentation of a dynamic picture of precarious workers' subjective experiences and their political actions. It guides the sort of analysis that links the dynamics within identity formation to specific political and economic factors. The analysis also connects the emergence of new forms of precarity to the broader trajectory of industrialisation and the strength of union and broader social movements across societies.

The study has shed light on the specific ways in which entrepreneurial identity is constituted, and the opportunities that are available for workers to challenge its effects. While paying attention to the specifics of the case study in Indonesia, this study has also been imbued with comparative concerns to illuminate the trajectory of the new precarity. It has taken great care to note the differences in the experiences of precarity in the newly industrialising economies of

South-East Asia, and in the advanced industrialised economies of the West (and East Asia). As explored in Chapter 2, the discursive challenge to precarity by broader societal movements, including in civil amorphous and formal civic organisation–led movements, has been more likely to emerge in the already-industrialised economies. In newly industrialising economies, unions, which have tended to have a weaker link with broader societal movements, have become the main force challenging the normalisation of precarious work.

Those specific political and economic processes—related to the trajectory of industrialisation in Indonesia—have created circumstances that constrict the formation of a shared identity and the predisposition of workers to organise, bargain collectively and take industrial action. A range of political and economic factors have weakened resistance to the new precarity, which has expanded partly through the proliferation of the gig economy. This study has found that obstacles include the relative weakness of organised labour and broader societal movements as a condition that predates the expansion of newer forms of precarity. These new forms of precarious work, which had initially emerged in the formal sector of the economy amid the process of rapid industrialisation, have come to be perceived as normal. This has been more so the case as the informal sector has remained pervasive in a range of urban and peri-urban settings. Access to social welfare systems has remained difficult for the vast majority of workers in Indonesia, even after welfare schemes were hatched in response to the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis and after the advent of the Jokowi presidency.

Furthermore, the findings of this study add to our understanding of the implications of particular forms of precarity, associated with app-based transport work (compared to that associated of other forms of precarious labour), on workers' individual and collective identities in the Indonesian context. The insights allow us to reflect on some problems for future research, grounded on the premise that precarious work will be even more pervasive in the future, especially amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which has severely impacted the world of work. In Indonesia, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in significant job and income losses. The trends are global, as the ILO (2020) reports that, as of September 2020, mandatory or recommended workplace closures had affected 94% of the global workforce. In addition, millions of workers have experienced layoffs and reductions in their working hours (ILO 2020).

On top of that, the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the pre-existing fragilities of the global labour market and deep-seated inequalities in societies and economies. As asserted by the ILO director general, Guy Ryder, 'the crisis has uncovered the huge decent work deficits that still

prevail in 2020 and shown how vulnerable millions of working people are when a crisis hits' (Department of Global Communications 2020). Hence, the economic consequences of the pandemic have not been experienced equally. Among those most affected by the pandemic are precarious workers in the gig economy, who have had limited protection, while they have often been unable to follow the social distancing protocol, as mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation.

On Workers' Identity and Politics

The new challenges posed by the pandemic are clearly relevant to the sort of questions underpinning this study (see Chapter 1). It has become more pertinent to ponder the degree to which workers would continue to celebrate individual entrepreneurialism as a way of life; or whether they would shift to a more shared identity as a means of resisting the effects of increasing precarity, now amplified by the pandemic. However, the newer challenges brought about by the pandemic could come to underline how the development of new forms of collective organisation among workers, specifically in the case of Indonesia, might continue to be quite constrained. Surely, a fair assessment of gig workers' political inclinations in a time of Covid-19 can only be made by reflecting on how forms of precarity associated with the online transport and delivery services have impacted workers' individual and collective identities.

In Indonesia, as elsewhere, the Covid-19 outbreak has led to substantial loss of earnings among app-based transport workers. LD FEB UI (Lembaga Demografi Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Indonesia; the *Demography Institute* at the Faculty of Economics and Business, *Universitas Indonesia),* finds that 63% of drivers reported a significant loss in their income (LD FEB UI 2020). The limited organisational progress based on solidarity that developed among drivers previously (see Chapter 6 and 7) have shaped their collective responses to the crisis. In Jakarta, for instance, GARDA (an organisation of online *ojek* drivers mentioned in Chapters 6 and 7), protested the banning of online *ojek* drivers from carrying passengers, after the implementation of the first phase of the strict PSBB (*Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar*; large-scale social restrictions), from 10 April to 4 June 2020 (Adjie 2020). GARDA demanded that the government provide compensation for each online *ojek* drivers' projected loss of income during the period and also called for Gojek and Grab to reduce their cut of the drivers' earnings.

Worker protests against unsafe working conditions amid the pandemic have occurred in many countries. Precarious workers in the gig economy have participated in such protests too. Some observers have come to conclude that the protests will intensify pressures for reform within the

gig economy (Hlongwa 2020). These political and workplace struggles across the world are a continuation of those that have taken place because of the expansion of precarity. However, the expectation that these struggles will be more successful in the context of the pandemic needs to be evaluated against existing social circumstances. Such circumstances have been evaluated in the case of Indonesia studied here, through an investigation of new forms of collective organisation in online transport services. These workers' struggles have been analysed in connection with the formation of the neoliberal entrepreneurial identity, which helps to normalise new forms of precarious work and self-disciplining that align workers' personal goals with those of corporate entities (see Chapter 4).

Like their counterparts elsewhere, gig economy companies in Indonesia have had to respond to the global pandemic. Gojek and Grab have established initiatives to support drivers who have to deal with the resulting new economic pressures (Eloksari 2020; Samboh 2020a). Funding for these initiatives comes from these companies' senior management, donating a percentage of their salary, and from employees' voluntary donations. In addition, the Indonesian government has provided an array of support schemes for drivers. Online *ojek* drivers are grouped as informal workers who are most affected by the pandemic, and are thus entitled to government social assistance. It has been reported that Jokowi himself personally handed out staple food packages to online *ojek* drivers in Jakarta at the outset of the outbreak. Pertamina, the state-owned oil and gas company mentioned in Chapter 3, also arranged a 50% cashback program for online *ojek* drivers who purchased non-subsidised fuel through its apps (Susanty 2020).

Online *ojek* drivers in Jakarta have also been given special dispensation to transport passengers during the PSBB (Mufti 2020). The Transportation Ministry issued Regulation No. 18/2020, which allows drivers to transport passengers if they comply with health protocols. This regulation contradicts Regulation No. 9/2020 issued by the Ministry of Health as well as Jakarta Gubernatorial Regulation No. 33/2020, which allows drivers to transport goods but not passengers, undermining large-scale restrictions on two-wheel vehicle services. The Transportation Ministry finally announced that it would leave the decision to allow or ban two-wheel vehicle services to regional leaders (Mariska 2020). However, in early June, the Jakarta governor announced that online *ojek* drivers could transport passengers during the transition to eased restrictions, from 5 June to 10 September 2020 (The Jakarta Post 2020). Online *ojek* drivers were also allowed to transport passengers during the second phase of the strict PSBB, from 14 September 2020 to 11 October 2020 (TRIBUNnews 2020).

Again, such developments must be viewed in relation to the broader context as mapped out in this study. Companies and government responses to the global pandemic can be easily interpreted as resulting from the pressure generated by driver associations, such as GARDA and others (see Chapters 6 and 7). The findings of this study, however, demonstrate the inability of drivers in online transport services to unite under a shared identity and consolidate their forces to support a coherent anti-precarity agenda. Thus, app-based transport drivers can gain advantages from the opportunity presented by the pandemic only when their interests intersect with those of the state and businesses. Companies obviously have an interest in keeping their businesses running, and therefore need to ensure that workers do not abandon the industry in droves. Likewise, the government's support must be seen in the light of existing connections with influential politico-business elites who have benefited from the expansion of the gig economy (as discussed in Chapter 7).

On a Future Research Agenda

On a broader scale, the crisis brought by the Covid-19 pandemic means that trends like the growing casualisation of the formal sector (see Chapter 3), the rise of the gig economy, flexible labour, and self-employment will continue relatively unabated (Ravenelle, Kowalski and Janko 2021). It is important to understand the impact of this latest trend in the world of work to workers' identity and politics in Indonesia, considering the role of the gig economy there, in institutionalising earlier forms of precarious work arrangements (in the informal sector), so that they are deployed extensively in the formal sector (see Chapter 4). At the same time, the weakness of labour and broader society movements continues to shape the struggles of sections of precarious workers in Indonesia's urban economy. The weakness places limits on forms of resistance that can become manifest in online transport and delivery services.

The enactment of an omnibus bill on job creation at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic (see Chapter 3), surely guarantees the continuation of trends toward the growing casualisation of the workforce. Without being influenced by an overt anti-precarity agenda, drivers in the online transport and delivery services can do very little to halt the progress of the broader labour market 'reforms' that increase work precarity. GARDA for instance, chose to support the enactment of the bill (Kencana 2020), rather than combat it, notwithstanding its effect on precarious employment. This support for the bill was expressed after the government provided online *ojek* drivers with assistance in dealing with losses suffered due to the pandemic. This indicates driver organisations' tendency to side with the state when their short-term goals are met. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the political mobilisation of these drivers results mostly

in short-term gains, because the drivers have not been able to leverage their bargaining power vis-à-vis the companies and the state.

All in all, GARDA and other drivers' organisations in Indonesia can do very little to push for more fundamental reform in the gig economy. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, although driver organisations in advanced economies in the West operate in a difficult situation, they have been more able to mount a challenge against increasing precarity. In the US, for instance, the pandemic prompted members of Rideshare Drivers United (an organisation of app-based transport drivers mentioned in Chapter 7) to demand the immediate enforcement of the AB5 and reallocation of companies' anti-AB5 lobbying dollars to provide workers with relief from the hardships associated with Covid-19 (Burns 2020). This indicates the influence of an anti-precarity agenda on gig economy workers' Covid-19 politics, which stands in contrast to the position taken by Indonesian organisations, like GARDA, which support the omnibus bill on job creation in spite of its longer-term ramifications. GARDA also takes the opposite position from organisations connected to well-established unions such as KSPMI/FSPMI, which reject the implementation of the bill, thus further demonstrating fragmentation among drivers' self-organising vehicles.

The Covid-19 politics of gig economy workers in Indonesia indicate that they are not well-equipped to gain strategic advantage from opportunities that may be presented by the current crisis, which again relates to workers' failure to conceptualise a challenge to the normalisation of precarity. Despite the emergence of individualised forms of resistance (see Chapter 5) and the vibrancy of their street-level politics (see Chapter 6), the opportunities for workers to push for reforms including substantial concessions—from state and capital—to overcome the conditions associated with the new precarity thus remain limited. Again, while this predicament is by no means specific to Indonesia, the struggle to challenge the neoliberal identity of autonomous entrepreneurship—espoused though work practices in the gig economy—is tougher in a context where a working-class identity has never been truly established and labourism has been absent from the everyday life of ordinary citizens.

The life-long experience of living under precarity and the lack of effective social and political representations - in the forms of union, association, or community, through which workers could express their aspirations - may cause anger and frustration among many workers. But it has been suggested that the political sensibilities of urban precarious workers are often shaped by the sort of social bonds established to deal with labour-related insecurities (see Yasih 2017). These social bonds can be strengthened by political languages associated with nationalism,

ethnicity or religious identity, and can be cultivated through violent groups, such as paramilitary and vigilante organisations. It is not a surprise, therefore, to see some workers being attracted to populist demagogues, utilising ethnic and religious identity to fan the flames of division (see Mudhoffir 2017).

Future research, therefore, could be directed towards investigating the way urban precarious workers articulate contemporary social problems and their solutions, especially amid the Covid-19 pandemic that has accentuated issues of inequality and precarity. The case of the online transport and delivery service is important because it provides an example of the expansion of new forms of precarious work on a large scale, which allows for new opportunities for collective organisations and actions. However, as demonstrated in this study, workers' immersion in entrepreneurial identity means that they are continually hindered from articulating a precarity-based discourse in their struggles for improved living and working conditions. Given these circumstances, it will be increasingly crucial to explore the evolving political sensibilities of these workers, for example, in relation to appeals based on populist rhetoric. The ineffective self-organisation attempts of large numbers of precarious workers may provide fertile ground for an assortment of populists who have already entered the Indonesian political stage (Hadiz 2014).

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