



Multidimensionale Risks in the XXI Century

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Abstract

Institutionally induced uncertainty: understanding Jakarta underclass' turn to individualistic survival strategies

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Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, is ranked as the world's 30th megacity with 10.7 million people living in the city in 2019. The surrounding metropolitan regions i.e. Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi (*Jabodetabek*) or Greater Jakarta are inhabited by nearly 20 million people, making Jakarta one of the largest megacities in Asia. As in many other urban settings in the Global South, a chaotic bricolage of uncertainty and insecurity constitutes the city residents' everyday life. It is reflected in Jakarta's crowded settlements, traffic congestion, entangled governmental and quasi-governance systems, informality, inequality and complex relations between these. In the context where the lines between the government, the governed, the public and the private are blurred, any of these actors and spheres can produce uncertainty. However, with the legal and economic power held by institutions such as government or corporate, these institutions produce uncertainty through events and regulations they institute. These events disrupt people's expectations of the future at times. As a result, their future becomes less predictable and less known. Therefore, they are forced to rely on their own individual efforts to manage everyday risks and uncertainties. Finding own ways to keep their safety and livelihood in the absence of collective action under occupation-based organisations seem to be the only available option. Employing uncertainty as a perspective, this paper maintains that city's inhabitants perceive institutions as producers of uncertainty, in contradiction with institutions' ideal purpose i.e. to reduce uncertainty (Beckert, 1996). For those at the low socioeconomic group whom lacking resources, the responses might act as their survival strategies. The empirical data in this paper is obtained from the author's doctoral research project in metropolitan Jakarta and West Java where she interviewed thirty respondents who work in formal, informal and those in-between, in mid-2018.

Keywords: *uncertainty, insecurity, institutions, megacity, Indonesia*

Remarks:

The author expresses her interest to be considered for receiving scholarships to attend the conference, as she is a Jakarta-based researcher in a non-governmental organization which focus is on social and welfare policy. This paper might inform the conference regarding uncertainty for the inhabitants of megacity from the Global South perspective. The author is currently undertaking her PhD and she expects her thesis will help public and policymakers to understand how everyday life risks and uncertainties might shape workers' decision to insure (or not) under Indonesian national social security system. While the author is a scholarship recipient of DFAT's (Department of Foreign and Trade) Australia Awards, the scheme does not cover any costs for PhD student recipients to attend academic conference overseas.