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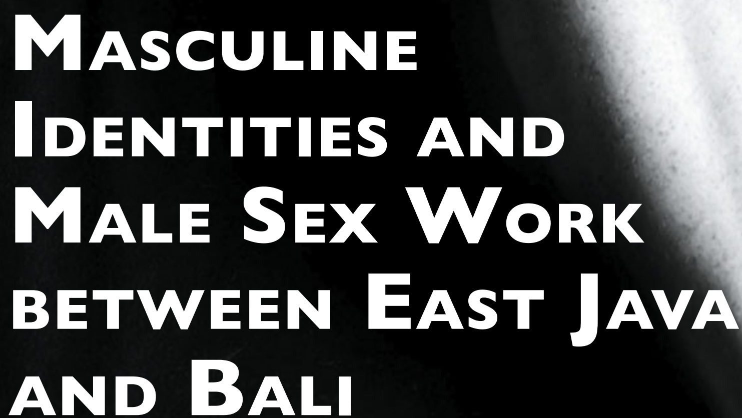
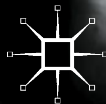


Masculine Identities and Male Sex Work between East Java and Bali

An Ethnography of Youth, Bodies, and Violence

Matteo Carlo Alcano



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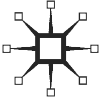

MASCULINE IDENTITIES AND MALE SEX WORK BETWEEN EAST JAVA AND BALI
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To Sirio, and to my family

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Introduction

The present work examines the construction of masculine identities in the context of migration between the city of Surabaya, East Java, and the region of South Bali. It addresses the issues of growth and work among underemployed East Javanese young men who seek membership in street gangs of male sex workers in South Bali. I try to explore how young men attempt to draw together the necessary social and material resources to enter adult life, how they engage in collective practices, and make use of violence.

Object and Themes

Youth Transitions and the Construction of Masculine Identities

Youth transitions and growth are a topic of hot debate among anthropologists and youth researchers. A large number of scholars (e.g., Dwyer and Wyn 2001; Skelton 2002) have questioned whether it is realistically possible to even talk about transitions as a coherent process. First, the demographic category of youth can extend up to the age of 35 years (Arnett 2004). Second, the historically linear nature of youth transitions is now claimed to be increasingly fragmented (Furlong and Cartmel 1997), a "highly unstructured and unsettled period" (Arnett 2006: 113).

Similar arguments have been made by recent works about youth in Indonesia (see, e.g., Nilan 2010; Naafs and White 2012) that have examined the very idea of "transition." First, and according to these studies, the boundaries of the category

of "youth" in Indonesia have been prolonged by a great margin, and it has become difficult to establish the markers that define the passage from youth to adulthood. The new *Law of Youth* in Indonesia indeed defines "youth" (*pemuda*) as "Indonesian citizens who are entering an important period of growth and development and are aged between 16 and 30 years" (Uu no 40/2009, article 1.1., quoted in Naafs and White 2012: 5), and it thereby seems to include a very heterogeneous group of individuals. Second, and consequently, these studies insist on the necessity of moving away from the examination of youth as a period of transition toward the conceptualization of youth as a life phase in its own right, and approaching the study of young people in their own right and from their own perspectives. In other words, while the political and social construction of youth tends to see it as the transition from child to adult, from education to employment, from family of origin to family of destination, these studies claim that it is important to "understand that young people do not necessarily see themselves in this way, or not only in this way" and that they are "busy developing cultures and identities in their own right, that is, trying to be successful in the eyes of their peers as youth, rather than trying to prepare themselves to be successful adults" (Naafs and White 2012: 4).

Indonesian youth studies have also followed a general pattern and trend of the broader field of youth studies: when approaching male youth, they have tended to develop a specific interest in subcultural behavior and lifestyles (e.g., Nilan 2011). Particularly, they have described and analyzed some of the forms of counterhegemonic masculine identities, the ways young men explore alternative subject positions and break away from a patriarchal notion of masculinity. These studies have theorized a progressive weakening of the notion of traditional masculine identity centered around the figure of the steady provider who works outside the home and is able to draw together the necessary resources to provide for himself and his family.

My attempt here is to argue for the importance of a relational approach, seeing male Indonesian youth in terms of the dynamics of their relationship with others (adults) in large structures of social reproduction (I follow here Naafs and White 2012: 4; Alanen 2001). Evidence seems to suggest that an understanding of "youth as transition" and an interpretation of "youth as a life phase in itself" are not incompatible. Among East Javanese men from the low-income neighborhood of *kampung* Malang in Surabaya, young men's own perception of youth seems to link the transition from "child" (*anak*) to "youth" (*remaja*, *pemuda*) to the ability to exercise judgment from right and wrong, and the transition from youth to "adult" (*dewasa*) with economic independence from the generation of parents (Naafs and White 2012: 5). Among young men in this area, however, work (especially work in the informal sector) remains a primary signifier of adulthood altogether, while people are simultaneously busy "developing a culture of their own" and most notably getting involved with youth street gangs. In other terms, there is a local cultural legacy based on work, and there are moments of collective experimentation as well. These two aspects of life seem to go hand in hand.

Work and Youth Gangs

While the official unemployment rate in Indonesia fell in 2009–2010, for young workers aged 15–25 there was an increase in unemployment (Baird and Wihardja 2010, quoted in Nilan et al. 2011: 710). The 2003 *Manpower Law* gave employers the right to offer short-term contracts, outsource some production activities, and employ more than one person in the same job. Essentially, not many new full-time jobs were created during the expansion period. All labor sectors remained more or less stable. This meant that there were relatively fewer vacancies for young Indonesians entering the labor market for the first time. That trend has not shifted much despite continued economic growth because

older workers are not readily leaving the workforce. These statistics and observations are nevertheless partial, as most work activities in Indonesia are conducted without formal contracts and in the informal sector. Overall, the transition to work in the first decade of the new millennium has been, and remains, a rather fractured and precarious journey for young Indonesians (Nilan et al. 2011: 711).

Young people without jobs sought to work in the extensive urban informal sector. This sector in Indonesia covers a wide range of economic and income-generating activities that fall outside of formal government regulation and taxation, including casual jobs, small-scale entrepreneurial activity, and home industry. It also includes the black market and the illegal market. It is mostly territorially based, operating in open spaces, from residences and backyards (Wilson 2010: 113–115). With the high dependence of formal sector employment upon global markets, the informal sector has expanded particularly during times of global economic downturn such as the Asian financial crisis of 1997. As such, it has provided a safety net against abject poverty in the absence of extensive functioning social welfare services in Indonesia (Wilson 2010: 114).

In Surabaya, the underemployment of youths among the urban poor is specifically tied to the recent requalification of the urban landscape and the progressive destruction of the informal networks that once sustained and facilitated the circulation of work opportunities in the urban informal sector among men. Between 1998 and 2008, Surabaya witnessed a decade of profound transformations, as the municipal government strove to achieve order and legibility to complement the needs of the emergent middle class. This process involved the clearance of the informal economy from the streets, and the progressive elimination of any sign of disorder from the public space. Most men in low-income or poor city neighborhoods, such as *kampung* Malang, where I conducted research, work (or used to work) as small-scale traders, street vendors, painters, scrap pickers, porters, and

becak (pedicab) drivers. They were also considerably involved in underground or illegitimate activities, such as selling local spirits, organizing lottery games, shoplifting, and thieving. Job opportunities relied heavily on informal networks and usually became available by word of mouth, when men gathered at food stalls.

Adolescents who were quickly approaching the world of the informal economy were particularly affected by these urban political and economic changes, as they began to struggle to find appropriate sites for aggregation and work. Unemployment and concerns about the future and the absence of a recognized social status pushed a growing proportion of these youngsters to create a network of companions and to develop new forms of support, encouragement, pride, and identity. Youth street gangs are perhaps the most manifest form of male aggregation among youth who wish to find employment in the informal sector but feel socially disconnected from the new urban landscape of job opportunities. My aim is to investigate these youth formations and the ways they connect to the territory and the idea of work, their function as social lubricants, and the ways they allow young people to enter the world of the informal economy and prepare them to make the transition to adulthood. While I do discard the idea that these gangs might only represent a life phase in the economy of young people's lives, I will show how they evolve into more sophisticated forms of organizations in the context of internal migration to South Bali, and therefore have profound effects on the lives of young Indonesian men and on the ways they conceive their role as adults within society at large.

Migration and Male Sex Work

In the city neighborhood of *kampung* Malang, where I carried out my fieldwork research, as in several other parts of Indonesia, successful masculine identities relate closely to not only success in becoming financially independent and

providing for the family but also the importance of migration (*merantau*), as a means of garnering experience and wealth.

In this particular area of East Java, migration is often associated with sex work, as youths, both female and male, travel from the city of Surabaya to the nearby tourist areas of South Bali and seek to make a living by entering the world of sex work. I do not suggest that all East Javanese migrants or all young migrants from the Surabaya region become prostitutes; however, there seems to be a corridor of internal migration linking young underemployed youth from East Java and, Surabaya in particular, to the world of sex work in South Bali. This phenomenon is particularly visible and anthropologically relevant between the neighborhood of *kampung* Malang and South Bali, and that makes it worthy of in-depth analysis.

I focus on the life experiences of young men who make the transition from youth street gangs in Surabaya to more formalized gangs of male sex workers that operate in South Bali. My hypothesis is that in the context of migration these youth formations evolve and acquire a specific economic connotation and a material drive that contribute to fostering a sense of a shared identity among its members.

The form of male sex work that I have studied is centered around two main exigencies and practices: the need to become a part of one of the numerous streets gangs of male sex workers that populate the area of South Bali in order to find work and accumulate capital, and a particular manipulation of the person's heterosexual body in order to be able to perform forms of compensated sexual activities with older foreign men. I will describe male sex work among East Javanese migrants as a form of collective entrepreneurship that originates and is made possible in a context of sex tourism and that makes an extensive use of violent practices and, in turn, generates violence and street warfare. These elements are specific to male sex work in South Bali and open up a new field of research in Indonesia (and perhaps Southeast Asia more generally), where the study of male sex workers

has long been neglected and no work on the subject has been produced so far (as demonstrated by Law, 2000; Minichello et al. 2013; Scott et al. 2014).

The research I conducted proved problematic at times. I based my work on participant observation and lived with a particular gang of sex workers named Villa Mangga, as I will describe in detail in chapter 3. From a certain point of view, I joined the gang and its activities. I was never properly initiated, but I agreed to observe their code of honor and offered my loyalty to the gang. I was accepted as part of the group and allowed to live in their home. While many understood my position as a young researcher, others never ceased to suspect I was just a young homosexual looking for way into prostitution. At times I found myself in the middle of dangerous situations, witnessed illegal activities, and looked at violent practices from a close distance. My role implied that I rapidly familiarized myself with the various gang codes and behavior patterns. As such, it provided me with an incredible research opportunity. It allowed me extensive access to gang members, and led to open conversations that were not clouded by suspect and fear. I was able to hear from gang members what it was that had motivated them to move from Surabaya to Bali and how they perceived themselves, as well as obtain extensive details about their activities.

In his seminal study of boxing, Loïc Waquant (2004) suggests that

> there is nothing better than initiatory immersion and even moral and sensual conversion to the cosmos under investigation, because this makes it possible for the social scientist to appropriate in and through practice the cognitive, aesthetic, ethical and conative schemata that those who inhabit that cosmos engage in their every day deeds. (Wacquant 2004: vii–viii)

My time at Villa Mangga was analogous to this "carnal sociology" (Wacquant 2004) because becoming a part of the gang by adopting certain behavior patterns allowed me to

understand much more viscerally particular aspects of gang life, the type of personal and collective commitment and investment of the gang members, and the ultimate objectives of their work activity.

At the same time, however, my decision to ask to "become one of them" was not prompted merely by research considerations, but also because I felt it to be a valid personal "survival" strategy in a context of gang warfare and in what I was experiencing as highly difficult and dangerous circumstances. I assumed that by becoming associated with Villa Mangga, I would be unlikely to suffer violence from its members, and that I would be able to draw on the gang for protection and support.

Obviously, a number of ethical questions about conducting research in a context characterized by a high level and different forms of violence arise. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992, also quoted in Rodgers 2007) argues that there are two ways in which the morality of violence can be approached. The first tends to "understand morality as always contingent on, and embedded within, specific cultural assumptions" (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 22). The second considers that "the ethical is always prior to culture because the ethical presupposes all sense and meaning and therefore makes culture possible" (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 23). These distinct viewpoints will generate very different ideas concerning the morality or immorality of violence, and sex work for that matter. It is not my intention to engage in an endless and unresolved discussion about which of these positions is epistemologically more adequate in the context of my research; instead, what I want to focus on is a more practical form of ethics. I follow here the intuition of Dennis Rodgers (2007), who conducted research among gangs in Nicaragua. Even if many of my actions in Bali can perhaps be seen as immoral or unethical in principle, I believe that by joining the gang and taking part in their activities, I was improvising as best as I could in an unfamiliar setting and circumstances. I was certainly inexperienced and relatively young at the time, at least

young to perform the task at hand. Furthermore, maintaining a disapproval of violence and sex work can be difficult in practice. It calls for levels of judgment that can crumble as one becomes more and more associated with violent individuals, to say nothing of violence itself.

The Nature of Social Relations

At another level of analysis, the study of youth street gangs calls for an adequate examination of the nature of social relations in Javanese and Indonesian society. Youth gangs in Surabaya and even more so their more formalized counterparts in South Bali rest on notions of solidarity, mutual help, mutual assistance, and reciprocal support among their members. These aspects are most certainly in line with a description of Javanese life as predicated on convivial harmony.

Colonial and postcolonial descriptions of Javanese village life as orderly, peaceful, and egalitarian share an affinity with a long tradition of anthropological description: with a few exceptions, they all emphasize the aesthetics and ethics of convivial intimacy, mutual dependence, and solidarity (Newberry 2008; Pemberton 2004 quoted in Retsikas 2010: 473). Clifford Geertz (1960, also quoted in Retsikas 2010: 473), for example, while noting the presence of divisive social forces in 1950s Java, opted largely for highlighting the social mechanisms that work toward forms of social integration. Despite the massacres of the 1960s, this picture of Javanese life has continued to permeate both local accounts of idealized village life and anthropological and Western accounts (Retsikas 2010: 473). In his comprehensive study of Javanese culture, the native anthropologist Koentjaraningrat (1989, quoted in Retsikas 2010: 474) describes the ethic of mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) that serves to build and instill a sense of solidarity and equality among the members of a community. More recently, urban sociologists have reworked the same ideas of mutual assistance and solidarity to describe village life in the context of contemporary urban changes in

Indonesia and have argued for the importance and the persistence of such institutions and practices to counterbalance the effects of urban forms of marginality and social alienation (see, e.g., Peters 2013).

I do not claim these perspectives to be a false representation of Javanese society. However, as suggested by Konstantinos Retsikas (2010), this one-sided picture needs to be complemented by research on the more predatory aspects of social relations, which are largely left unexplored by social and cultural anthropologists.

Through the study of bonds and interactions structured around the use of violence (on one's body and toward other people's bodies), I would like to investigate the ambiguity of social relations and consider the fragility and the predatory aspects of collective social practices. This is possible through an analysis of the experiences of both current and former male sex workers. Their accounts of marginality and social isolation ultimately shed light on the outcomes of migration and the desire for personal emancipation. After all, my informants who are members of youth gangs in Surabaya and gangs of sex workers in South Bali look to other gang members, their "brothers," for support, help, and comfort, and think of the group in terms of a resource for acquiring the means to complete the transition to adulthood. As they grow up, and prepare to quit the gang, they reflect upon their recent past and reveal a more complex picture of the mechanisms and dynamics that intervene in the process of maturing and entering adult life. Ultimately, the question that animates my work is the following: are social relations that are based on violent practices a constructive or destructive force in the process of achieving a full-fledged masculine identity?

I argue that one should not look at Javanese society, or at what one might label "Javanese sociality," as torn by the dilemma between conviviality or predation, but that these two modes constantly invoke and elicit one another.

Notes

I conducted fieldwork in South Bali and Surabaya for 20 months between the summer of 2008 and late 2010. I visited Indonesia three times: for three months in 2008, for seven months between 2008 and 2009, and for ten months between 2009 and 2010. As mentioned above, during this time I conducted participant observation among a gang of male sex workers in South Bali and visited their neighborhood of origin in Surabaya, where I have lived with their families.

South Bali is a composite of two very different cultural worlds: the world of Balinese people, and that of Javanese migrants. As such, it is a hybrid place for conducting research: one almost has the impression of being at the intersection of two very different worldviews without being able to get in-depth knowledge of either of the two. To add to this degree of complexity, one must take into account the massive presence of touristic infrastructures, foreign visitors, and permanent residents. This accounts for the fact that the majority of my informants are very fluent in the English language. In the early part of the research, communication with informants was in fact in English. Later, conversations included Indonesian and Javanese slang, with the final part of the fieldwork conducted without resorting to English except for loanwords. All block quotes are field notes, not transcriptions. Unless indicated otherwise, all foreign words in italics are in Bahasa Indonesia.

All names used throughout my work are pseudonyms, to protect the identity of my informants who are involved with illegal activities. I have also decided not to reproduce any fieldwork pictures that portray their faces. In addition, some life history details have been altered or purposely left imprecise to some extent to maintain the anonymity of the individuals. Throughout the book, I use uses a perhaps unusual form of fieldwork analysis. I present a number of profiles: these are composites that represent different and distinctive

life experiences and ways to elaborate on life and work. The advantage of assembling a number of narratives and condensing them into different characters lies in the opportunity to synthesize a number of different and complex stories that present common features, while retaining the "lived" quality of ethnographic data (for a similar analysis in the field of masculine identities in Indonesia, see Nilan 2009). While I do not claim these profiles cover the entire range of paths and life choices, they are nevertheless sufficiently representative of the plurality of experiences I was able to witness during my research.

Finally, a note about South Bali. Many things have changed in South Bali since this research ended. I was able to visit Bali again in 2014 for a few months, and many of the places described in this book are barely recognizable. To give an example, the land occupied by the gay beach I describe in chapter 3 has been converted into a resort. However, these places are still an important part of the history of sex work in the region, and form a common cultural horizon shared by those who still move to Bali and enter sex work and by those who travel to Bali in search of sexual pleasure. In many ways, the book serves as a testament to a particular time and place as is always the case with ethnography, and speaks of the changing nature of a tourist destination, its spaces, and social actors.

The Chapters

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the chapters that follow via description of the urban transformations of the city of Surabaya and the meanings attached to masculine identities among a generation of men who live in the low-income neighborhood of *kampung* Malang. The main focus is on the impact of urban transformations on the lives of the older inhabitants of the area, and the ways spatial disconnection and material chances impinge differently on the life experiences of local residents and on traditional social institutions.

Chapter 2 shifts the attention to the phenomenon of youth gangs, as the most manifest form of contemporary male aggregation in *kampung* Malang and a viable social solution for entering the world of work in the informal economy. It investigates the nature of youth street gangs, their relationship with urban spaces, and their quest for social integration, movement, and growth, as well as their transition to organized crime in the context of internal migration to South Bali.

Chapter 3 is set in South Bali. It follows the young men of *kampung* Malang as they travel to South Bali and join a particular gang of male sex workers named Villa Mangga. While it continues on to explore the issues of growth, male socialization, and youthful group formations, it also discusses the logic and the dynamics of male sex work with a focus on the use of the body and on violent social practices.

Chapter 4 shifts the attention to the stories of former East Javanese sex workers who have left the Villa Mangga. The accounts provided by former sex workers are narratives about the limits and contradictions of that form of entrepreneurship that is sex work and that originates in the context of migration, violence, and sex tourism of South Bali. They reveal young men's second thoughts, discrepancies, discontinuities, and idiosyncrasies, and speak of the short- and long-term consequences of violence in the process of growing up and in the attempt to achieve a full masculine status through affiliations to groups of peers.

I close by reflecting upon the nature of social relationships among collective youth formations and the long-term outcomes of sex work and violence in the process of making a proper entrance into adult life.

As usual, responsibility for the contents of this book lies solely with the author. All mistakes are mine.

Chapter 1

Men's Things and Male Activities

Introduction

The present chapter discusses the meanings attached to masculine identities among a generation of men aged 40–65 who live and work in the low-income neighborhood of *kampung* Malang, Surabaya, East Java. More specifically, it describes the relationship between the recent transformations of the urban landscape and the redefinition of the spaces where men come together, aggregate (*berkumpul*), socialize (*bergaul*), and become involved with work in the informal economy.

The politics of urban requalification that have taken place since at least 2008 have contributed to reducing the number of sites where men can meet and socialize, the spaces that were historically assigned to the activities of the informal economy. The reorganization of the city traffic through the conversion of two-way streets into wide one-way thoroughfares, the growth and the development of big residential areas, and the proliferation of shopping malls and plazas have caused a sensible decrease in the number of street food stalls (*warung*), mobile food carts (*kaki lima*) and local markets (*pasar*), and a general corrosion of the networks of solidarity and forms of apprenticeship that once regulated the formation of youths and their access to the world of work. According to the older men who live in the neighborhood village of *kampung* Malang, the current generation of youngsters can hardly find any room to "be together" (*bersama-sama*), learn

the tricks of a particular trade, and help each other find a job. Instead, they find themselves "alone" (*sendiri*), socially isolated in the delicate transition to adult life. They travel outside the village to other (and somehow distant) parts of the city to find a job, and are more exposed to the dangers and the temptations of life outside their home. In the eyes of their fathers and uncles, these youngsters might compromise their chances to "become men" (*menjadi laki laki*) in the full socially recognized sense of the term. There seems to be a diffused preoccupation as to what the future will entail for their sons and nephews at a time when men can no longer hold on to their own "things" (*urusan laki laki*, the male activities, but also *aktivitas*).

In the following pages, I first present the city of Surabaya and piece together the historical antecedents that have fostered different types of cultural and material exclusion, the orchestrated top-down processes of urban transformations, and the local attempts to resist and subvert marginalization, social and spatial disconnection, and exclusion. In the subsequent sections, I introduce the low-income neighborhood of *kampung* Malang, located south along Surabaya's main river, the site of my research. My main focus here will be on the impact of urban transformations on the lives of the older inhabitants of the area, the ways material changes and spatial disconnection impinge differentially on the life experiences of local residents, their idea of work, and the construction of a masculine self. Last, I will show how these men articulate specific ideas of uncertainty and precariousness. Their words express a sentiment of social solitude, intended here as the inability to assemble and forge durable social bonds; they also wonder about their future and their son's future in the renewed landscape of urban Surabaya.

Surabaya

Surabaya is Indonesia's second-largest city, the capital of the province of East Java and the home of the country's navy. It

is located in the mouth of the Mas River, and along the edge of the Madura Strait. It is a gigantic port strewn with cranes, construction sites, corporate buildings, wide roads, and shopping malls. For local residents, Surabaya is closely linked to the birth of the Indonesian nation, as it is in Surabaya that the battle for independence began and peaked in 1945. To them, it is the city of heroes, and statues commemorating independence are scattered all over the city.

By the middle of the 1990s, urban sociologists in Surabaya were noting that the municipal government's desire to achieve order in public spaces was directly complementing middle-class needs, which real estate developers were striving to satisfy (Peters 2009: 904). Surabaya's most prominent urban planner, Johan Silas, pointed to this trend, noting that there was a perception among developers that they would lose market opportunities to competitors if these needs were not fulfilled (Silas 1995, quoted in Peters 2009: 904). Ramlan Surbakti made similar observations at the time, noting that this trend contributed to a "utilitarian" tendency among real estate developers in the city, who aimed to "fulfill the needs of only those who are able to pay" (Surbakti 1995, also quoted in Peters 2009: 904). For Silas, this utilitarian trend reflected what he called an antisocial tendency in the city's urban development toward the mere consideration of commercial concerns, while for Surbakti it condemned the poor (Ibid.)

Between 1998 and 2008 Surabaya witnessed a decade of profound urban transformation, as the municipal government strove to achieve order and legibility to complement the needs of the emergent middle class. The overall goal was to facilitate the circulation of persons, vehicles, and goods, and to qualify Surabaya as a city of passage and consumption. Among the most prominent transformations was the restructuring of road transportation through the unclogging of existing roads (*jalan*, *jalan raya*) and their conversion into spiraling one-way circuits (Peters 2010). This process involved clearing the informal economy from the streets, and the progressive

elimination of any sign of disorder from the public space. As a consequence, some of the poor were relegated to the confined alleys of the neighborhoods of the inner city. By mid-2008, according to local newspaper reports (as quoted for instance, in Peters 2009, 2010), Surabaya's civil policing arm achieved a thoroughgoing clearance of makeshift food stalls (*warung*), mobile vendors, market places, and pedicab (*becak*) drivers from the city streets in order to abate congestion and increase the flow of traffic. As a result, the sites of long-standing and well-established forms of street-side male socialization and aggregation (*berkumpul*), which served as the medium for the informal exchange of goods, work, and job opportunities among underemployed men, quickly began to disappear.

Order also manifested itself through the rapid proliferation of plazas. While the conversion of roads served the purpose of eradicating any pause in the constant flow of traffic and of avoiding congestion, the latter functioned to negate and visually deflect poverty (Peters 2009, 2010). The growth of plazas and hotels has been particularly rapid over the past decade and a half in the central urban subdistrict of Tegelsari, a transformation most apparent where I have conducted research, in the old Ngagel industrial estate situated across the river from *kampung* Malang (see below). In this once weed-ridden former industrial estate, where old factories stood during the 1990s, there stands a completely new panorama. The Novotel hotel, for example, has replaced the Unilever factory; a homemaker center now fills the old Heineken brewery; and a Carrefour supermarket occupies the site of an old ice block factory (Peters 2010: 6). Overall, Surabaya is a city with 17 plazas, three times the number of plazas sufficient for a population of 3.5 million (Ibid.).

According to Robbie Peters, there is a striking similarity in the principle that sustains the unclogging of streets and the legibility of one-way roads and the orderliness of plazas and hotels:

> Devoid of the abjection that plague the street, the controlled simulations of the mall constitute a completely legible and

> ordered environment that now acts as a model for the street. Like an architect's miniaturized three-dimensional model, the mall is the idealized street side in miniature and conveys what the elusive ideal of "peace and order" would look like if it were ever achieved along the street. Closer to this ideal than anytime in its post-independence history, the street in Surabaya now simulates the mall through a complete elimination of abjection. As the so-called "gateway to East Java," Surabaya forms a "first impression" of the island according to tourist industry pundits. Not unlike the plazas advertised in the newspapers, the city was "branded." And, like the malls, Surabaya was to "sparkle" as an aesthetically pleasing commodity somehow unblemished by the floods, smog and dust that had made the city infamous. (Peters 2009: 913)
>
> (...) In accordance with the sparkling concept, old electric street lamps were rewired and new ones added to shine light on a meticulously manicured streetscape, where the shrubbery and lawns of roundabouts, river banks and parks were finely trimmed, drains were cleared of their characteristic algae-ridden gunk, streets swept and scrap collected by the so-called "yellow army" of scrap pickers working overtime to maintain the city's new facelift. Subject to a constant touching up and trimming, Surabaya's new manicured streetscape now simulated the potted plants of the plaza and the new zoning regulations that set out its floor space. Testimony to this simulated landscape were the huge fountains of water pumped into the air before the Pemuda street bridge, which formed an intersection of extravagant plazas and hotels overlooking a once prostitute-infested riverbank that now forms a quiet promenade. (Peters 2009: 914)

In this sense, order is pursued through the unclogging, dislocation, and displacement of the urban poor, and through the concealment of urban *kampung*. In the words of Terrance McGee (2002, quoted in Peters 2009), such transformations designate a new "geography of exclusion" (McGee 2002: 21). In their account of the trend toward private real estate interests in Jakarta, Howard Dick and Peter Rimmer (1998) have noted that "the driving force behind the new geography of Southeast Asia is the avoidance of social discomfort" (Dick

and Rimmer 1998: 2317, also cited by Peters 2009). These ideas of avoidance and exclusion were furthered elaborated by Abidin Kusno (2000), who argues, "[T]he building of elevated highways, the multiplication of large-scale shopping malls, and the creation of gated urban housing in the major cities of Indonesia constituted a form of modernity which was also accomplished by a fear of falling towards the category of the 'internal other,' the Indonesian underclass" (Kusno 2000: 118–119, quoted in Peters 2009: 914 and following).

Erosion and Ephemerality

As vividly sensed by Stephen Christopher Brown, Surabaya has an efficient, industrial feel to it. Yet, the appearance of order is deceiving, misleading (Brown 2009). Widely promoted by municipal authorities as "clean and green" (*Bersih dan Hijau*), Surabaya is rather dirty, despicable, a "scunge" city, in the sarcastic words of Surabaya-based Australian journalist Duncan Graham (2002):

> The East Java Provincial Government, is not above a little dissembling. You get it on the road into Surabaya where the official welcome signs note that Indonesia's second biggest city is "Bersih dan Hijau"—Clean and Green. The signs are best seen at first light. By 9 am smog blurs the image and attention is distracted by beggars and newspaper sellers who swarm around any slow-moving car. (. . .) That's in the dry season: in the wet roads are flooded from door to door, so pavement, verge, drain and bitumen merge into a seamless black scum where floating objects best remain unscrutinised. Then Surabaya stalls as saturated engines short circuit. And the green? Most obvious on bright colored giant billboards offering sexual, sporting and social success for the tiny price of a pack of smokes. Real trees are as rare as a shark (*sura*) fighting a crocodile (*buaya*), the city's mythological origin. (Graham 2002: 1)

Much of the city today looks old, as though it were built centuries ago. For the most part, this is an illusion. At the end

of World War II, after the Japanese had formally surrendered the islands to Allied forces, British warships, planes, and tanks pummeled the city flat in retaliation for the first outbreak of a rebellion that would be known as the Battle of Surabaya and would commence the five-year war of Indonesian independence (1945–1949) (Ibid.). Even the structures built a mere decade ago are often marked by a patina of decay far beyond their years; the tropical climate, combined with contemporary corner-cutting construction practices, results in rapid erosion (Graham 2002: 3).

In his vivid accounts about the streets of Surabaya, Brown (2009) described the city as a "strikingly protean place," extremely variable in shape and form, a site of swift changes, where urban transformations occur in a short period of time and uncertainty is palpable:

> I have watched mildewed plaster literally peel off an interior wall of its own accord during another soggy day in the wet season; construction bricks are often so soft they crumble to the touch. In one of the gleaming marble and metal temples Javanese people use for banking, the entire polished stone counter crashed to the floor one day when I leaned down to speak through the hole in the glass. (p. 34)

Surabaya is a city where plans are constantly deferred to the future, with empty lots and half-finished buildings identified by both government officials and local residents as "not yet developed" (*belum dibangun*) or "not yet ready" (*belum siap*). This contributes to create a sense of uncertainty, both spatial and temporal:

> Over the decade or so since I first visited the city buildings, skyscrapers and malls have gone up, been torn down or burned down, been replaced by newer and seemingly more fragile ones. Roads are changed and the everyday routes are subject to constant revision. Warung pop up like mushrooms, transforming the landscape for a six or eight-hour spell before their orange and blue plastic tarpaulin walls are struck again and melt away into the air. Some districts reinvent themselves

> three times a day, selling for instance flowers in the morning, beer and chicken in the afternoon, brightly colored aquarium fish in plastic baggies by night. The most enduring landmarks these days are perhaps a few construction projects halted long ago amid disputes over debt and ownership; their rusted iron frames diminish almost imperceptibly each night, as gleaners sell scrap metal by the kilogram, but the indeterminacy of ownership is, paradoxically, the one constant that can be relied upon. (Brown 2009: 34–35)

In the following paragraphs, I introduce the site of my research, *kampung* Malang, and explore how the above-described urban transformations have impacted on the lives of its inhabitants, in order to present a specific form of perceived disconnection and its consequences for the construction of masculine identities.

Kampung Malang

Kampung *as Urban Village*

As argued by John Sullivan (1992), the Malay word *kampung* is generally taken to mean “village,” but in Indonesia it is more commonly applied to urban entities, to parts of towns and cities. Initially, it meant “compound,” most typically the wallet yards, gardens, and residences of well-to-do families, and it was long used for the residential compounds of princes, nobles, and other dignitaries. Yet today, the majority of Javanese take *kampung* to mean primarily something akin to “home community,” while a better-off minority tend to interpret it more decisively as “slum” (Sullivan 1992: 20–21). The boundaries of many city *kampung* are given by major streets and roads: as suggested by Janice Newberry (2008), a city *kampung* represents a spatial segregation of the lower classes in contrast to those living in larger, better built houses. This spatial separation is marked as well by differences in housing density and construction, and the size of the alleyways that thread through these neighborhood.

I have conducted most of my fieldwork in the inner-city neighborhood of *kampung* Malang,[1] located south along the Mas River. The Kali Brantas is a significant south-to-north river that crosses Java. Toward Surabaya, its name changes to Kali Surabaya, and then, at Wonokromo on the southern outskirts of Surabaya, it bifurcates into a northerly branch, the Kali Mas, at the estuary of which grew the city of Surabaya, and an east-flowing branch, the Kali Wonokromo. Colonial-Dutch Surabaya developed southward from its port, lineally along a road parallel to the Kali Mas and variously named along its length. Kali Mas, in turn, became a linear zone of a decidedly polluting industry.

Kampung Malang spans an area of no more than one square kilometer. It is actually a cluster of about 100 neighborhoods, each comprising about 100 officially registered residents, for an approximate total of 10,000 inhabitants. *Kampung* Malang sits across from a once heavily industrialized industrial estate that now forms part of a congested central service district. A humongous one-way road, a bridge, the Mas River, and then abandoned factories, as well as new hotels, malls, and apartment complexes that have surfaced since the early 1980s merge here around an intersection that borders the *kampung*. Through the naked eye, the landscape of the area surrounding *kampung* Malang is characterized by an excessive number of buildings under construction, empty lots, and half-finished buildings, so many in fact that, as I have said before, many *kampung* residents describe the city as "not yet ready" (*belum siap*) and as a site of perennial construction work. The city is unfinished, not yet developed, and the construction sites are a constant reminder of that.

A great portion of *kampung* Malang occupies the area along riverbank: this is a former residential area that grew around a weaving factory and used to house factory workers, at least until the early 1990s, when the factory was closed down and demolished. In fact, despite the development of the area along the riverbank, this settlement only has a single postal address, which still coincides with the old factory

address. The rear area of the settlement is occupied by a market.

In Surabaya, *kampung* Malang is widely regarded to as a slum neighborhood, a *lorong*. The term *lorong* literally means narrow corridor. However it is also loosely used by some to refer to the slum areas in many big cities in Indonesia (see, for instance, Nasir 2006; Nasir and Rosenthal 2009a, 2009b). In the *lorong*, clusters of alleyways commonly known as *gang* link the slum area to more affluent parts of the city. As Sudirman Nasir and Doreen Rosenthal (2009a) point out, with some geographical and sociocultural differences, similar areas can be found in many developing or even developed countries, and the *lorong* can be compared to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, the poor neighborhoods in Colombia and Guatemala, or the ghettos usually inhabited by Latinos, the so-called barrios, and by African Americans in the United States (Nasir and Rosenthal 2009a: 195). What these areas have in common is that they are known in slum literature as "clusters of disadvantage" (Chambers 1983), that is, areas that present severe socioeconomic deprivations that interact to create various kinds of vulnerabilities.

The residents of *kampung* Malang, however, do not perceive nor identify their neighborhood in terms of a slum area. When I asked about what they believe a slum area looks like they pointed to the immediate neighboring area of *kampung* Baru, for two main reasons: its residents are not officially registered and, most of all, they are thought to be all criminals. As the name implies (*baru* means "new"), it is the newest of the riverbank *kampung* built on previously abandoned land for prostitution by night and scavenger use by day. The settlement was demolished in 2002, only to be quickly rebuilt, thanks to the links between local prostitution bosses, local gangsters, and government officials (King and Idawati 2010: 224). However, it is not recognized officially. In *kampung* Baru the residents can be grouped into two main occupational clusters, namely prostitutes and scavengers. The area is associated with crime, pollution, and burglary of its

neighboring areas. As I illustrate in the following pages, the residents of *kampung* Malang experience a form of disconnection and exclusion from the flow of capital and resources that animates the city life and is of part of the world of the emergent middle class. However, they insist on an ethic of work and cooperation that sets them apart from the criminals and the illegal dwellers of the neighboring *kampung*.

Kampung *Life, Solidarity and Work*

Like most *kampung* in Indonesia, *kampung* Malang has one alley that is wide enough to accommodate automobiles, but it is better understood as traversed through a series of paths that range from shoulder width, allowing for foot traffic, to bicycle and motorcycle width. Networks of relations, commercial, familial, neighborly, make use of these paths daily, and their overlaps and absences are telling markers of neighborhood relationships (Newberry 2008: 243). As Peter Kellet et al. (2001) note with reference to Indonesian *kampung*,

> these pedestrian scale alleyways form the key spatial component of the kampung and are intensively used as extensions of dwellings, but also for productive and collective activities. Kampung footpaths illustrate the ambiguity of private space and the density of traffic and habitation in these neighborhoods, as they frequently cross directly in front of thresholds and windows. (Kellet et al. 2001: 68, also quoted in Newberry 2008: 243)

Life in *kampung* Malang is ideally characterized by a flow of resources, including money, aid, and services, between households related through ties of kinship, spatial vicinity, need, and networks of exchange (Newberry 2006; Sullivan 1994). *Kampung* residents make reference to this Indonesian ideal and to the ethic of helping one another, of cooperation, and an equality of purpose and lifestyle. The boundaries of *kampung* life are reiterated by *kampung* dwellers, who seem to insist on qualities of closeness, neighborliness, harmony,

and mutual support. One established practice among *kampung* Malang residents (as elsewhere in Java) is *gotong royong*, which refers to a broad set of ideas and practices of mutual support and self-help, solidarity, and local cooperation. Especially in the context of riverbank communities, many refer to the importance of *gotong royong* at a time when houses are built cooperatively following the numerous attempts at eviction by the municipal authorities, which I return to later in this chapter. *Gotong royong* also remains fundamental to the management of *kampung* alleys and public spaces. This *kampung* ethos is often compared to the broken social life of the city at large, and of the new suburban areas, as highlighted by Newberry (2008):

> To be accused of not being sufficiently kampung suggests an aggressive and middle class individuality (. . .). This relates as well to a felt sense that kampung members are well known and familiar, and that outsiders are not readily incorporated. Wong kampung (Jv.) or kampung person can suggest humbleness and community spirit. (Newberry 2008: 243)

Newberry goes on to underscore how the category of "structure of feeling" is central to life in the *kampung*, and is connected with the sense that *kampung* are the site of traditional forms of collaboration and shared values. This category, according to Newberry, is perhaps more relevant than a mere analysis of the *kampung* as a historical administrative structure. Nevertheless, the two are intimately interconnected: the New Order government of Suharto (1967–1998) used and reproduced the sentiment of affection toward and longing for a rural community as a means of administering urban localities through its neighborhood section system, of delivering social welfare, and of organizing residents to follow the principles of *gotong royong* in the running of their own affairs (Bowen 1986).

The world of *kampung* Malang is filled with numerous economic activities. Residents are involved in multiple exchanges of money, services, food, and gifts between households and

networks of proximity. Beyond these exchange relationships, the *kampung* is also the site of a relative interesting amount of production through small, if not tiny, family enterprises, that "blur and reconfigure the spatial and conceptual boundaries between work and home, between production and reproduction in order to generate income and sustain themselves" (Kellet et al. 2001: 63, quoted in Newberry 2008: 243). Their nature is precarious, as they bloom overnight and disappear just as quickly. They are sometimes quite invisible, and the kind of money that is earned is barely enough to sustain the daily needs of a family. In general, these family activities are based on self-exploitation and family labor (Ibid.). Fixed capital is low, if not nonexistent, and wages often include food. While in theory these tiny enterprises can include true entrepreneurial concerns, with a family wanting to start a small business outside the home, the resources are quite limited and not sufficient to hire extra help or external workers, and these projects fall apart quickly (Ibid.). Frequently these activities occupy a small space within a house and require only family help, such as the many food stalls (*warung*), which may be nothing more than a shelf in front of a room from which a woman sells mosquito coils, soap, cigarettes, matches, and other small sundries (Ibid.). Another example is the phone card business.

Women and Men of kampung *Malang*

In *kampung* Malang, these economic networks and activities that revolve around the household are largely handled by women. Similar examples have been found throughout Java. Describing the site of his ethnographic research in a low-income neighborhood in the city of Yogyajakarta, Central Java, and the economic arrangements that sustain *kampung* life, Newberry (2008), for instance, noted that

> [i]n the small compound around my rental house, there were three kin-related houses including five households. Four men earned the low wages of Indonesian civil servants, and one

> worked as a store clerk; a fifth was unemployed. In only one household of five did the formal wages of a father and son provide sufficient income. Even so, this household included a woman engaged in a micro-enterprise cooking peanuts to order. She also helped manage a small dry goods stall in the local market begun with the aid of money and training from the Indonesian government. (. . .) In the house next door, the unemployed man cooked peanut candy for sale. His married daughter worked sporadically as subcontracted labor. One son cut hair for neighbors and later became a spiritual healer. Next door, one daughter-in-law worked as a seamstress out of her house sewing clothes on order for the local puppet maker. Another daughter-in-law made and sold *jamu*, traditional health tonics, from her house as well as in the local market. (Newberry 2008: 246)

Despite a history of active income generation by Javanese women of the lower classes, the New Order regime was quite successful in placing female work within the home and the community (see, for instance, Brenner 1998; Stoler 1995). This was functional to an ideology of development that emphasized the two-child family and the stay-at-home mother. I document here the dominant ideology of the New Order period and its discourses on gender because the women and, most of all, the men whom I discuss in this chapter, who are the fathers and uncles of the young men who represent the focus of my research, grew up within the milieu of its educational and development policies, which situated women in the home and men as household heads, workers, and breadwinners.

As highlighted among others by Evelyn Blackwood (2010), the ideological discourse on gender in Indonesia was and is represented linguistically as a sex/gender system, through the overlapping of sexed bodies and gender social attributes: gender is part of the "nature" (*kodrat*) of sexed bodies:

> One way in which this is evidenced can be found in the Indonesian words for "man" and "woman," which are the same words for "male" and "female." *Perempuan* means

> both female and woman, *laki-laki* means both male and man; *kelaki-lakian*, for example, which has the root laki, is defined as manliness, mannish. In using these terms, Indonesians express a concordant relationship between bodies and behaviors. When people speak of *kodrat perempuan* or *kodrat laki-laki*, they are referring to the nature or character (*kodrat*) of women and men. (. . .) This relationship means that in the dominant Indonesian sex/gender system, one's gender attributes are seen as naturally and indivisibly part of one's sex. (Blackwood 2010: 40)

Under Suharto's New Order, the state defined mother and wife as the primary role and duty of women:

> The New Indonesian woman became a wife (*isteri*), who was defined primarily in terms of her commitment to follow her husband's lead and limit her reproduction capacity to the ideal older son—younger daughter. State pronouncements articulated a vision of women's nature (*kodrat*) that emphasized women's maternal role and responsibility for their children's health, care and education. (Sullivan 1994: 133)

It was in the "nature" of women to be reproducers and a source of domestic labor. The discourse on gender operated through an extensive network of policies, programs, and institutions that encouraged and enforced normative gender meanings (Blackwood 2010: 43), most notably through school education and textbooks (see Leigh 1994 also quoted by Blackwood).

More recently, numerous scholars have advocated and written about the responsibilities and features of a "new type of career woman" (*wanita karier*), the professional woman exemplified by the affluent middle-class woman who works in white-collar jobs as teacher, civil servant, manager, and administrator (Sen 1998; Bennett 2005; Smith-Hefner 2007). While there is no sign of this type of working woman in the alleys of *kampung* Malang, I will show further along in this book that female immigrants who come to Surabaya to work in the new plazas and try to find accommodation in

kampung Malang, as well as local girls and young women who move outside the village to look for better life opportunities, do make great reference to the notion of "career woman" when describing their dreams and aspirations. Nevertheless, one must point out that the role of career women is not at all incompatible with the normative duties and responsibilities of being a wife and a mother: the new career woman is also bound to notions of proper femininity, and is expected to be morally virtuous and fulfill the obligations of married life, despite her career interests.

According to Blackwood (2010), such state-driven discourses about gender roles in Indonesian society have historically worked together with religious (Islamic) views about proper conduct for women and men. This is relevant in a context in which the majority of my informants are Muslims, with varying degree of reflexivity and participation. Islamic writers, Blackwood maintains, are generally concordant with the idea that women and men are different by nature: they have their own character, determined by Allah, as well as different dispositions and different social and cultural obligations:

> Islamicist doctrine in Indonesia draws strict boundaries between men and women. These discourses represent men and women in dichotomous terms to create a knowledge of gender difference. (. . .) The writers generally agree with the modernist idea of men's and women's equality, but they find incontrovertible the "fact" that men and women by nature are different. This difference make women's realm the family and the household, whereas men's realm is the nation and the religious community. Their position can be summarized as follows: men's and women's bodies are different: men have more strength and women have the ability to bear children. Therefore each sex is created to fulfill particular functions, men to protect and provide for women, women to raise and educate children. (Blackwood 2010: 45)
>
> [With regards to the new type of career woman] these writers reason that necessity is the only acceptable reason for women to work. (. . .) [However] intermingling without adequate protection for women could lead to "negative excesses" that

> might increase the incidence of adultery and threaten the institution of the family. (Blackwood 2010: 46)

Accordingly, dominant state and religious discourses about masculinity have been based on the idea that men, and fathers, are economic providers for the family. The elevated Javanese discourse of masculinity centered around the idea of the *bapak*, the "father," played a significant part in the construction of a hegemonic notion of national masculine identity during the New Order period. In a striking example, Suharto made himself known as *Bapak Pembangunan*, the "father of development" (Nilan 2009: 332). In principle, the *bapak* rules over the family, but also over the business, the town, and by extension the nation-state. He is entitled to exercise dominance because of his God-given wisdom, self-control, and mastery of emotions. These qualities grant him authority over women, children, and male underlings. He achieves hegemony through the exercising of "refined power embodying emotional self-restraint" (Brenner 1995: 118, quoted in Nilan 2009: 332). His calm demeanor demonstrates the triumph of *akal*, reason and control over base passions, *nafsu* (Peletz 1995: 88–91, also quoted in Nilan 2009: 332).

Among the men of *kampung* Malang, successful masculine identities relate closely to the ability to provide for the family, and to fulfill the quite onerous (in terms of time and resources) community expectations. In particular, there is a perception that the transition to masculine adulthood is complete only when (young) men are able to gather the considerable financial and cultural resources required to marry a woman from the community and to provide well for their wife, family, and extended kinship network and, in the case of first-born sons, to care for their parents. Pertinent to the discussion here is the notion that men must work, and this work also includes work around the community (*kerja bakti*, the "duty work," which involves specific tasks around the *kampung*).

Furthermore, in this particular area of Indonesia, as in many other parts of the archipelago, adulthood is associated with "circular migration" (*merantau*). As explained by Lindquist (2013), the cultural logic of *merantau*, which means "to go out into the world before returning home again," is understood as a process of transformation, or a rite of passage in which the boy leaves the village and returns as a man.

A number of studies have looked at the consequences of failing to acquire the resources needed to achieve an idealized masculine identity (e.g., Kristiansen 2003). In *kampung* Malang, while most women handle the household business and the micro economic activities that revolve around the house, the great majority of men are unemployed. The phenomenon of male unemployment or underemployment has to do with the fact that men are traditionally and largely involved with the informal economy. In the next section, I explore the idea that male activities take place in the realm of the informal economy and rely on male networks of socialization. It is precisely the disintegration of such networks that undermines the possibility for men to earn an income, provide for their families, and ultimately be recognized as full-fledged members of the community. The inability to come together and pass around information about prospect activities and jobs, as well as actual work opportunities is described as a preoccupation among the men of *kampung* Malang, a concern for their lives and lives of their sons.

Male Socialization and Job Opportunities

Berkumpul (literally socializing, aggregation, coming together, sometimes also *bergaul*) is a male institution among the men of *kampung* Malang. Through networks of socialization and through the possibility of getting together at a certain time in a particular place, *kampung* men share information about job opportunities, exchange goods, and

spend time together. While men mingle at an intersection, or most often at a street food stall (*warung*), they hear information about work available for the day: some might find a small opportunity painting a house; a peddler of secondhand clothing finds customers; a scrap picker meets someone willing to buy his scrap metal; a petty criminal finds a buyer for some marijuana he has purchased; and a broker finds a buyer for a watch he wants to sell. Through the exchange of information, men gain work that enables them to generate an income. Reciprocally, the practice of work stimulates the desire to meet, and to continue to share the flow of information. *Berkumpul* is a form of communication among *kampung* men, an opportunity to interact with other men, a practical need, and a way to make a living. Numerous activities are subsumed under the category of *berkumpul*. These range from meeting and talking at a street food stall of the *kampung* main alley, to exchanging goods, to gambling and pigeon racing, to organizing rotating credit associations. I return to these activities in the following pages, where I show the impact of the recent urban transformation on *berkumpul* and on the availability of work for the men of *kampung* Malang.

Berkumpul as a social institution proved to be a successful resource during the economic crisis that gripped much of Asia and Indonesia starting in 1997. The dramatic effects of the inflationary crisis were somehow mitigated by the fact that *kampung* dwellers relied heavily on local credit associations and exchange, as well as on the informal sector to buy food. Peters (2010), who conducted research in the area for over two decades, maintains that the *kampung* economy and *kampung* spaces, the occupancy of land, were determinant in lessening the immediate effects of the economic downturn on the lives of local inhabitants:

> During the economic crisis, poverty confined unemployed *kampung* men to the alleyways and nearby *warung*. Unable

> to afford transport, they moved only along the main alley and the *warung* of the nearby street and riverside. (. . .) In the *warung*, men would sit for short periods and drink coffee. The *warung* was the place that most manifests the Javanese adage, "Eat or not eat, what is important is to come together" (*Mangan gak mangan asal kumpul*). (. . .) The *warung* brought men together for socializing and, through it, these seemingly immobile and unoccupied men actively found out about work that might be available. (Peters 2010: 579)

These observations are in line with some of the stories that I collected during the conversations I had with the men of *kampung* Malang. These men insisted on the historical importance of land, and space, as a means for coming together, and described the *warung* as the designated place to experience communal forms of exchange, in a broad sense, whether practical or recreational. The food stall was, in most cases, a mobile income-earning instrument that could shift location, therefore allowing movement and circulation. Men would dismantle it and relocate it easily, thereby facilitating the flow of information across different *kampung* areas.

These descriptions stand in stark contrast to the contemporary urban landscape of Surabaya. As I have outlined in the introductory part of this chapter, the redefinition of land rights, and the requalification of urban spaces through dislodging and concealing has changed the panorama of opportunities for *kampung* residents in terms of mobility over *kampung* spaces and in terms of living conditions, with tremendous effects on socializing and *berkumpul* activities in general. As men begin to find it hard to dispose of the land they inhabit and municipal authorities are determined to clear all communal activities from the public streets, there is a sense of diffused frustration and concern as to what the future of young men will be. I delve into this subject in the remaining sections of this chapter.

The Impact of Urban Transformations on the Lives of the Men of *kampung* Malang

Empty Roads and the Destruction of Networks of Male Socialization

As I have shown, over the decade from 1998 to 2008, the acceleration of road transport in Surabaya did not take place through the construction of new roads, but through the unclogging of existing roads (Peters 2010). In order to accelerate vehicular traffic and cater to the needs of the middle class, temporary food stalls and mobile vendors were cleared from the city streets. As a result, the most recognizable feature of the city streetscape in the present are no longer food stalls, but bulldozers and the growing corps of civilian police dedicated to the tearing down of *warung*. In 2010 alone, authorities planned the construction of 13 new linking roads that were set to cut through *kampung* areas (Ibid.).

The unclogging drive that was clearing traders from the street side soon extended to the main alleyways of the *kampung*. In *kampung* Malang, the fate of its underemployed men was sealed when the developers' gaze focused upon the main alley. In accordance with the new municipal agenda of unclogging roads, this alleyway would become a thoroughfare linking two main roads at separate ends of the *kampong* (Peters 2010: 571). Municipal officials posted flyers on *kampung* bulletin boards and instructed the *kampung* informal leaders that the alleyway was public space over which the municipality exercised ultimate authority; sustained police operations attempted to clear the main alleyway of all economic activities (Peters 2010: 572).

It is no surprise, then, that while Surabaya's authorities envision the city streets as filled with cars and traversed by a constant flow of vehicles, goods, and capital, the inhabitants of city neighborhoods, such as the inhabitants of *kampung* Malang, describe those very same streets as *sepi*, that is, "void of any human activity," and some even push the discourse

further and maintain that on the streets it is "forbidden to work" (*dilarang kerja*):

> The problem is space, and the use of space. There is no space to go meet other people and sell stuff, ask for a job, and stay together. They [the police] want to use the main street to connect the big roads, and nobody cares what we need it for. There is no problem in wanting to use the main street but everybody must be able to fulfill their needs, and we need to meet and work. (Wawan, 39 years old, owns a small mobile food stall)

The destruction of food stalls along the *kampung* alleys meant the destruction of networks of socialization upon which the quest for a job and the practice of work rely heavily. Peters (2010) described the presumed end of socialization and of communal forms of exchange of information and work as the end of "direct speech," of mutual understandings that are forged through continuing collaboration. Such notion of "direct speech" also extends to the communication between state and city authorities and local communities. In his essay, he reports a dramatic episode that underlines the clash between the developing force of the city officials and the practical needs of *kampung* people,

> (. . .) the summary justice exacted upon the poor came into question in May 2009 when the young daughter of a fleeing street-stall vendor died from a vat of boiling water that spilled on to her as the police set about demolishing her parent's beef soup stand. The incident brought into question the brutality of a development process that fails to communicate with the poor, a process that needs to engage rather than negate them, as a spokesman representing the poor noted, stating: "The municipality has to change its methods of evicting people, such as those who live along riverbanks and those who sell their products along the roadside. Better communication between them will lead officials to find better way to solve the social problems, which are a common challenge in big cities like Surabaya" (Jakarta Post, May 22, 2009). The report continued, noting that "the municipality needed to approach

> the residents and communicate with them to solve the urban problems." No such approach seems likely; Surabaya's streets are clean, the poor absent and the municipality unresponsive to the fact that, as the report makes clear, "people would be open to discussing fair solutions offered by officials." Despite the poor's willingness to communicate, it remains a defunct logic. (Peters 2010: 571)

While linking roads, the new urban trajectories function to conceal and exclude the poor, who express a sentiment of disconnection from the city at large. The spaces of the middle class are connected to one another via circuits that facilitate the passage of vehicles and people, but that deflect and bypass the urban spaces of the lower classes. Furthermore, while city officials expropriate land, they also push people at the margins of the territories they have inhabited for decades, and deprive them of the possibility of continuing to exercise their economic activities. At a local level, in fact, *kampung* men also feel disconnected from their own work activities. In their day-to-day economy, they experience a feeling of disconnection in the inability to meet with other *kampung* men and attempt to make a living in the realm of the relational informal economy. As they put this constraint into perspective, these men cannot help but wonder what the fate of those who prepare themselves to enter the same economy, their children and their friends' sons, will be, and how this will be reflected in the ability to accumulate the necessary material and social resources to make the transition into adulthood, or at least to head toward financial stability.

Markets, Licenses, and Ties of Apprenticeship

A similar scenario, with similar preoccupations, surrounds the world of local markets, which were traditionally used to socialize children and youth to the practice of work, but were lately torn down and burned by municipal initiatives in order to make room for shopping malls and city plazas. The story of the men of *kampung* Malang is particularly tied to the fortunes and

misfortunes of two local markets, Pasar Turi and Keputran, which are quite well known across Indonesia and most certainly part of the history of East Java. Both markets burned down following arson attacks. While the former was completely destroyed and the area reconverted into a plaza, the latter was displaced and traders were scattered in the urban periphery.

I rely heavily on the history of the city as provided by Peters (2009) to give an accurate description of what happened in the case of Pasar Turi and Keputran, before examining the significance of such events and the profound consequences on the lives of the men of *kampung* Malang in terms of socialization and the transmission of work ethics and knowledge between generations.

With over 10,000 people employed within the market's grounds and 1,500 industries supplying its traders, the fire at Pasar Turi was estimated to have caused the loss of 300 stands and over 30,000 jobs. The Pasar Turi fire was the latest of nine unsolved market fires across Java over the preceding nine months that had already dispossessed thousands of traders from traditional markets. The blunt reality of the displacement it caused was immediately apparent to traders as they rushed to salvage their stock and relocate along the roadside or nearby railway line (Peters 2009: 907). Immediately following the fire, the municipal government opened the area along the road and railway line to displaced traders, but space here was expensive to rent and alternative sites few as displaced traders crowded into Surabaya's smaller markets (Ibid.). Meanwhile, construction was stalling on a temporary market intended to house the displaced until Pasar Turi could be reopened as a modern mall in the coming years. Seemingly locked into this new trajectory from *pasar* to mall, hundreds of displaced traders expressed their anger by addressing the Department of Trade and Industry, the Board of Investment offices, the Municipal Parliament, and the City Hall (Peters 2009: 908).

Traders had resisted the redevelopment of Pasar Turi into a mega mall for many years, claiming that rental space would

be too expensive and contracts only temporary. Now, trader resistance was suddenly put to rest by one night of fire, which forensic investigation proved to be intentional (Peters 2009: 909). Proof of arson resolved little for these traders, who were now displaced and unable to relocate anywhere without municipal approval. Their payment of taxes, improvement of stalls, and development of large clientele bases over many years counted for nothing as the government engaged in the above-mentioned campaign that approached a state of emergency and aimed at the clearance of street stalls and mobile vendors from Surabaya's streets.

While the streets were being emptied of vending activity, the city's largest remaining traditional market at Keputran, which lay at the back of the riverbank settlement part of *kampung* Malang and had also suffered a series of unsolved arson attacks over previous years, was slated for relocation to the urban periphery, despite impassioned protests by traders. Here also documentation had substituted occupancy as the only legitimizing principle and was enforced through certifications and legal papers, which were the only unequivocal evidence of proprietorship (Peters 2009: 913). Temporary contracts were issued through a new municipal regulation stipulating that licenses and agreements should be renewed on yearly basis. These new temporary contracts exposed traders to the ever-present possibility of nonextension and their being replaced by others capable of paying the inflated rents and service costs for space in the new mall (Ibid.).

Among the men of *kampung* Malang, the importance of market activities lay, and still does, in the association of work and personal growth. By working at the market stalls, men say they would learn the tricks of a particular trade, and more in general, discipline and dedication toward the practice of work:

> Men who work at the market, carry their business around all the time; wake up early, prepare their goods, and really just care about what they do. (Joko, 42 years old)

A youth, especially, would learn the art of a business by working at different market stalls over the course of his adolescence. He would rotate on a timely basis and become a trade apprentice before eventually moving on and trying to own his own business activity:

> Children must learn all sorts of activities, from as many people as they can. This way they can find out what they want to do, and really gain experience and wisdom. (Joko)

Because each market stand is usually associated with a particular family or a particular household, youths would circulate among different families and households and be treated as part of the family, as well as a business protégé:

> In the village children move around to live and work with a family, and then another family, and they also become part of the family's activity. When you go to the market you see them work at the stand, and then at another stand, and then at another stand again. Sometimes they go live with another family, maybe a relative, maybe not, sometimes they only stay there during the day and then come home at night. It depends, if there is enough room, or if the kids are grown up and want to do their own thing, maybe hang out with their friends and then come home at night. (Joko)
>
> The special thing about the market is that when a child goes to work he becomes a man, and also travels from one place to another in the village. (Wawan)

These forms of rotation are social institutions that can be partly assimilated to the customary habit of sending children off in an informal fostering arrangement to become a trade apprentice or a business protégé, where they learn how to collaborate and operate together under the same roof, the social practice of "borrowing" children described among others by Hildred Geertz (1961) and more recently revisited by Suzanne Brenner (1998). According to these scholars, there are links that are constructed through apprenticeship rather than blood, and children have historically been "loaned"

among relatives, even distant relatives. Quite often these exchanges involved monetary transactions, which somehow, as these authors maintain, would help secure recognize the child's status and rights.

Here again, the transformation of the urban landscape, the destruction of local markets, and the abundance of new mega shopping plazas has important consequences for the practices of socialization and the masculine activities of the men of *kampung* Malang. The changes in the urban landscape entail a reconfiguration of social practices and modes of interaction, while also endangering the very forms of income earning, transition to adult life, and affirmation of an idealized masculine self. What seems to be at stake here is the idea that men can no longer be related to one another through work inclinations, attitudes, and the sharing of an economic activity.

Pigeon Racing and Prohibitions

Berkumpul is also associated with recreational activities, such as pigeon racing and gambling. It is worth noting that the playful aspect of such practices is intimately intertwined with its economic valence and efficacy.

As described in great detail by Peters (2010, 2013), pigeon racing (*merpati belap*) brought more men together than any other *kampung* institution. It took place in the main alley of *kampung* Malang, which formed the end point to a race between two male pigeons. Pitted against one another in a race that begins five kilometers to the east, the birds first come into view to awaiting punters as distant specks in the sky. Eagerly pointing out the incoming birds, the chattering punters fall silent as they watch the pigeons begin a sharp descent toward their cages. Losing sight of the birds behind the *kampung* rooftops, the punters await the sound of gongs that are beaten by awaiting adjudicators at each cage to mark a pigeon's return and the winner of the race. As bookkeepers settle bets, the birds are rested and new

races organized using different birds and different cages (Peters 2010: 581).

At the successful conclusion of a race, the bookkeeper who arranged the bets divides up 10 percent of the winnings among those involved. This includes the three individuals involved in the release of the bird, the bookkeeper himself, and the two who wait at the respective cages to beat the drum that signals the return of the bird to its cage (Peters 2010: 581–582).

Built by *kampung* men to house their racing pigeons, the cages are many and tower over the alleyways as the tallest and most prominent structures in the *kampung*. A ladder takes a pigeon's owner up a supporting pillar of solid wood and into a cage made typically from chicken wire and corrugated iron. Up there, owners escape for long periods, feeding their birds with fresh grubs, spraying them with fine mists of water, and cleaning the cage to ensure the birds are in prime racing condition. A man's eagerness and devotion to his birds and cages would soon be sapped, however, by a new municipal campaign intent on eradicating the pigeon races (Peters 2010: 582).

Historically, pigeon racing as a form of *berkumpul* proved an enduring repository of knowledge that threatened colonial and New Order regimes intent on limiting the unmediated exchange of information among the poor majority (Peters 2010: 581). In one report from 1941, for example, the municipal government outlawed pigeon racing because of fears it harbored subversive ideas capable of causing political destabilization during World War II (Frederick 1978: 322, quoted in Peters 2010: 582–583). In the more politically open landscape of post-1998 Indonesia, however, *berkumpul* was threatened, not because of the ideas it nurtured, but the land-use pattern it represented.

Pigeon racing obstructed the main alley, which now formed an important thoroughfare linking two main roads separated by the *kampung*. Dated February 29, 2008, an instruction from the *kelurahan* office (the lowest official administrative post in municipal government) forbade bird racing (Peters

2013). Pinned on the *kampung* notice board, the instructions (reported in Peters 2010: 582) read,

> A meeting has taken place between the sub-district police head and representatives from the community on 25 February 2008 concerning the "Peace and Order in Society" (*Kamtibmas*) doctrine with regard to gambling on the pigeon racing. In relation to this, the assistance of the community is requested to help pass on the information that pigeon coops will be pulled down and declarations of ceasing pigeon racing (. . .) made through the co-operation of neighborhood officials and local residents.

The initiative was unprecedented in its thoroughgoing assault on pigeon racing and was complemented by regular undercover police operations to catch bookkeepers (Ibid.). In *kampung* Malang, the money circulating in the gambling economy supported a variety of industries based around the sale of food, alcohol, and merchandise to the gamblers congregating in the alley. As the bird racing disappeared, so did these industries (Ibid.).

Keep the Money Moving

The main trouble with trying to make money by working on the street side and the world of the informal economy among the men of *kampung* Malang is not just the scarcity of money itself, which must not be underestimated, but the inconstant circulation of it.

As suggested by Brown (2009), in order to act as capital, cash has to be set in motion, circulating to accumulate surplus value in a flow that, ideally, should never stop. The similarity with Surabaya's one-way spiraling streets is striking (Brown 2009: 161). However, while money is generally expected to circulate, a particularly high value is often placed on the movement of circulation itself, whether or not that movement is producing surplus value:

> A good example occurs among small-scale vendors, both on the streets and in the *pasar*. Sellers will often implore

> potential buyers to make a purchase, even at a price below the vendor's cost, if they have not sold anything on that particular day. The reason behind this is that there should ideally be some successful sales activity. The implication is that sales generate sales, and once the flow begins, more sales are bound to follow, perhaps at a higher price. The principle seems that the way to make money is to position oneself near a circuit of flow. This is also evident in the clustering of businesses which sell the same sorts of products, both in sections of the *pasar* and in regions of the city or the village. When one business is successful, others crop up almost immediately as close to the first as they can get. Rather than trying to distinguish themselves from the others, they generally simply wait for customers to come (or to stimulate the flow of customers by discounting the first sale). Once a repeat customer is made, however, he or she is sometimes pressured to buy something regardless of need or competing prices, based on maintaining the status of repeat customer. (Brown 2009: 162–163)

One popular traditional financial institution, *arisan* (rotating credit associations), both ameliorates and exacerbates the problem of the circulation of money (Brown 2009: 164). The unclogging of the streets from gambling activities took quite a toll on *arisan*, as most forms were prohibited and outlawed. They, however, continue to proliferate in secrecy. *Arisan* works as a powerful social institution because it underlies cohesiveness and inclusion: the main point of *arisan* is, indeed, that those who participate are bound together by trust, and a person does not just play *arisan* with any group of people, but with a specific number of trusted persons.

In theory, *arisan* are set up to periodically pay out in lump sums the same amount as is put through a series of smaller regular payments. (Brown 2009: 165) In practice, however, *arisan* are pursued as fecund sources of profit in their own right, and through a variety of mechanisms that generate impressive profits for some of the participants. In fact, people do not merely participate in *arisan*, but play *arisan*, treating

it very much like a lottery rather than just a small and traditional saving bank (Brown 2009: 166).

There are many sorts of *arisan*, and not just a single or one traditional way of organizing it. One simple pattern is for a group of people to get together at regular intervals (ranging from daily to monthly) where they all put a set amount into a pot. Then the participants draw lots to see who gets the pot for that meeting. This sort of recreational *arisan* is hard to distinguish from gambling, and usually described in terms that minimize the focus on money and emphasize the social aspect (Ibid.). However, it is much more widespread to include some mechanisms for ensuring that each participant gets the same number of opportunities to take the money home. This can be accomplished by simply taking turns in an established order, but it is very popular to randomize the sequence by drawing lots. For instance, some groups remove the names of members who have already won in the present round and draw anew each meeting (Ibid.). Others have everyone draw a number at the beginning of *arisan* to create the order for that round. The *arisan* that give everyone one chance to win are more credible as a means of saving money, but they have the disadvantage of fragility: members who have already taken their turn at a payout must be persuaded to continue to contribute their share at subsequent meetings, or the group will collapse, and some members will have paid in but not received their money back (see Alexander 1987, quoted in Brown 2009: 167).

The River, the Labyrinth

The older men of *kampung* Malang love nothing better than to recount to their sons and grandsons anecdotes about the Mas River, which borders the eastern entrance of their home village.

First and foremost, the Mas signifies the "Blood River" (*Sungai darah*), a term that refers to those periods in the city's history—such as during the struggle for independence,

the overthrow of the communist party, and the licensed assassination of criminals by the police—when the river swept the discarded corpses of the victims of politically motivated violence downstream toward the sea (see Peters 2010). The river banks are associated with death and the passage of large masses of dead bodies, the remains of local heroes whose epic deeds animated much of the local and national history over the course of the decades. More recently, according to the older men of *kampung* Malang, the river has been washing away the solitary corpses of young adolescents, young men who have ventured out into the city streets of the new middle-class neighborhoods in search of employment, but have become involved with street gangs, petty crime, and substance abuse. According to some of the stories that widely circulate among *kampung* men, these lads have vanished and never returned home. The victims of personal retaliation or indirect revenge, oftentimes consumed by drug and alcohol addiction, their dead bodies are sporadically found by the river banks, their faces barely recognizable.

The older men of *kampung* Malang seem to make a clear-cut distinction between the masses of corpses of local heroes and the carcasses of young adolescents. While the former are the epitome of political commitment and collective efforts, the latter are the symbol of social alienation associated with city life. While local heroes were historically found lying in the water in large groups, young adolescents nowadays come into sight one at a time, as if nobody noticed they had gone missing. Ultimately, the Mas River suggests an important change has occurred in the lives of young men that has altered the way the current generation of young adolescents embraces their masculine identity, assembles, and socializes. Young men are “wild,” more “libertine”: in the city streets they struggle to forge durable bonds of solidarity and mutual help, and fail to find a decent social location. There is no doubt that some of these stories are exaggerated. They are, nevertheless, symptomatic of a sense of disquiet.

Second, the Mas River is *sepi*, that is, void of any human activity. Barracks cram the river bank despite frequent police attempts to vacate the area. Jalang Malang, the one-way street that runs alongside the river, is jammed with private vehicles, yet, in the eyes of the older men of *kampung* Malang, "nothing happens by the river." Such perception is due in large part to the city's dispositions that forbid small trade activities along the river banks, as well as along the alleys. Because it is hard to meet, men feel socially isolated, a perspective that worries them with regard to their own lives and the lives of their sons. If there are scarce chances to come together and find work, how are their sons going to be able to draw the resources to make the transition to adult life?

Third, the river symbolizes passage, albeit not always a positive kind of transit. It represents passage toward another part of the city, where their sons will perhaps try to find a job and will try to embrace the responsibilities of adult life, make a living, and eventually reach a form of economic self-sufficiency. However, while the riverbanks represent, and have long represented, a clear site of aggregation, beyond the river, and the village, the city is described in terms of an indefinite and precarious place, where buildings are half-finished, left incomplete, and social relations are less supervised, more libertine, less constructed on the basis of long-lasting bonds of collaboration and solidarity. From the riverbanks, the horizon discloses bright city lights, but as these men metaphorically turn their gaze from beyond the old industrial area to what they perceive as the intricate city paths that are largely unknown to them, they cannot help but label the city one big "labyrinth" (*labirin*).

Chapter 2

Growing Up in Surabaya: Youth, Street Gangs, the City, and Beyond

Introduction

This chapter investigates the nature of youth street gangs in Surabaya, their transition to organized crime, and their relationship with urban spaces. It discusses personal growth, the quest for social integration, and movement, with a focus on how particular channels facilitate, organize, and constrain movement, and how circuits of human mobility are configured for a particular group of people, to particular ends in particular places at a particular historical conjuncture (Freeman 2001; Lindquist 2009; Tsing 2000).

Adolescents who are quickly approaching the world of the informal economy are particularly affected by the political, economic, and social changes that take place in the urban areas of Surabaya, as they begin to struggle to find appropriate sites for aggregation and work. Unemployment and concerns about the future, the absence of recognized social status, and a diffused sentiment of being disconnected from the flow of capital, goods, people, and ideas that animates life in the city pushes a growing proportion of these youngsters to create a network of companions and develop new forms of support, encouragement, pride, and identity (Kristiansen 2003).

Youth street gangs are perhaps the most manifest form of male aggregation in contemporary *kampung* Malang. The driving force behind these youth formations is above all social and symbolic. These gangs are the social cement that contributes to the construction of a sense of shared identity. Nevertheless, gang members also benefit from the material help they receive from some of the other gang members and make a living by exchanging goods, small money, and clothes. They also resort to petty crime and robbery. From their point of view, they do not feel at all socially isolated. They certainly express a sentiment of disconnection from the stream of wealth and opportunities that are offered to youths and young adults on the city streets; however, they do not articulate an explicit discourse about social solitude. In fact, they maintain that gang membership provides a powerful resource in order to "move forward" in life. Furthermore, in this particular area of Indonesia, youth gangs typically evolve into adult gangs, as young teenagers follow their older brothers, relatives, and friends and move to South Bali, where they enter the world of professional gangsterism. As they work toward their transition into young adults, these gang members situate their life experiences and aspirations in direct substantial continuity with the life experiences of their fathers, uncles, and grandparents, and imagine a life of work, self-sufficiency, and family responsibilities.

Youth Gangs in Indonesia: A Theoretical Framework

The Need to Move Forward in Life

Recent scholarship on male youth street gangs in urban Indonesia has insisted on the bounded temporality of these group formations (see, for instance, Guinness 2009; Nilan 2010; Tadié 2006). According to these studies, youth street gangs have a very limited life cycle. During school years, young teenage boys look for social recognition through temporary networks of friends, and some resort to violent

behavior; however, they usually leave these groups as more legitimate opportunities are offered to them in early adulthood and do not proceed into adult gangs.

Monica Barry (2010), for instance, argues that the teenage years of heroic warfare end abruptly on the last day of senior high school. She points out that, while still in school, many adolescents have few "socially recognized means of legitimating their stake in the social world" (Barry 2010: 134, as quoted in Nilan 2010: 6). During this phase, some may engage in antisocial behavior "as their only means of gaining recognition meantime, even if such recognition comes only from the temporary network of friends within the school" (Ibid.). In his study of young men in the Central Javanese city of Yogyakarta, Hatib Kadir (2009, quoted in Nilan 2010) notes that being involved in gang conflict at school is part of a "sweetest experience" youths like to remember fondly and revisit years after they have left school. In the same area, Nilan (2010) echoes these observations by noting that among youths she has studied,

> (. . .) there is great pleasure in planning strategy and running with the pack. Actual combat is exciting and victory exhilarating. They were saddened when their comrades were wounded and devastated when they lost a fight. (. . .) In essence, school was boring but the gang was thrilling. Involvement in gang fighting and campaigns while at school appears to give young men a solid sense of purpose, and an ontologically strong masculine identity: yet this is confined to a relatively short period to the now extended transition to male adulthood. (. . .) Tellingly, some young male workers and university students even return sometimes to their old school gates in the afternoon to urge on the current teenage gangs and reminisce about battles they fought. (. . .) Nostalgia lingers in accounts of young men occasionally revisiting the sites of their schoolboy gang battles, even when they must engage daily with the middle class male labor market or higher educational institution which does not require physical prowess, courage or daring. They clearly feel that something satisfying and pleasurable has been lost. (Nilan 2010: 7)

A similar position is maintained by Leccardi (2006, also quoted in Nilan 2010: 8), who describes gang membership in senior secondary school in Indonesia as an "episode" in the fragmented life course, a part of an unconnected series of events, a small project at best, but nevertheless one that is quickly abandoned to move on to other experiences. As suggested by Jérôme Tadié (2006), who conducted research among youth and youth gangs in Jakarta, schoolboys are rarely keen on continuing to take part in gang activities once they pursue higher education or enter the labor market:

> Schoolboys enjoy life in the gang and admire the heroes of adult threatening gangs, but they rarely seem to emulate them in adult life. Once they have completed senior high school, paid for by parental sacrifice, almost all will enter the middle-class or skilled working class labor market, or pursue higher education. Once in the workplace or the university campus, a completely different set of social and cultural conditions prevail that do not favor continued gang activity or peer fighting. Neither employers nor university authorities are tolerant of gang violence and there is relatively little free time. (Tadié 2006: 131)

These studies are based on the experiences of middle-class youth, who are privileged enough to enter high school and eventually move on to university. Youths of *kampung* Malang, in contrast, do not follow such an educational path and for the most part struggle to complete the required nine years of compulsory education.

In Indonesia, students are required to attend nine years of school, comprised of primary (*Sekolah Dasar*, or SD) and junior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*, or SMP). These may be followed by three years of senior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*, or SMA), or students can choose among a variety of vocational and preprofessional junior and senior secondary schools. Education is defined as a planned effort to establish a study environment and education process so that the student may actively develop his/her own

potential to gain the religious and spiritual level, consciousness, personality, intelligence, behavior, and creativity for him/herself, other citizens, and the nation. In primary and secondary schools, the youths of *kampung* Malang begin to forge friendships and become involved with small groups that vaguely resemble youth gangs. However, they leave school early in their teenage years, as the material need to make a living begins to impinge on their lives. To them, school is not "boring" at all, as Nilan argues in the above quote with reference to middle-class schoolboys. Youth in *kampung* Malang clearly remember school as a very happy moment of their life. However, their feel pressured to start looking for a job, and feel "sad" (*sedih*) about having to drop out. As many recount, in order to "develop" (*maju*) oneself, to "move forward" in life, a youth has almost no choice but to withdraw from school. Personal development (*kemajuan*) is associated here primarily with making money and reaching self-sufficiency, in substantial continuity with hegemonic ideas of gender roles and masculine identity, such as those described in the previous chapter with reference to the older generation of men of *kampung* Malang.

For the above reasons, and as we shall see in the following sections, gangs generate in the neighborhood spaces rather than in school cafeterias. To become a part of a gang is not just a diversion that a youth takes up out of mere boredom. It is a fun, playful engagement but also an activity that leads to personal development and as such requires actual work and personal investment. Through gang membership, youths attempt to turn their luck around and begin to fight their own way into adult life. This is all the more relevant as some youths continue to be involved with gang activities well into adulthood, either in their local neighborhood or somewhere else. Far from being a sweet episodic experience, for low-income youths the gang represents the entry point to a particular end in life.

To better understand the ethnographic data I have collected in *kampung* Malang, I turn to a recent study for

comparison. Elaine Rosa Salo's (2006, quoted by Streicher 2011) article on gang practices on the new urban streets of a South African community argues that gangs should not only be seen as an expression of isolation and opposition to society and the elderly but also as an expression of "social cohesion in peripheral communities" (Salo 2006: 149). According to Salo, gangs might also embrace societal values and contribute to the reiteration and reproduction of social norms and social roles. In line with this, she explores the relations gang members entertain with the household and the wider community. With reference to this last point, she argues that gang members should be observed in the midst of the many social interactions that concur in the formation of their identity: these include, no doubt, gang activities but also family and house duties, romantic relations, and social commitments:

> Gang members have other gendered identities that are embedded within the generational continuity of a household and woven into the richly textured social expanse of the township's communal relationships and networks. They are also sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, lovers, friends and social mentors. These other gendered identities overlap, sometimes articulate, sometimes conflict with, and ultimately shape their identity as gang members. (Salo 2006: 149)

Salo suggests the need for more on-the-ground ethnography to better understand the spaces where these multiple identities are played out.

Overall, as we shall see, in *kampung* Malang, the gang is without a doubt, a locus for expressing dissatisfaction and personal turmoil; however, it is also the point of convergence where youths come together to try to reconnect with society, its values and norms, and with social expectations, in a context of profound urban transformations. The life of youths who are involved with youth gangs is not one-sided and limited to gang activities, but it intersects with a wide range of social spheres, from work to personal relations to a series of interactions with society at large. Moreover, these youths are

extremely mobile subjects and exhibit the qualities of movement and transition of the spaces they inhabit, imagine, and travel. The streets, the alleyways, the city spaces, and the roads to migration are incarnated, reworked, and revisited, and come to designate a geography that, while local, is not limited to one place. Let us now turn to the youth gangs of *kampung* Malang in greater detail.

Antecedents of Youth Gangs in Indonesia

These youth street gangs express a powerful identity in the present and in the future. Such identity is based on notions of territory, honor, respect, fear and on norms of solidarity. This symbolism is rooted in past accounts of collective male violence and banditry, and makes reference to the deeds of local strongmen known as the *jago* (literally "cock" or "rooster"). In the following, I digress briefly on the salient features of *jago* masculinity.

According to Ian Wilson (2010), *jago* masculinity is enacted through the securing, control, and defense of a specific territory, calculated acts of symbolic violence, and the fortification of the body through the acquisition of supernatural powers (Wilson 2010: 2). In the world of *jago,* he argues, supremacy is determined by the extent of the monopolization over a street, a neighborhood, a market, or a bus terminal, within which the *jago* controls the extraction of illegal fees on the pretext of offering protection from criminals or other *jago*; furthermore, a *jago* normally entertains relationships and networks of patronage with the police, the military, and government officials (Wilson 2010: 3). The *Jago* thrives on the excitement of exercising domain over a territory and being recognized by the community as a leader who rules by the exercise of threats, force, and violence. Moreover, the *jago* is believed to possess an array of magical and supernatural abilities. Among these, physical invulnerability and invisibility are achieved through tutelage and ascetic trials under the direction of a master (Wilson 2010: 5).

Wilson argues that, with the strengthening of the New Order, the *jago* was first criminalized, then progressively institutionalized within state-created bodies. As notions of honor and territoriality through the use of force became a threat to the state's monopolization over violence, the *jago* were contained and rationally reconstituted as obedient auxiliaries of state power (Wilson 2010: 12–15). In the 1980s, for instance, the term *preman* indicated young males in groups engaged in criminal activities. These groups were characterized by their tight solidarity and obedience to a chain of command, and were central to the system of violence and corruption under the Suharto regime (Barker 2001; Kristiansen 2003: 111). State officials controlled and protected street-level *preman* through a system known as *bekking* ("backing"), which gave *preman* state protection, while also forcing them to pay their own dues to government representatives (Kristiansen 2003: 115; Ryter 2005).

The critical economic and social situation brought about by the Asian crisis of 1997–1998 forced the long-time ruler of Indonesia to resign. With the downfall of Suharto and the collapse of the New Order, Gerry Van Klinken (2007) notes a shift that took place from a top-down state-driven pattern of violence to a pattern of lateral and diversified struggles between different groups, including small local gangs. In other words, with the onset of decentralization and the liberalization of Indonesian politics, a diffuse sense of frustration permeated civil life, in which the state was perceived as weak, no longer able to perform its protective function, and as being at the mercy of political elites and their interests, and numerous alternate groups began to proliferate. Violence became "democratic," in the sense that it came to be used as a tool for creating new social bonds, fostering existing social relationships, and laying claims about social identities. At a phenomenological level, violence defined the everyday experiences of individuals and groups and became the visible aspect of numerous social interactions.

Wilson has included the notion of *jago* masculinity under the category of "protest masculinity" (Wilson 2010), which is a form of masculine identity that emerges in poor contexts or among men who feel marginalized and socially excluded in order to protest against the state's failure to improve social conditions and to assert social autonomy and some type of territorial sovereignty. According to Wilson, this has been particularly the case with ethnic and religious conflicts. Nilan (2010, among others) has expanded the use of the category of "protest masculinity" in the Indonesian context to point to the experiences of schoolboys at a liminal stage of their lives, one that is filled with a feeling of uncertainty about the future and the desire to challenge (or at least to question) the values of patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity. In line with this analysis, schoolboys are a part of the youth subculture phenomenon, and their actions are informed by a will to voice dissatisfaction toward the present before progressing into adult life. Here the focus is on the opposition between a (collective) self and society in general, and on the violent (yet playful) rituals that youths perform in school cafeterias to make a name for themselves.

Among youth street gangs in *kampung* Malang, *jago* masculinity provided young men with a model for thinking about themselves in a context of perceived disconnection and vulnerability. These youths certainly feel excluded, but mostly want to connect with a new landscape of opportunities, capital, goods, and ideas. They strenuously insist on notions of territory, discipline, security, honor, and work to defend their social identity against a backdrop of social and urban changes. However, to interpret their activities and social practices as a mere form of "protest," opposition, or resistance would be to simplistic. Rather, I suggest reading their words and actions in a more nuanced sense, as a quest for social acceptance, reconnection, and integration. In short, these youths make a specific use of the spaces and the resources that are available to them to find a way (metaphorically and literally) to be a

part of society, and not to subvert it altogether. In doing so, they also create meaningful places.

Youth Gangs in Kampung Malang

Territory and Work Opportunities

In present-day *kampung* Malang, there are about a dozen youth street gangs (*geng*) that populate the area. They consist of youth aged 13 to 17. These gangs do not closely match the definition of a gang as provided by gang studies (see, for instance, Hagedorn 2005; Klein 2005; Rogers 2003; for Indonesia, see Nasir and Rosenthal 2009a, 2009b; Nilan 2011). For instance, they are not yet stable criminal organizations. Rather, they tend to be fluid and loosely structured associations of peers: gang members, especially at a younger age often swing from one gang to another following disputes and arguments, while many simply want to continue to hang out with their close friends who decide to seek membership to another (and in some cases rival) group. As gang members become more involved with gang activities, however, they tend to pledge their exclusive loyalty to one gang only.

Many youth gangs originate at school. School is the place where young teenagers start to form friendships and begin to think about their future. However, because these youths usually leave school at an early age to pursue work in the informal economy, most youth gangs self-assemble in the neighborhood. The high level of underemployment provides large amounts of time for youths to interact in the neighborhood. Many call these activities *nongkrong*, "hanging around" or "doing nothing." The actual practice of "doing nothing" includes busy activities such as talking, joking, drinking, singing, recounting details from previous events, playing video games, fiddling with mobile phones, chatting via social networks, and exchanging goods (clothes, cigarettes, alcohol), but also passing around and trading information about small job opportunities. In the neighborhood, youths come together in gangs to "make a

living," to "look for money" (*cari uang*), as they maintain (see also Brown 2009). The underlying idea is that a person leaves the home in the morning to try to earn enough to support himself, possibly with the help of others. In a broad sense, in fact, *cari uang* refers not only to the strict acquisition of small amounts of money but also food, cigarettes, drinks, and things of everyday usage (as corroborated by Brown 2009: 152).

A youth usually joins a gang through initiation, which involves fighting between initiates and older gang members and usually lasts for a short amount of time. The initiate must show courage and toughness and also pay a small membership fee, which is a token of commitment, a tangible representation of obligation and engagement. In some ways, one might argue, gang membership is a currency in the neighborhood. Young initiates pay a certain amount of money to join a gang, and receive social recognition, prestige, and help from other gang members in exchange. In doing so, they generate material and social capital, and are therefore highly sought after by gang leaders who want to increase their influence over a specific territory.

A territory is what defines a gang at its best, according to what gang members say. Indeed, each gang controls its own territory in the neighborhood, what is usually known as the gang's turf (*lahan*): a whole alley (although this is a fairly rare occurrence), a segment of an alley, a bus stop, a small parking area, the back area of a building (in many cases gangs hang out at the back of the shopping malls, as the alleyways that depart from the exit of these complexes lead back into the neighborhood). Within their territory, youth gangs attempt to regulate the flow of wealth, goods, and work opportunities. Ideally, all business opportunities should fall under their supervision. Gangs extract fees from traders and offer protection from thieves and intruders in return; they collect information about prospective short- or long-term work opportunities in the formal and informal market; and they monitor the sale of illegal substances and stolen goods.

Gangs also manage to raise money by imposing a payment upon those who cross their territory, such as city dwellers who enter the neighborhood to look for inexpensive labor or migrants from the surrounding rural areas who travel from one place to another looking for accommodations and a job.

Ideally, to exercise influence over a large territory is a synonym for the possibility of generating more work opportunities and more income. Particularly, there are territories that are considered to be more appealing than others because they border on wealthy city areas, such as the rear entrances of shopping malls and the alleys behind some of the new buildings in the financial districts. For instance, some gang members who control the parking lots of the shopping malls have better access to the occasional job as parking attendant (whether legal or illegal), garbage collector, or handyman. Other gang members work to satisfy the needs of some of the middle-class youth by selling drugs and stolen items. Some others again assault and rob these middle-class adolescents and steal money and cell phones that they will eventually sell on the black market. In other cases, gang members also make small profits by selling newspapers to businessmen as they leave their offices during rush hour. It is also common for gang members to try to make a living by working as street food vendors. I will return to this point below in the chapter.

What is interesting about the idea of territory among youth gangs in *kampung* Malang is that while the boundaries of such territory might be well set and reiterated over time, they can also change at any given moment. This aspect of alteration and flexibility has been scarcely underlined by gang studies, which tend to situate gangs neatly in one fixed territory. However, because gang members often defect to other gangs, a gang's territory might expand, contract, or even disappear in the blink of an eye. For instance, when gangs lose a consistent number of members over a short period of time, they might choose to cease their activities and abandon a territory altogether. Conversely, when gangs

have too many members, they might decide to venture out into the neighborhood and increase their authority over adjacent areas. There are also cases of gangs that merge to establish their influence over larger parts of the neighborhood. Furthermore, many youth gangs claim they control more than one territory within the same neighborhood, and these areas might be distant from one another or even situated at the opposite ends of the neighborhood itself. As one gang member pointed out, "[G]angs are like dots (*titik*) on a map, some are small dots, some are bigger dots, but their size on the map can change, just as their fortune changes."

Discipline and Invulnerability

Two notions are associated with gang membership. The first is the notion of discipline (*disiplin*), which refers to the existence of a code of apprenticeship and behavior among gang members, and the second is the notion of physical invulnerability (*ilmu kebal*). To be a gang member means to embrace a set of norms of conduct and to acquire specific corporeal abilities. These two elements are connected to one another.

The idea of discipline is inculcated in new members as soon as they become part of the group, and it presupposes that a new member must understand the place he occupies within the gang. Not all members are equal, despite a diffused sense of solidarity and the sentiment that relations among members should be harmonic; however, seniority is not the logic that sustains hierarchies among gang members. There are two factors that are taken into account when a new member is accepted and that contribute to identifying his place and rank within the gang: the amount of money he was able to pay to join the gang (the higher the sum, the more prestige he is given as he enters the group), and his exposure to the gang prior to his direct involvement (for instance, whether he has siblings or close friends who are already a part of the gang). Hierarchies and statuses, moreover, are reworked and adjusted on a daily basis, and gang

members see their influence oscillate as they compete with one another to show shrewdness in the attempt to make a living (to be *cerdik*, clever, ingenious). Indeed, they place strong emphasis on an aptitude for generating money, income, and for gaining possession of stolen goods. Particularly, gang members who become successful at obtaining a permanent job in the city are highly valued by the rest of gang as they, in turn, might be in the position to have firsthand information about small jobs and generate further work opportunities. This is the case for youths who find a relatively stable job at one of the stores or food chains at the shopping mall, or who are employed to do occasional repairs and maintenance work at one of the hotels in the city.

On a more intimate level, the idea of discipline presupposes that a new member must fulfill a series of duties and obligations and comply with the day-to-day exigencies of the gang, whatever these may be. There is one responsibility and task in particular that it is worth mentioning, and it is the duty to "clean the house." In *kampung* Malang, youth gangs usually occupy small barracks, shacks, and abandoned homes. These squatter settlements are scattered all over the neighborhood and symbolize the possession of a specific territory. In fact, they are considered as the "headquarters" of the gang and are usually the place where gang members aggregate to hang out during the day. What is striking about these informal and precarious settlements is that they are kept as neat and tidy as possible by their inhabitants. The walls are plastered with pictures of relatives and friends who have lived in the same area, and with newspaper articles about police raids and local thugs; bottles, drinks, glasses and snacks are arranged on the small tables that are made out of cardboard boxes; and there is usually also an old mattress or a couch of some sort to accommodate gang members when they meet. New gang members are usually in charge of keeping the place cozy and comfortable: they wash the dishes, sweep the floor, and decorate the room with secondhand materials. While new members take care of the gang's home, older gang members

usually assemble to play chess and gamble. During these activities, new members act as maids (they are ironically referred to as the *pembantu*, "the housemaids") and cook and serve meals to other gang members.

New gang members rarely leave their barracks unsupervised, as they first have to become familiar with the perimeter of the gang's territory. For this reason, they are chaperoned around the area by older gang members who take them for a jog or for a motorbike ride to show them the posts and landmarks that delimit their turf and to point out the spots where the gang operates. New gang members are usually required to memorize and be able to name all these spots that make up their gang's territory.

Discipline is also manifest in the way a gang member carries himself and walks in a neighborhood alley. In fact, gang members are required to walk in line (*jalan di garis*) and march through the neighborhood alleyways like miniature soldiers, as they often refer to themselves. The idea of walking in straight lines[1] along the narrow stretched out spaces of the neighborhood alleyways serves several purposes, some practical, some symbolic. First, by positioning themselves in a line, gang members are able to move easily through tight, otherwise impracticable, interstices, and second, by stomping their feet on the ground, they tread noisily, announce their presence, and are recognized by the community at large. Also, by walking in line, gang members reiterate the gang's internal hierarchy, as gang leaders usually march at the front of the line. In many cases gang members are able to recite out loud the full sequence of names that make up an entire line, and this is all the more impressive as positions, just like statuses, change frequently. To know the names of gang members reflects on the self-perception of single gang members and their sense of identity. As many say, "in a line you always know who you are." Moreover, by proceeding in line, gang members fulfill the need to never backtrack (*mundur*), as they maintain: in a line, somebody is always watching somebody else's back.

Such a notion of discipline has a lot to do with order, posture, gait, and reciprocal help and support, and it is what constitutes a person's strength and invulnerability. The idea of invulnerability here differs in part from the supernatural powers historically associated with bandits and strongmen. While gang members in *kampung* Malang also believe that the body should be impenetrable from attacks and disruption, they make no reference to the fact that such ability should be achieved through ascetic trials under the direction of a guru (Wilson 2010) or through a separation between the self and society. Rather, invulnerability is a tangible collective construction, one that is learned, reiterated, and preserved with the help of all senior gang members, and other gang members in general. In short, invulnerability is achieved through integration into a group and through the physical positioning of a person within a line.

Last, there is an inherent element of ambiguity that seems to characterize the notion of invulnerability as intended here by these youths. As implied by numerous gang members, because a gang's configuration might change a great deal over a short period of time, and gang members might jump in and out from one gang to another, it is not always easy to trust a new members's commitment to the group. While walking in line, then, many are torn between the will to trust the person who walks behind them and the diffidence toward his true intentions, between the confidence that "somebody always has your back," unconditionally, and the doubt that that same somebody "might stab you in the back" all of a sudden, as some have recounted.

A Safe Place

Overall, we have seen how youth street gangs in *kampung* Malang provide a means for overcoming exclusion and for seeking excitement, work, and a sense of identity. They are social lubricants that satisfy the need for socialization and social mobility: gang members are bound together (some

more permanently than others) and support each other, materially and emotionally. They share a set of values and norms of behavior that are based on discipline and order. As a result, there is a general perception among gang members that "within a gang, a person is safe (*aman,* or *selamat*)," and will be free from fear, danger, and will benefit from the help and protection of others.

Youths feel safe because their neighborhood is also safe and peaceful (also *aman*), as they maintain. There is a quality of order and restraint that differentiates the neighborhood territory as a whole from the city at large in the eyes of these young men. In the neighborhood, there are clear-cut physical barriers, and most neighborhood thresholds are marked by gates and guards (Brown 2009). There is a known local authority, the *kampung* leader, a figure who emphasizes a sense of autonomy and responsibility. The alleyways that wend rhizome-like designate a world that, in the midst of the city, remains not quite urban. Once a person enters the neighborhood alleyways, it is understood that he or she leaves the public city and, if not a local resident, may only proceed at the dispensation of the local community. While in theory all streets, including the neighborhood alleyways, are legally public, in practice outsiders do not ordinarily claim any generalized public right to enter such domains, and incidents of mugging, beating, or worse are very common as a result of trespassing (Brown 2009: 124–125; see also Barker 1999; Dick 2002).

Youth gangs themselves also contribute to creating a safe and secure environment and go out of their way to protect local neighborhood inhabitants from outside intruders, robbers, and criminals. In fact, while competing with each other to preserve their turf's integrity and legitimacy, these gangs do not engage in open or violent confrontations and do not battle with rival gangs inside the neighborhood. Neither do they prey on local inhabitants and nor victimize the local population. In other words, there is no display of violence in the neighborhood, at least not one that

would compromise the very existence of the neighborhood life. Rather, youth gangs attempt to collaborate to ensure the safety and prosperity of the local community. They are motivated by a certain love (*cinta*) and respect (*hormat*) for their neighborhood, and vow to care about its security and good fortune.

In recent years, for instance, youth gangs in *kampung* Malang have fought vigorously to prevent the city municipality from clearing the neighborhood alleys of all traditional forms of trading and from tearing down the traditional markets. As the police were busy mapping the local city residents through documentation and validation, and continued to dislodge and relocate people and business activities to create a sort of spatial legibility that would improve circulation and revenues, many youths began to become actively involved in the defense of the informal alley-based social networks, notably by serving as lookouts for unannounced police incursions and, more frequently, by corrupting public officers. The corruption of policemen and municipal employees through payments and commission fees (*komisi*) to avoid dislodging operations has somehow become endemic in the area, and it is a symptom of a generalized sentiment of distrust toward political authorities and the attempt to (re) establish a form of collective sovereignty over a determined territory (see also Peters 2009).

For the above reasons, youth gangs are not perceived as a threat by the neighborhood residents. This idea is by no means implausible in a context of economic and social fragmentation. As noted by Dennis Rogers in his seminal works on Nicaraguan youth gangs (see, for instance, Rogers 2005, 2006a, 2006b), there is a substantial difference between the perception of the gang phenomenon as a whole and the value attributed to the local manifestation of a gang by a local community (Rogers 2005: 12). While the former is overtly and unequivocally criticized, the latter is somehow accepted, as it is seen as the principal source of security in the neighborhood. According to Rogers, youth gangs

and their "violent care" are a medium through which a localized form of sustained social order is established, laying down practical and symbolic rules and norms that go beyond the gang and affect the wider neighborhood community (Rogers 2005: 12).

Rain, Mud, and Battles

In contrast to the neighborhood, there is a quality of unruliness and excess that is associated with the city and with the city life. In particular, the inhabitants of *kampung* Malang describe the city streets as chaotic, broken, and disorderly, and the social relations that take place in the city space as too libertine (*bebas*). The notion of *bebas* indicates confusion, muddle, while also denoting a certain disregard for morality, the opposite of discipline. *Bebas*, for instance, is the word one uses to describe the fragmentation of social relations, and also the term one uses to talk about prostitutes, or the feeling people get from drugs. Parents usually worry that if their children spend too much time in the city, they might want to be free (*mau bebas*), enjoy life, and will ultimately fail to retain the importance of social boundaries. Youths (especially when involved with violence) also seem preoccupied that their behavior might not foster healthy social relationships or risk compromising the stability of social bonds. For this reason, because *kampung* Malang is, and must remain, intrinsically as safe as possible, gangs confront each other outside the neighborhood, out in the city, where disarray already seems to prevail. In short, battles and gang warfare might cause disorder, and disorder calls for a scenario of its own.

On rainy days, gang members storm out of the neighborhood alleys and fight against those who have offended their honor. These battles involve gangs from the same neighborhood who compete to expand or protect the boundaries of their turfs, and also gangs from different neighborhoods who want to take possession of a particular area that lies at

the intersection of two or more neighborhoods. Gang warfare is semiritualized, and follows set patterns. For instance, timing is crucial: heavy rain (*hujan lebat*) is the code for big battles, my informants maintain, as these fights must take place when the rain is pouring so heavily that the police are not on strict patrol. As they sense an upcoming thunderstorm, gang members await their opponents in a dirt path beside a city street. They want to be ahead of the game and be the first to encircle (*mengepung*) their enemies to launch an attack. The battle initially involves the use of sticks, stones, and bare hands. As it escalates, however, gang members also use broken bottles and knives, but never guns. There is a wild thrill of excitement among gang members as these combats progress. To an external observer, however, these battles look quite messy: because it rains so heavily, these youths are usually soaking wet, covered in mud, and after a half hour or so one can hardly tell them apart. Many in the city speak of one "big mass of kids" having a good time, for instance. This feeling of not being able to distinguish who is who on the battlefield is also conveyed by gang members, who sometimes do not notice they are beating up a member of their own gang, as several episodes that have occurred demonstrate. Oftentimes, in the heat (and, one might say, the dirt) of the moment, gang members are unrecognizable. At other times, however, new members are not yet familiar with the faces of their companions and might mistake a friend for an enemy, or vice versa, especially in the case of youths who swing easily from one gang to another.

Another common form of competition among youth gangs includes illegal bike racing. This activity usually takes place at night in the empty areas of the mall parking lots and involves the use of borrowed or stolen motorbikes. Illegal bike racing is structured around a system of bets and the circulation of money and stolen goods, and the winner (or winners) is usually rewarded with an actual prize, besides the social validation of his honor and prestige. These races

are not only excuses to engage in open rivalry but also moments of socialization, when gang members from opposing sides gather and get to know each other. For instance, it is quite common after a bike race to go to a food stall and eat with the members of other gangs, discuss the race, forge and shift alliances, and occasionally try to convince an adversary to "defect," leave his own group and join a rival gang. As many youths point out, during a meal people make new friends, and after a meal many gangs change their configuration. From this point of view, bike racing has a lot in common with the traditional activity of pigeon racing (see, among others, Peters 2010), in which men used to (and some still do) aggregate around the neighborhood main alleys and gamble on the fastest pigeon to return to its cage.

The Gang of the Repair Shop

Rio is very passionate about motorbikes and likes to hang out by the motorbike repair shop in one of the back alleys that borders the big traffic intersection.

Rio is 18 years old (14 at the time of this research), and was born and raised in *kampung* Malang. He is the youngest of three children, all boys. His father has worked for over two decades as a food vendor at one of the local traditional markets (*pasar*), but eventually had to give up his tiny business when the city authorities tore down the market and began to build a mall. According to the new municipal regulations, all traders had to be registered, buy a license, and sign a yearly contract, which in practice exposed them to the ever-present possibility of nonextension or replacement with others capable of paying the inflated rents and service costs for the space in the new malls. Rio's father refused to acquiesce to these new city dispositions and opted to accept a job as a part-time cook at a *warung* inside the *kampung*. Rio's mother works occasionally as a seamstress, when not helping out a friend of hers at one of the phone card kiosks along a secondary alley.

At the age of 14, Rio was planning to leave school and look for a job as a mechanic, or at least he said he wanted to start working at a body shop in some fashion, learn the tricks of the trade, and possibly make some extra money repairing the occasional motorbike that breaks down along the road (which is actually a rather frequent possibility in Surabaya). When talking about leaving school, Rio never mentioned dissatisfaction with the type of education provided by his institute, and did not complain about his friends and schoolmates. Strictly speaking, Rio liked going to school very much, as did many of the young adolescents to whom I talked in Surabaya. However, while still in school, Rio felt excluded (or at least disconnected) from the flow of opportunities that characterized life in the city. Obviously, just by hanging out with his friends in the back of the malls, Rio had been exposed to the expensive goods and the lavish lifestyle of the new middle-class youth. However, the decision to leave school was not motivated by the desire to show off valuable clothes, cars, and state-of-the-art tablets and mobile phones. Rio did not say he wanted to drop out of school in order to "be a rich kid" (*anak kaya*) but to "become a rich man" (*orang kaya*), a statement that goes hand in hand with his dream of learning a trade and being able to build a profession, and that underlies the will to acquire a particular work skill and express it to its fullest potential:

> There are many things you can learn how to do in the city, and then you can make money. In school they teach about life skills and how important it is to start a business, but in the end you have to go out and get it for yourself. They don't give it to you in school. You have to use your strength. And find somebody with the same intention. (Rio)

Rio became involved with a street gang as he was collecting information about job opportunities. Like many looking to make some money, he began asking friends at school, then turned to friends he had known on the neighborhood

streets for a long time, who hung out in groups and seemed to know their way around the area. Although street gangs in *kampung* Malang are quite visible, they are not at all dreaded by the community, as I have explained, and youths, especially when newbies in the gang business (and one might say a bit naive), do not have a particular problem approaching a gang member or even the gang leader. After all, teenagers in *kampung* Malang know for a fact that at any time they can buy their way into a gang by paying a small amount of money. Rio stole some money from his father and also offered a top-up voucher he swiped from his mother's friend booth, and joined a gang that normally hangs out by a bike repair shop, which also serves as an improvised petrol station and a food stall from time to time. Since every now and then groups of thugs from another neighborhood might try to steal the petrol bottles from the repair shop, the owner leans on the gang to watch over his business. The gang offers protection in exchange for a monthly fee. Rio, on his part, found himself a new group of friends and finally the chance to spend some time at a repair shop.

Rio's initiation followed a common pattern for this particular gang. He was beaten up, and then ate some rice and beef with his new friends. He is quite the reserved type and was reluctant to talk about the hits and the punches. What he recalls with most pride about his initiation is the meal he shared with the rest of the gang, the moment

> [w]hen you are still bleeding but you're also very hungry, and everyone is watching you and you feel so much power, and respect. I don't want to talk about the combat because I had a nice meal afterwards and I didn't even have to pay for it! My friends paid for me! (Rio)

Among the things Rio enjoyed most about being a new member of the gang, one was taking care of the gang's shack. Particularly, he was in charge of fixing things around the house (especially his friends' telephones, which were in most cases stolen mobile phones that had to be unlocked

or disassembled before being sold onto the black market), but also of repairing his friends' motorbikes, a task that gave him a lot of prestige and credibility, especially when it came to checking the bikes to put together an illegal bike race. Here again, he recounts that the meals (lunch, especially because, like most of his friends, he would return home for dinner) were the most pleasurable time of the day, and that those who were assigned to cooking duties worked busily to run around the *kampung* and find some vegetables or soup. Shopping for food was largely based on the exchange of goods among *kampung* people, but gang members could also profit from the fees they were owed by small-scale business entrepreneurs, who were more than willing to pay off their protection by offering food. According to Rio, during a meal a gang member had the chance to meet with the rest of the gang and discuss their daily activities, and become familiar with the faces and the names of the youths who made up the gang, especially the newcomers,

> Because so many come and go it is hard sometimes to know everybody, but almost everybody, actually everybody, comes to the office [a colloquial expression to indicate the gang's barracks] to eat. (Rio)

Also, during a meal gang members learned about new work opportunities, a moment of trepidation and surprise that Rio describes with much excitement because all of a sudden a gang member might have something unexpected to do for the rest of the day, or even the rest of the week.

When the circumstance presented itself to engage directly with violence or violent practices, Rio was certainly less enthusiastic and, by his own admission, felt quite inadequate. He actually hated a lot the mess, the confusion, and the sloppiness that surrounded those big battles in the heavy rain, and admitted more than once he found it difficult to spot his own companions among the crowd of people fighting, drenched and dirty, their faces covered with mud. One of the accidents that stuck in his mind happened

the time he involuntarily struck a broken beer bottle on a friend's head, which almost resulted in the young boy losing an eye.

Two points should be made here. The first is the nature of youth gangs in *kampung* Malang, which so distinctively sets them apart from the life and the experiences of youth gangs elsewhere in Indonesia and the world (see, for instance, Kristiansen 2003). These groups are born out of the need for youths to participate in social relationships, to come together, share a meal, spend time with one another, and possibly find a small occupation. When youths join one of these gangs, they do so to avoid feeling lonely and underestimated, to voice their need to grow up and express their capacity to develop into adults. Obviously, the quest for a job plays a crucial role in the desire to become a part of a gang, as the story of Rio suggests. But what Rio's words also convey is that violence plays a secondary role in the construction of social relations. Here, violence is merely the language that youths use to communicate, while never the message they try to convey. These gangs are not glued together or motivated by hatred and intolerance toward a significant otherness (a religious group, an ethnic minority, for instance, as demonstrated largely by Kristiansen 2003, among others), but are driven by the need to partake in something: a piece of beef, a stroke of luck, but most definitely not a broken jaw.

Youths and the City at Large

Making Money

Gang members flock to the city streets to be close to where they perceive the circulation of money is. This is an important aspect of gang life, one that is perhaps less captivating than those stories of games of territory and honor but that nevertheless provides useful insights in the day-to-day experiences and interactions of youths in this area. In fact, aside from marking their own turf, acting out as strongmen, and confronting each other in "epic" fights and battles out in the

open and in the rain, these young teenagers and adolescents work hard to make a living. A variety of money-generating activities on the streets includes busking, begging, engaging in petty trade in magazines and papers or other cheap goods, acting as brokers for people who are looking for more expensive goods, picking trash, pedaling *becak* (pedicabs), and selling parking vouchers.

Virtually anyone can beg and sell goods on the streets, although there are obviously territories and rents paid for engaging in small business on a particular street. When gang members venture out on the streets, they inevitably come across some other gang's (or somebody's) territory and are subjected to pretty much the same rules and extraction fees they expect from those who want to do business on their turf. For instance, parking attendants are very territorial, a good example of a case in which links to organized crime are evident. Attendants pay a fee to work a spot on the street. In theory, they purchase official parking slips from the municipality and then sell them to drivers at a nominal markup, which provides a revenue stream, but saves the city from having to invest in parking fee infrastructure and enforcement in busy areas. In practice, most prefer to take parking money without giving a receipt slip. If they can manage, they also collect parking fees from drivers who stop in privately owned areas, sometimes from the owner of the land himself or from that owner's friends and customers (see Brown 2009: 179, for a further description of the informal system of parking fees). These jobs are quite coveted, but, as gang members admit, to find the right channels and work as a parking attendant is very hard. Many youths improvise and sometimes hang out in the parking lot, only to run up to drivers and ask for money for watching over their vehicle.

At night, young gang members seem to be drawn by construction sites. The trespassing of construction sites is without doubt a playful activity, but nevertheless one that carries a deep valence, because youths who enter construction sites illegally are curious to know what the future city spaces will

look like, which in itself is a way of connecting visually and personally with the new urban landscape. From another point of view, one could argue that when youth gangs play around these construction sites, they are making a use of the spaces that someone else (the city planners and developers above all) have imagined for the city and its residents, but not necessarily for these youngsters. The construction sites are quite easily accessible in the late afternoon and the early evening, while they are fully uncontrolled at night, when youths dare to jump the fences (if there are any) and explore these areas. They play games of courage that involve climbing the scaffolding and exploring the dark empty spaces of the new buildings, but even more frequently, they play games of manhunt.

Red Lights

Out on the city streets, some youths make money by trying to leech on to the world of semi-illegal crime, such as that of female sex workers. This is quite common among older gang members from *kampung* Malang (as it is for other youths involved in gang activities across the city), who drive, sometimes in large groups, sometimes in smaller groups, outside the neighborhood early in the evening and after dark to reach the infamous (and somehow legendary) Dolly brothel complex. Many also travel to the streets of Jarak, another popular complex in the city, while others (the majority of adolescents) hang out in the less visible and less prestigious areas of Kremil, Kembang Kuning, and Dupak Bangusari, which are essentially pockets of prostitution near the railway station and slum areas catering to lower-income groups. Surabaya is indeed home to one of the largest red light districts in Indonesia. The official prostitution or brothel complexes (*lokalisasi*) fall under the supervision of the Municipal Social Affairs Office, and represent a unique feature of the organizational structure of the sex industry in Indonesia, and in Surabaya in particular. In these

complexes, an extensive number of brothels are clustered together along one or a few streets, and control over order and security is maintained by a group of local government, police, and military authorities (Jones, Sulistyaningsih, and Hall 1998: 42–43). In recent years, the city municipality has vowed to clear the public spaces of these brothel complexes and made several attempts to close down these areas, albeit with scarce or questionable success. This follows a disposition from the Governor of East Java, who committed to closing down all brothels from all regencies and municipalities by 2014 and relocating sex workers to their home villages after providing them with adequate life skills. The main issue with clearing up the spaces of organized sex work has to do, as one might easily understand, with the difficulty of mapping out the networks of informal (and less regulated) activities and the social actors that spring up and gravitate around these areas.

Dolly can be divided into four areas, which many local residents describe as a spiral that revolves around a commercialized section, where young women sit behind the bright glass windows that constitute the main brothels. Behind these women in the window lies a less visible crowd that consists of groups of older women who also work in brothels, but are not displayed in a shop window. Rather, they are kept away from the public eye of local customers because they are considered less attractive (certainly, one might argue, they are less feminine and innocent looking). These women usually earn more money than their younger counterparts, as they negotiate a higher pay rate with their procurers. Further out in the darker corners of the brothel complex, among the tombstones of the old Chinese cemetery, then, freelance sex workers look for customers and drugs: they manage themselves and are not part of the regulated brothel system. At the other end of the graveyard, one usually finds *warias* (male transvestites) and "money boys" (young male sex workers), who wholly fall outside the definition of state-regulated legal sex work. Especially in the

case of male adolescents, their underage status places them in the category of illegal sex workers.

Dolly, like other complexes, has its own power and control structure, which goes hand in hand with its spiral logic and functions well beyond the existence of an official regulator, or administrators and prosecutors and the presence of legal regulations. The brothel proprietor plays an important role in the organized sex sector, being directly responsible for providing the facilities (rooms and daily meals) that enable the sex workers to operate; the pimp, or procurer, is a person who lives off the earnings of a sex worker and in return provides her with services such as protection and contact with customers. Pimps market their workers through photographs and fliers, negotiate their monetary compensation, and arrange the actual encounters with the customers (Jones, Sulistyaningsih, and Hall 1998: 39–40). In the unorganized activities, the sex workers work on their own to find and contact clients. Usually sex workers in this category comprise not only those women for whom sex work is their sole occupation but also students, shop assistants, and factory workers, who moonlight in addition to their main occupations. These individuals make direct deals with the clients, and the price for their service depends normally on how well they are able to bargain (see Jones, Sulistyaningsih, and Hall 1998: 39). Included in this group are streetwalkers, who operate clandestinely in public or semipublic spaces, such as the notorious Chinese cemetery. After the municipality began to close down some of the legal brothels in the area, the number of unregistered sex workers began to rise considerably, as many (if not most) failed to fully redirect toward salaried work and did not permanently move back to their home villages, despite multiple efforts made toward their professional and personal requalification by local authorities, organizations, and associations.

There are also many other social actors whose income depends significantly on the sex trade, including taxi drivers, pedicab drivers, room cleaners and launderers in massage

parlors, and hotel security personnel who hang out around hotels and other places where potential clients are likely to be found (Jones, Sulistyaningsih, and Hall 1998: 40). Taxi and pedicab drivers, for instance, play an important role in the marketing of sex services by providing information to clients concerning the location, rules of the game, types of services available, and price of the sex worker's services. Sometimes pedicab drivers can become mediators between the sex worker and the client (Ibid.). In the Dolly area, the sale and consumption of drugs is closely linked to the sex trade, and many clients who seek sex also look for drugs, thus enhancing the possibility for very remunerative business opportunities. Some pimps run illegal side brothels where clients can find women and cocaine at their disposal at almost any time of day.

Among youth gangs, there is the general perception that the sex trade and the drug dealing market that flourishes around it are very remunerative occupations, and certainly less likely to be affected in times of economic hardship. They are, in fact, envisioned as activities that might enjoy a period of rapid growth prompted by the voracious consumerism of the new middle class. Rio and his friends, for example, believe that what makes sex work so appealing is that sex workers "make money every day, and perhaps lots of it every day." When they stroll around the alleys of Dolly, they begin to imagine a life of means and financial independence. Dolly is (or it seems to be) where the money goes. Those who are not teenagers anymore, and are no longer interested in petty crime and small precarious work opportunities in their own neighborhood, look at Dolly as a money-making machine to take advantage of. They aspire to work their way up the complex's hierarchical structure, first by acting as negotiators between sex workers and clients, and eventually by attempting to move closer to the center of the sex trade activities, with the ultimate goal of running their own businesses.

The idea that female sex workers earn a whole lot of money goes along with the diffused perception that girls, in general,

make more money than boys (and that women make more money than men) because they are offered more job opportunities in the new city malls and in the homes of the rich middle-class families, as we have seen in the previous chapter when discussing the impact of foreign (largely female) labor on the lives of men in *kampung* Malang. However, while many young men look with resentment at what they consider to be gender-based forms of work discrimination, many others take the perceived disadvantage as a challenge, and feel motivated to counterbalance a sense of inadequacy by working even harder to climb the social ladder.

Many youths begin to attend the alleys of Dolly on a regular basis by mixing business with pleasure. They look for sexual encounters with some of the freelance sex workers and take some as their girlfriends. These visits coincide with their first sexual experiences with girls, which are usually the subject of much speculation among gang members when they hang out together, as they like to share stories about erotic love affairs, adventurous relationships with older women, and brag about their sexual exploits. During a conversation with Eko, a 17-year-old friend of Rio's, about the type of sexual encounters he had with a 31-year-old sex worker from Dolly, however, it emerges that most of the times boys and women only "rubbed their bodies against each other with their clothes on." Similar stories are also recounted with reference to early romantic relations with girls in the *kampung*, when boys and girls admit that they "think we were having sex, but in reality we were just rubbing our body against one another, or were just touching hands, or making out." These youths, nevertheless, do establish a close bond with some of the freelance sex workers, who look for protection to avoid police raids and can surely profit from the help of their younger male friends to find customers and travel from one spot to another to offer their services. Gang members drive these women on their motorbikes, make phone calls, make arrangements with customers, and even negotiate monetary transactions.

By approaching women, youths seize the opportunity to become part of a mechanism that they believe will lead to more fruitful opportunities. Some of them ultimately would like to work as procurers, and move to the periphery to the center of the complex and handle the management and functioning of a brothel. They want to integrate into a hierarchical structure based on the circulation of money. For this purpose, youths hang out in the shadow of the brothel complex at its various levels and offer their services to proprietors and procurers. They ultimately hope to be rewarded with more and more challenging tasks that will prove their influence and increase their chances of becoming a part of Dolly.

There are, however, some substantial difficulties in establishing a permanent position in the sex (and drug) sector in a "foreign neighborhood": procurers and brothel proprietors largely exploit these youths to run their dirty (and risky) business (transport and sell drugs, handle money under the table), and local gangs that operate in the Dolly neighborhood do not look kindly upon these intruders, and brawls or more fights take place on a daily basis. At the end of the day, many (if not most) youths from *kampung* Malang struggle to find a place in the complex and are forced to return home.

The Movement of Returning

Pulang*, or "Going Home"*

Many envision Surabaya as a city of passage (Brown 2009; Peters 2009, 2010). I have insisted on the fact that, over the past decade or so, city planners and municipal authorities have worked toward a definition of the city of Surabaya as a facilitator in the flow of vehicles, goods, and people toward the eastern part of the archipelago. If, theoretically, in the city, the traffic never stops and cars circulate undisturbed and free from traffic lights, at the regional and national level old routes have been reinforced and a new bridge, the Surabaya-Madura

Bridge, has been constructed to connect the opposite ends of Indonesia. Among tourists, foreign traders, and expatriates who live in Surabaya, there is a widespread feeling that the city port is merely a point of transition, one that people visit or at which they stop by momentarily to conduct business but never elect as a permanent home. Foreign migrants from other parts of Indonesia or from the surrounding rural regions never fully acknowledge Surabaya as the place in which they live. While this is partly due to the severe city dispositions that limit the right of residency to those who are legally employed and registered with the local police, much of their indifference has to do with their desire to eventually leave what they feel is merely their place of work and go back to their original village. Local migration stories as narrated by those who were born and raised in the city are rich with details about men and women who have left their home in search of work and a better life. These stories are usually accounts of personal achievements and social mobility, and as such omit chronicling those episodes of disappointment or personal failure.

While the need to "move forward" seems to permeate the lives of those who intersect in Surabaya, many complain that the opposite, and equally meaningful movement of returning home, is being undervalued, and underappreciated. In *kampung* Malang, for instance, many *kampung* residents were eager to discuss the idea of *pulang* (returning home).

After a long day of hanging around, fighting, making new friends, and experimenting in the city areas, youths who are involved with gangs return home (*pulang*) to their family, much like all *kampung* and city workers, and city dwellers in general. There is a sense of relief that is associated with family life, and with the idea that no matter what unfolded during the day, a person will return home. Among *kampung* youths, this is all the more true as these youths struggle to find employment and leave their home in the morning to try to find work, to make a living, as I have

illustrated so far. In the more mundane sense, *pulang* indicates the movement of returning home to the place where a person lives.

Pulang, however, is also what people do periodically. For instance, every year as the fasting month of Ramadan winds to a close, hordes of migrants begin to anticipate the Idul Fitri celebrations, and return home to pay respect to their parents and families, and to revisit their village (see Brown 2009: 112). The desire to *pulang*, as highlighted by Stephen Christopher Brown, becomes irresistible at this time of the year, and even people who steadfastly insist they would rather stay put than travel home abruptly change their mind and go out of their way to quickly collect the money to buy bus fare and go to their village. In this particular acceptation, the notion of *pulang* is imbued with a sentiment of longing and nostalgia (Brown 2009).

Brown, again, suggests that the word *pulang* contains a thick affective pull: it is one word that encompasses both "home" and "return" and that therefore differs from the Indonesian word *rumah* or the Javanese word *omah/*griya, two words that have a connotation closer to "house," "building," and also from the verb *pergi*, which means "to go to," but it is not used to indicate the movement of going home. *Pulang* concentrates the idea of "home" and the "movement of going" all in one term. The efficacy of such term, according to Brown, lies precisely in its verbal component. After all, while the particular location to which one returns is variable, what remains constant across plaintive appeals to *pulang* is the movement of returning itself (Brown 2009: 113). What is missing in Brown's argument is an accurate analysis of the multiple reasons behind *pulang*. In *kampung* Malang, for instance, migrants do not just return home to celebrate Idul Fitri and visit their family. Also, Brown lacks a certain perspective. In fact, while many indeed return home, some (a lot) are already home: families, relatives, friends, and acquaintances who await the return of those who are away, for the day, and more importantly, for the year.

Gangsters from South Bali

What type of interactions take place at the convergence between those who live in one place and those who return home? In *kampung* Malang, there is one category of people whose return home causes excitement and preoccupation, and that is the category of "gangsters" (*gengster*), young men who return home from South Bali. Their cyclical presence in the *kampung* is crucial to better understand the process of socialization of youths who are involved with gang activities in this particular area and their transition to organized crime. In this final section, I illustrate what happens when gangsters return home.

First and foremost, who are these so-called gangsters? Between *kampung* Malang and the area of South Bali there seems to be a corridor of internal migration that connects young men from the inner parts of the city to the affluent tourist areas of Kuta, Legian, and Seminyak. Robbie Peters's analysis of Surabaya's urban development (2009) indirectly documents (he only hints at the subject but does not provide further information) nearly three decades of male labor migration between this particular area of Surabaya and South Bali.

In the Legian region, in the heart of South Bali, the young men of *kampung* Malang come together as a gang (*geng*). The geography of gangs of sex workers who also are involved with drug selling in South Bali follows a regional pattern, and young men group into antagonistic street gangs based on their place of origin. They usually live in small, unsupervised boarding houses, which are owned by Balinese people, and strive for the control of the sex market. I detail in the next chapter the logic and the practices that regulate the gang of youths that come from Surabaya and live in South Bali, and their idea of sex work as a form of entrepreneurship. In chapter 4 I also consider some of the long-term consequences of sex work in the lives of these young men. What is relevant to the present discussion is the shift that occurs in the transition from being part of a street gang in Surabaya and the

acquisition of membership status to a full-fledged gang in South Bali. While teenage youths on the streets of *kampung* Malang were animated by the desire to join a gang in order to make new friends, socialize, and possibly find a temporary work activity to make a living, the young men who move to South Bali are determined to make a career out of sex work, accumulate capital, find a long-term partner, and gain financial support. The driving force underlying these type of youth formations is now above all economic. Eventually they wish to have made enough money on their own to support their family through remittances, buy some land and build a house back in their home village, and get married. In short, they wish to embrace a fully recognized and socially regulated masculine gender role.

When it comes to *pulang*, the migrants from Surabaya who live and work as sex workers in South Bali return home quite frequently, especially during Bali's tourist low season, when the flow of tourists decreases and business is slower than usual. Their visits serve numerous purposes. First and foremost, migrants return home to bring some money to their families, to transport drugs back and forth from Surabaya to South Bali, and vice versa. These occasions also offer the excuse to revisit their village, toward which they express a sentiment of longing and nostalgia, and to spend time with relatives, siblings, and friends.

The subject of remittances is a tricky one. In *kampung* Malang, most people, especially among the older men, suspect that these youths are involved with the smuggling of drugs. After all, the amount of money that circulates is considerably high as compared to local salaries, and many find it hard to believe that such money is earned through entirely legal means. However, almost nobody is willing to discuss this topic, a social secret that nobody wants to talk about to avoid getting in trouble with the police. However, youths who return home usually brag about their gangster activities and share stories about the risks and adventures that accompany the drug business, thus exposing the secret out in the open.

Sex work is a different matter. Over the years, people have heard stories of young migrants who sell sex in South Bali. Accounts of female sex workers abound, and even stories of young men who look for "sugar daddies" and engage in promiscuous behavior are widespread across the city neighborhoods and the region in general. However, people are usually reluctant to acknowledge the issue when their sons appear to be involved in the first person. They are uncomfortable with the idea that the money these youths bring home (and they, the parents, take with a certain ease) is earned through morally despicable acts such as compensated sex acts with older men. For this particular reason, many prefer to accept the money rather than question where it comes from. On their part, youths usually lie about their work activity, and many recount being employed in high-class hotels and resorts, and making a lot of money in tips. Others tell their parents they work as waiters in fancy restaurants, or as brokers in the business of renting luxurious villas to foreign tourists. These are jobs that people in *kampung* Malang imagine to be quite remunerative.

Among those who have lived in South Bali for a longer period of time, some have set aside a sufficient amount of money to begin scouting for land in their home village, or at least to explore the possibility of purchasing a small plot of land somewhere in and around Surabaya. Especially those sex workers who have been involved in a long-term relationship with a foreign man (or multiple foreign men) feel confident enough to start imagining their return to their hometown, and make frequent trips home to inquire about land for sale and land prices.

There even have been cases of young men returning home accompanied by their partners, who were interested in expending money in land property and wanted to take a firsthand look at their potential investment. These visits arguably caused embarrassment among community members, family, and friends, but rumors and gossip about the identity of the older men entering the village were quickly

hushed up as everyone liked (and opted to) to assume that these men were just land developers, foreign contractors who were doing legitimate business with their sons and their friends. In fact, in most cases, young migrants who returned home with the intention of buying land ended up purchasing a legal business license for their families, thus making it all the more plausible (and enjoyable) for everyone to believe that they, and their older partners, were in town for business. The partners themselves were in turn instructed to avoid any display of affection. After all, a great deal of the male sex work business in South Bali revolves around the fictitious stories of marginality and discrimination that young men recount to trick their potential clients into establishing a relationship with them and supporting them over the years, accounts of feelings of inadequacy that push the young men to leave their village as they learn about their own homosexual feelings. Whether they buy land or start a business to hand over to their family and relatives, these migrants who return from South Bali are held in high regard by their community and their peers. Their stories prove that there is a way to achieve personal development through work and that a person can express his full potential given the means and circumstances. In this particular case, people seem to assert the primacy of social and work networks in fostering a person's aptitude and inclinations and in attaining success.

Furthermore, and equally importantly, these young migrants return home to recruit new gang members and to lure young adolescents into moving to South Bali to improve their work and life conditions. Once in Surabaya, these "gangsters" spend time with their younger brothers, cousins, and friends, hang out with local gangs members, and even participate in battles and fights by watching youths as they confront each other and by scrutinizing closely their initiative and skills. They show off their expensive clothes, telephones, and some even go so far as to purchase a motorbike for their father. They tell numerous stories about endless job opportunities, but more than anything, they stress the

fact that in South Bali a person can earn his own money and develop a form of personal entrepreneurship. There is a network of connections and friends that facilitates the thriving and flourishing of a person's good fortune and that will ultimately help improve a person's social status. Youths like Rio, who at the time of the present research was eager to move to Bali and make money, do not necessarily associate the island of Bali with the prospect of easy money but ultimately with the opportunity to achieve a particular long-term goal, open a repair shop, buy a plot of land, help the family, become a man in the full social sense of the term.

These stories are interesting because they encompass the *kampung* life while being intimately tied to it. Obviously, and from another point of view, these stories are also interesting because of what they do not tell. Not everyone leaves to go to Bali. Many are well aware of the risks, dangers, and demands that the South Bali arena (and sex work) involves, and prefer to stay in Surabaya and await for another work opportunity, perhaps a more contained and less ambitious job but one better suited to their personal inclinations. Many migrants who return home come empty-handed, having spent all of their earnings on drugs and expensive items. They certainly cannot afford to buy a license, let alone purchase land. Many others become sick while working in the Balinese sex industry, and once home lead a life marked by physical suffering and social stigma. Some do not return at all, and continue to stay in Bali. Among these, many struggle with alcoholism and substance abuse. While these stories somehow fall outside the orbits of young teenagers, they nevertheless constitute the flip side of the movement of *pulang*.

When young migrants return home, they trigger the desire to move forward among *kampung* youths. However, the mere notion that poverty pulls people into criminal activities and sex work is quite reductive and offers little explanation here. In Surabaya, youths feel disconnected from the flow of capital and opportunities. What the prospect of

migration offers is the chance to enter a stable network of solidarity and work, one that will provide the means to grow up, progress in life, and ameliorate a person's position on the social ladder. For many, this translates into the opportunity to become an active agent in the handling, circulation, and accumulation of capital and goods. The notion of *pulang*, here, suggests that there are two equally powerful forces at play: the wish to go, which influences and draws youths toward traveling and seeking a better future in South Bali, and the will to return home, the irresistible force that pulls young men toward home, where they will try to reconnect with the flow of things. If Surabaya is a city of passage, one must not omit to consider the significant yet inverse movement of returning home.

The River, the Beach

The youth gangs of *kampung* Malang and the urban spaces of Surabaya that I have presented in this chapter seem to exude the same attributes of movement and transition. Youth gangs originate at school, and more importantly in the hearth of the spaces and in the heat of the social relations of the local neighborhood, only to expand and evolve into adult group formations. While not all gangs follow this pattern, ethnographic evidence suggests that a consistent number of youths from this area who are involved with youth gangs early in their adolescence eventually travel (or aspire to travel) along the corridor of migration that links *kampung* Malang to the region of South Bali, and many attempt to become affiliated with professional criminal organizations. The streets of Surabaya, on their part, have been restructured and reinforced to facilitate the flow of capital and goods and to accommodate the need for unimpeded circulation. There is virtually no limit to the extension of these streets and the creation of new roads nor to the possibility of connecting areas as far away from each other as possible. Potentially, the growth of youths mirrors the growth of streets and roads,

and vice versa, because they both seem to be permeated by a relentless passion for expansion.

However, while embracing the principle of mobility, youth gangs also seem to inflect those very same qualities of movement and transition. In fact, they seem to revisit the logic of opposition between order and disorder that underlies life in the city of Surabaya. I have shown how city planners and municipal authorities have, in the past decade or so, envisioned Surabaya as a middle class-oriented metropolis, one built on the opposition between ordered wide urban spaces and chaotic urban interstices. To an extent, the city has needed those urban enclaves to sustain and legitimize the need for urban improvement and development. In the midst of urban, political, economic, and social changes, many youths have felt disconnected from the new stream of opportunities and searched for personal ways to reconnect their life trajectories with the flux of things and the opportunities that were made available. To this end, they have drawn a geography of their own, one that is made up of dots, lines, circles, spirals, and orbits, in which young men come together in gangs, connect with a particular territory, create discipline, defend their honor, look for a job, and give entrepreneurship a try. In their eyes, the city is where disorder lies, while order can only be achieved in the intelligible spaces they map out for themselves. From this point of view, then, youths also need chaos to support their own personal life development.

Through forms of social aggregation, teenagers and adolescents look for a way to stick together and find work, which is what guarantees the possibility of imagining a transition toward adulthood and a recognized masculine identity. This does not differ from the forms of male aggregation and solidarity that I have presented with reference to the older generation of men of *kampung* Malang. In fact, while the means through which these personal (and collective) ends are reached may vary in their degree of legality, ingenuity, and originality, they nevertheless reveal a similarity of intents

and preoccupations with the objectives and preoccupations of the older men who live in the same neighborhood.

I draw to a close by presenting the following ethnographic fragment, an excerpt of a conversation with Firman, Rio's father, which best summarizes a substantial generational continuity in the conceptualization of the relationship between personal growth and urban transformations:

> Rio always jokes around and once asked me, "Do pigeons not know how to fly anymore? I've noticed some of them are trapped at one of the construction sites." I tell him that pigeons only know how to fly when raised and trained by their owners: they have to learn how to return home (*pulang*) once they are set free in the open air, they have to know the right trajectory, they have to know where to go: it's not enough for them to be strong and quick. It's hard to train a pigeon these days: I, myself, can barely recognize the streets of this land; everything changes so fast and there are so many cranes and construction projects, so many concrete boxes, cars, people: how can I train a pigeon to find its way home?
>
> My son thinks positive. He said to me: "You always say pigeons are intelligent, ingenious, that they know their way home even in the chaos of roofs and barracks, and that they are smart enough to move around. This is what they know how to do best, right?"

Like his father and many other older men in *kampung* Malang, Rio is also preoccupied with the destiny of pigeons and their ability to fly in the new geography of the urban landscape. The same can be implied about the destiny of men. Firman is worried about what direction his son will take in life, and whether he will be able to return home and fulfill the role of the head of the family and the head of a business activity. Rio is also concerned with what the future unfolds. While looking at the river, the city might not look like a labyrinth to him, and yet he cannot help but wonder what might happen to those who follow the water and arrive at "the beach" (*pantai*). The beach to which he metaphorically refers is the Legian-Seminyak Beach, in the heart of

Bali's tourist area, where many of his friends have gone to look for a better life. As I have suggested when discussing the movement of returning home many youths come back home to their families and friends empty-handed. Although my informants tend to insist on stories of personal success, the process of growth almost never follows a linear pattern, and youths encounter several bumps along the road of self-development and success. For this particular reason, Rio stares at the river water with a feeling of excitement mixed with anxiety. In the following chapter, I turn to the "beach" and to South Bali, and examine the life of these young Javanese migrants as they move away from home and enter the world of sex work.

Chapter 3

Male Sex Work in South Bali: Bodies, Violence, and Entrepreneurship

Introduction

This chapter[1] shifts the focus to the young men of *kampung* Malang as they travel to South Bali and join a particular gang of male sex workers named Villa Mangga. While the chapter continues to explore the issues of growth, male socializing, and youthful group formations, it discusses the logic and the dynamics of male sex work and the use of violence.

My aim is not to indulge in a brutal and vivid depiction of violence for its own sake, but to analyze the construction, enactment, and reproduction of cohesive youth masculine identities through the use violence in initiation and in the everyday social practices of the gang, as well as through embodied knowledge. Specifically, I explore the role of physical and symbolic violence in the construction of masculinity in relation to body work and emotional labor. Performance, storytelling, mimicry, and deception are also key aspects of self-invention for unveiling the collective mechanisms that produce the commodification of the Self, and form part of the practical logic in the entrepreneurship that is sex work in Bali. Finally, I extend the discussion of violence to its more destructive and negative aspects, and present ethnographic material about how violence is directed toward rival gangs and other sex workers.

Migration and Arrival in South Bali

Since the 1980s, an increasing flow of people from other parts of Indonesia, especially East Java, has traveled to Bali in search of work and a better life (MacRae 2010: 16). By the mid-1990s, most of the hard, heavy, dirty, and dangerous work in South Bali, especially building and road construction, was being done by immigrant men, many of them young and single. They also dominated the informal economy of street stalls and door-to-door sales of house goods, as well as scavenging for recyclable materials from rubbish. Javanese contract teams have also taken over much of the rice harvesting in the western half of Bali (MacRae 2010: 22). Such migrants are attractive for employers because they have a reputation for working longer and harder for lower wages. Moreover, they do not require the irregular but frequent time off work that Balinese employees expect for attendance at ceremonies *(*Ibid.). Under national law, all citizens of the Republic of Indonesia are free to travel and settle wherever they choose provided they have employment, notify the local authorities, and are registered as temporary residents. However, the presence of Javanese migrants poses a problem for the Balinese communities in which they live, because membership in such communities presupposes religious as well as social, economic, and political participation. To be a community member also presupposes a state of marriage (Ibid.).

Some immigrants disregard the laws and arrive unregistered and invisible. This is, for instance, the case of the young men who come to the tourist areas of South Bali from East Java. Among those who travel the corridor that links the inner-city neighborhood of *kampung* Malang and South Bali, there are many adolescents and young men who are involved with sex work and drugs. These two types of business go hand in hand and animate the nightlife of South Bali.

The young migrants of *kampung* Malang settle in the Legian area, in South Bali. The region of South Bali is perhaps the most popular area of Bali among visitors, and the

most densely populated. It comprises the island city capital of Denpasar and is the location of the Ngurah Rai International Airport. The eastern coast harbors the quiet tourist village and the stretch of beach of Sanur, with its hotels and resorts known for its relatively family- and senior-oriented clientele. On the southern tip lies the Bukit Peninsula, which consists of the purpose-built, gated, and rather sterile tourist enclave of Nusa Dua (*Kawasan Pariwisata*, quite literally the *Tourism District*), and, a few points west, the Tanjung Beona peninsula with the famous cliff-hanging temple at Uluwatu and some of the most legendary surf spots on the island. On the western coast of South Bali, Kuta Beach stretches for about five kilometers along the area of the same name, and then further north along the areas of Legian, Seminyak, Petitenget, and Canggu. The areas of Legian and Seminyak have been the specific focus of my research.

The Legian area is widely known as an "immigrant neighborhood" (*kampung pendatang*), and carries a negative connotation among Balinese people. Prostitution, petty crime, thefts, rapes, and more violent crimes are reported in detail in the Balinese media and are generally attributed to outsiders (*pendatang*) and, more specifically, to Javanese people (*orang Jawa*) who live in the area. While I have no way of knowing how consistently or selectively these crimes are reported, I have been able to observe that there is a general perception that most criminal activities in this area and the neighboring area of Seminyak are perpetrated by Javanese people, who are for this reason the subject of heavy vigilante inspections.

There is a bus that connects Surabaya and Bali. Most young migrants who travel to Bali for the first time board at the Bungurasih bus terminal in South Surabaya and ride overnight for about 12 hours before arriving at the Gubeng bus terminal in Denpasar. Almost nobody wants to talk about the decision to leave the *kampung* in Surabaya and move to Bali. Perhaps this has do to with the hesitancy to elaborate explicitly on the reasons behind the decision to enter the world of sex work and to have to discuss its moral

implications. There is, however, one particular and fascinating story that circulates among East Javanese migrants, and many recall waking up at the beach in Legian, wandering around a desolate shore in the early morning hours and coming across a group of friends. For instance, this is how Dion, 23 years old, remembers his arrival in Bali, in late 2007:

> I woke up at the beach. It was very early in the morning and there was nobody around. It soon became very hot and I started to walk up from Legian beach to Seminyak Beach until it was almost lunch time. After that, I walked past the gay beach [Callego Beach, in Petitenget], and there I saw some of my friends from Surabaya. They were sitting at a table and eating lunch, at the beach restaurant, in the shade, under a gazebo. They looked very fresh. I stared at them, but they didn't invite me to join them at their table. To be able to sit with them is a privilege I knew I had to gain for myself. (Dion)

In the Legian region, the young men of *kampung* Malang come together as a gang (*geng*). The geography of gangs of sex workers in South Bali follows a regional pattern, and young men group into antagonistic street gangs based on their place of origin. They usually live in small unsupervised boarding houses, which are owned by Balinese people, and strive for the control of the sex market. While teenage youths on the streets of *kampung* Malang were animated by the desire to join a gang in order to make new friends, socialize, and possibly find a job to make a living, the young men who move to South Bali are determined to make a career out of sex work, accumulate capital, find a long-term partner, and gain financial support. The driving force behind these types of youth formations is now above all economic. Eventually they wish to have made enough money on their own to support their family through remittances, buy some land and build a house back in their home village, and get married. In short, they wish to embrace a fully recognized masculine gender role.

Villa Mangga

The Gang

Javanese migrants constitute the majority of migrant male sex workers in Bali. There is a widespread local association of Javanese men with sex work (Boon 1990), and they are known in Bali as "money boys," a term that has also gained great popularity among local and foreign tourists. These Javanese migrants usually organize themselves into complex networks of antagonistic street gangs, as they call them. These gangs are self-assembled associations of peers who are held together by mutual interests and pursue their specific objective to control the sex market, including the conduct of working and often illegal activities. They are structured hierarchically and have a recognizable leadership and an internal organization based on personal achievements. They are groups based on norms of mutual solidarity, loyalty, and fraternity, which often refer to a common origin, thus creating a strong bond of affiliation and continuity over time and place.

The gang with whom I conducted fieldwork consists of 20 men from East Java with an age range from 18 to 26, who live in Villa Mangga, a house named after the cul-de-sac across the street, in the center of Legian. These men refer to themselves as "brothers," a classificatory system that is overlaid on real kin ties to foster a strong bond among gang members:

> We are brothers because we come from the same place, or same village, from the same economic situation, and because we all want the same thing: a better life. We know each other from before, from when we were in the village in Surabaya. When I was 17 I made the decision to come to Bali and try to make my life different. My cousin was living in Villa Mangga already and was making a lot of money and had nice things. So when I saw him I decided I wanted to try to do the same thing, because I wanted the things he had, I wanted them for myself and I wanted to be able to go back to my village and provide for my family and show my friends the things I had. Like me, my brothers came here in the same way, they

> followed their desire. They all wanted things, because you know, this desire for things is like a virus. (Dion)

For the Villa Mangga gang, successful masculine identities are based on being able to provide for oneself and for the family. This case of male migration is associated with making the transition between dependent childhood and independent adulthood, thought to be complete when young men are able to draw together the resources to provide well for themselves and their families, to reshape their experience at work and also in family relationships (Elmhirst 2007: 230). As Dion puts it,

> We come to Bali to change our lives. The money that we can make here could turn things around for us, for our families. This is a project, it's a job, it's a life opportunity and this is what we focus on, our future. (Dion)

These men are immersed in gang activities on a daily basis. During the day they hang out together at the gay beach, where they like to be seen with rich male clients, share expensive food and show off expensive presents. It is also the place to meet gay tourists and other potential clients. In the afternoon they usually play billiards, hang out in a karaoke bar in Kuta, or write songs and play the guitar. These activities provide an outlet for tension and stress from sex work. At night they party together at Mixwell, the most famous of the gay bars in Seminyak, using money from their long-term clients whether they are in Bali or not. Mixwell is a place to look for potential new male clients. And it is also where hustlers hang out.

The Geography of Sex Workers in Bali

There is a terminological distinction central to the self-perception of men such as the inhabitants of Villa Mangga. They speak of themselves as a gang (*gang*), a "hard-working gang" (*gang rajin*, *gang kerja keras*), but they never refer to

themselves or each other as "prostitutes" or "hustlers." They apply the term "prostitute" (*pelacur*) specifically to girls who are lazy (*budak malas*) and depend on a "pimp" (sic) to find customers. They consider these girls as "not independent" (*tidak mandiri*) and as working the streets for "small money" only, with no sense of planning or entrepreneurship:

> Girls are in the hands of their pimps: they do what they are told and never take control of their activity. This is because girls only want to survive, they only think if they are going to be able to pay rent, buy clothes, have food tomorrow; they don't think big enough for their future. (Dion)

Young female prostitutes are among the poorest and most vulnerable people living in South Bali. As many prostitutes in the tourist zones are from Java and elsewhere in the archipelago, they are subject to transmigration taxes and the constant surveillance and harassment of local patrol gangs and the police. Known in Bali by the romantic title of *kupu kupu malam* (night butterflies), these girls often come to Kuta from the rural districts of Surabaya and Jakarta. As females, they are generally less valued for farm work, and with a low level of education, they represent a poor financial prospect for the family. The girls' vulnerability to violence and extortion impels them into an underground system of protection and exploitation by managers and pimps. While these networks may offer some level of security and support, nevertheless many workers remain exposed to a high degree of violence. For the girls who work outside the clandestine system and police-based protection rackets, these dangers are even more acute (Jones, Sulistyaningsih, and Hull 1998).

While a number of prostitutes haunt the shadows and alleyways around Kuta, many also work as "café girls" at nightclubs and other entertainment venues. Police crackdowns and heightened security measures since the Bali bombing attacks on Kuta have severely impinged on the prostitutes' work spaces, so it is now far more common for pimps and taxi drivers to approach international visitors and invite their interest

in a “young girl.” These “young girls” also inhabit the massage rooms and other bodily service spaces such as tattoo parlors. Indeed, while there are labor demarcations between massage and prostitution, the Kuta area has evolved a strong subterranean youth network associated with an economy of pleasure. The “upmarket” prostitution system that operates through the major hotels and resorts tends to conscript better-educated and more attractive women. In these instances, prostitution is often arranged by hotel management for the service of wealthy Indonesian and international visitors.

Outside the tourist zones of Kuta and the resorts, many girls work the streets and villages around Carik in Denpasar. Carik is a shabby and dirty *kampung*, consisting of around 15 service houses and around 150 cubicles. These cubicles are very small and unhygienic, with little more than a cane mat bed and occasionally a paper towel. The girls are paraded in the houses, and the client chooses the woman, service, and price that suits. Prices vary according to the customer’s ability to pay, but range between $2 and $15 for international clients, full sexual intercourse, and more demanding services. The young women themselves receive only a small portion of these fees. In most cases, they live in Carik and must pay rent, commission, and protection money to their pimps. Failure to pay police protection money or an order from municipal authorities can lead to arrest and imprisonment in the Krobokan Prison. During their incarceration, the women are usually supported by the pimp, who reiterates a bond of exploitation and dependence over these women and exercises a form of control that guarantees obedience after they are released from prison (Jones, Sulistyaningsih, and Hull 1998). Areas similar to Carik are also found in Sanur, where brothels resemble more closely the *lokalisasi* areas found elsewhere in Indonesia, and are described, for instance, with reference to Surabaya in the previous chapter.

As far as male sex work is concerned, and according to my informants, “hustlers” are “men who work alone in the streets,” who “pretend to be gay, in a cheap way.” They are

"fake gays" (*gay palsu*) or cheap homos (*homo murah*), and also work for "small money." This is why they are considered to be fierce competition on the street. Hustlers are often called "nocturnal gays" (*gay malam hari*) because they only work at night, as opposed to gang members, who speak of themselves in terms of "full-time gays." The expression "full-time gays" here does not refer to sexual identity, sexual orientation, or desire. It is used to underscore entrepreneurship and commitment in the accumulation of material capital, and describes individuals who are fully committed in finding a *bule*,[2] preferably a rich foreigner and a long-term client ("silver daddy" or "sugar daddy") who will support them for life in Bali or from abroad. Although most of these men affirm that it is their goal to "leave Bali" and move to the West "to live a better life" with their clients, my research among former sex workers suggests that few achieve this objective and most prefer to stay in Bali and have relationships with multiple clients to accumulate more money. My informants are forthright about their goal in entering the sex market:

> The more money, the better. Of course you dream about expensive things in foreign countries: nice homes, nice cars, lots of money. But my brothers who went to Europe told me that it is not always the case: lots of men don't have all that cash to spend when they are back home. So it is better to stay here and milk them from here, and possibly find many more *bule* to milk at the same time. (Dion)

This focus on entrepreneurship also informs their preference for the homosexual sex market over female clients. For my informants, the broad category of "hustlers" also includes the notorious male gigolos, known in academic literature and media representation as the "Kuta beach boys"[3] or "Kuta cowboys," and who are Balinese and who typically work with women (Dahles and Bras 1999; Jennaway 2008; Wolf 1993). Also known as *cowok*, *gaid*, they enter the pleasure economy on the basis of possessing local knowledge useful to female tourists, facility in English, and certain affectations that

render them familiar and friendly, even in an exotic setting (Jennaway 2008: 51). In their efforts to accommodate the foreigner, Balinese beach boys act out as "hosts" (Ibid.).

My informants are convinced that "spending time with foreign women doesn't pay," as Angga maintains:

> You can trap a woman for a holiday romance, but that's it. They may fall in love quickly as well but they will fall out of love just as fast when they return home. It is stupid to invest in women because they will use you for their holiday and then take off; they will leave you with absolutely nothing. And this is frustrating. Yes, maybe the market is also big, because so many foreign women come to Bali. But also so many men here want to get a woman. And more importantly the potential for our future is very small. Women are not interested in supporting you from abroad. Men are different: they look for something that is long term. (Dion)

The Fabrication of Masculinity

Initiation and Violence

For the Javanese sex workers who live at Villa Mangga, the gang provides models for thinking about oneself in relation to the group. Central to their short career is the complex fabrication of male identities through the manipulation of bodies. They do not perceive themselves as homosexuals, but self-identify as heterosexual men. They think of homosexuality as something that can be fabricated (*membuat*), both as constructed—manufactured from different parts—and as created, deliberately invented for the purpose of deception. In this sense, homosexuality is not related to sexual desire or sexual orientation, but is a category that refers to a set of distinctive public practices that a person learns through initiation by peers and that are, ultimately, linked to sex work. This differs greatly from the idea of being gay and its relationship to normative gender ideals in Indonesia as discussed by Tom Boellstorff (2004a, 2005), because my informants did not address issues of homosexual desire, but

instead link sexual intercourse with men specifically to professional skills learned in Bali. Indeed, as Harry (22 years old), maintains,

> I always had connections with boys in my village in Surabaya and in school, and even held hands sometimes or touched each other, but this is not "gay," this is a special connection with a friend. I learned "gay" when I came to Bali five years ago. Gay has to do with having sex with foreign gay men, for money. Now I know what gay is, and now I am gay here in Bali, because it is what I did to change my life. But before no, before I was *normal*. (Harry)

Such "connections" are associated with friendship and sociality among peers but do not encroach on a heterosexual self-identification. My informants exclude any nuances within the heterosexual/homosexual opposition. They explicitly state that they are not attracted by men, and that same-sex practices (and encounters) are a component of a working activity, rather than an expression of sexual desire. Their idea of homosexuality is constituted by the exposure of gestures and codified practices, and the ability to have sexual intercourse with men to find a partner and financial security. Homosexuality is a performance rather than an internal sense of self, as I illustrate in greater detail below. It is informed by the specificity of the context and by the aspirations and demands associated with sex work. Although the degree of involvement in same-sex encounters with foreign partners may vary, interpersonal relations with clients are described by my informants as mere monetary transactions. The idea of "love" or "falling in love" with a partner is never discussed, and is irrelevant to a context openly described as work. During an early conversation Raja (23 years old) has no doubt on this point:

> When you ask me if I'm gay, when you ask me if I enjoy being with a man, you are not asking a good question: just ask why I do what I do and my answer is simple; I want to have money. (Raja)

For Harry, Raja, and their friends, a crucial precondition for fabricating a homosexual self to work in the sex market is the violent transformation of the body into an object of desire, and thus into a resource. An explicit definition of the body as a commodity (*komoditas*) underlies and justifies the need for violence.[4] The Villa Mangga gang consider their sexual behavior as raw, malleable material that can be manipulated to become their primary source of income. Ritualized violent practices that occur shortly after arriving in Bali aim, as Harry clearly states, to "destroy the body as it is, to turn it into a new productive object." Violence is a rite of passage into a new way of being in the world. This initiation takes the form of a fight between one or more existing members of the gang and the newcomer. The gang member is cheered on by the other members, and the initiate known as the *fighter*, or the *warrior* (with both terms borrowed from the English language) is the object of gambling, with bets being made on how long he will endure the pain.

The ritual fight (*tawuran*) marks the detachment from a former self and the full inclusion into the gang. Underlying the fight is the idea that sex work requires high tolerance to pain and that this can be learned artificially. A series of ritualized physical offenses is thus directed toward the initiate, including, for the most part, punches, kicks, bites, and (cigarette) burns. Although the aim of the fight is to test the initiate's reaction to violence and not to injure him, the hasty consumption of alcohol before and during the combat makes the fighters lose awareness of the risks and dangers of their actions, and some even use sharp knives, chains, and baseball bats to hit the initiate. It is also common to force the initiate to masturbate by using sex toys. This simulation of anal penetration is considered to be a crucial component of the violent initiation because it ultimately represents the essence of homosexuality for the gang members. In the ritual initiation as in the subsequent sex work, the idea of anal penetration is polarized: it is not admitted as pleasurable and not part of one's personal sexual desire. In this sense, it is contained as

violence and managed ritually by the group. The fight concludes with no real winner or loser. The initiate is accepted as a member of the gang if he is able to sustain the pain until the fight terminates at sunset. The initiate then cleans his bruises, scratches, and wounds, and consumes liquor to calm the pain. At this point his "brothers" will create a new name for him.

The initiation to the gang of Villa Mangga presents numerous resemblances with initiation into contemporary Chicano gangs in Los Angeles (Husted 2008). Within these gangs, membership is granted through different types of entrance, with the most common being a ritual called "jumping in." "Jumping in" is also called "street baptism" and "inverse gangbanging." In this ritual, between two and eight more senior gang members surround and beat up a new member (Vigil 2004: 218). The new member is usually in junior high school, aged 12 or 13. The beating may last from 30 seconds to 2 minutes, and may or may not be timed. The scene always takes place in a public space within the gang's territory, with plenty of witnesses watching the ritual. The severity of the beating depends on a variety of factors, including the crowd's reaction and how intoxicated the older members are at the time. If the new member accepts the beating without a single complaint or whimper, the older members and witnesses shake hands and welcome him into the gang as a full-fledged "homeboy." The practical reasons behind "jumping in" are fairly straightforward: the beatings weed out the weak and uncommitted (Vigil 2004: 225). The gang members also take advantage of this opportunity to train for their physical confrontations with other gangs. A variety of psychological and social reasons, however, keep this ritual crucial to the operation of the gang. "Jumping in" can be viewed as a form of rebirth: the preinitiation individual is ritually murdered, and a new gang member is born. "Street baptism" also assigns the new member a new name. Besides rebirth, it also represents a rite of passage into manhood. This ritual usually takes place just after the start of puberty.

The new member must use his masculine will and strong physique to fight the older males. Jumping in also offers an opportunity for the new members to assert their identity as a mature, masculine individuals, by demonstrating violent and overtly masculine behavior.

Pam Nilan (2011) established an interesting connection between ritual initiations among young school boys in Solo, Central Java, and the deeds of mythological Javanese heroes performed in Indonesian puppet theater (*wayang*). Her argumentation broadens our understanding of peer initiation among Javanese sex workers and shows a salient trait of Javanese culture, historically involved with processes of transformation and growth. The author reprises Andrew Weintraub's (2004) study of Javanese hero Gatotkaca and his transformation from a boy child to a warrior of supernatural strength and bravery. The young Gatotkaca had the powerless body of a boy child still attached by the umbilical cord, which had to be cut (Nilan 2011: 4). The weaker body had to be destroyed and then through supernatural forces and indigenous riches (in this case minerals) brought back to life as the hero Gatotkaca (Weintraub 2004: 110, also quoted in Nilan 2011: 4).

"Slaves of Our Own Making": Entrepreneurship and Forms of Capital

By experiencing these violent practices, Javanese men in the gang learn how to rethink their bodies in terms of their own "capital." As Harry explained,

> It is painful when you learn because it hurts, but then you feel that the body is ready for anything. The fight is so important because the brothers can teach you how the pain feels and what you have to do. The kicking, the punches . . . the brothers hit you very hard and you bleed . . . they even burn you with cigarettes, and they use clubs to beat you up. But then you know what it feels like; you learn how not to feel the pain anymore, and then anybody can do that to you, any *bule*, and

> you let them because you don't feel the pain. Even with the sex, *iya*? With the penetration, especially the anal sex. You are prepared. You are ready, you go and give your body and make a nice life. (Harry)

As several informants point out, violence is needed in order to "produce slaves" (*untuk menciptakan budak*). This refers to individuals who are able to use their bodies in the many ways that the sex market requires them to:

> You have to know violence before you see it, you must know it in advance. Not all the *bule* are violent of course. Some are not. But some others will ask you to do things for them, in the bed, that feel like violence. First when they ask to have a penetration. You know that is really painful for us. It's disgusting and it's painful. They want to spank you or to do strange things, kinky things; a lot of them like fisting. But if you know how to deal with the pain then you can be ready for anything. And this is the key to being successful; so this is the first thing you must learn. Everything else comes with time. (Alex, 23 years old)

My informants said that "we are slaves of our own making" and "we use violence and make this body to share and we do it by ourselves." Interestingly, they used the word "slave" to describe a state of autonomy, independence, and entrepreneurship. This is how Rocky (25 years old) explains what had seemed to me a puzzling choice of words:

> When you have to sell your body and depend on the customer to give you money, or on the man to support you forever, you might risk losing some of your freedom, to go out there and become another person's property, because they have money. But this is why we stick together, as a gang. We decide that this is what we want. This is the decision that we make to improve our lives. And we do it by ourselves, with our own rules, without a pimp who controls our money or our life. We are the ones who make the rules. We are independent. We are slaves, yes, because we sell our body and we sell sex to men who think they own us. But they don't. They only think

> they do. We are slaves in their eyes. We have our own rules and our own code, and those men don't know about that. We hunt them and they fall into the trap. (Rocky)

Slavery is considered a state of independence because it is managed by the gang itself. In this sense, violence is a creative tool in the construction of a particular approach to masculinity for the sex market, one that sees the apprenticeship and performative sexuality as key components in the process of self-reconfiguration through corporeal transformation. Masculinity is first reworked for the sex market and marked on the body through violent practices.

New gang members learn a codified set of practices that are considered appropriate for the homosexual sex market: this specific knowledge is shared among gang members and passed on to new generations of initiates. Furthermore, those who become affiliated with the Villa Mangga gang rely heavily on a wide network of solidarity and benefit from the help and support of existing gang members. To join the gang means ultimately to access cultural and social capital, to paraphrase the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), in order to convert every fiber of every muscle into bodily capital and to produce value (Wacquant 1995).

According to Bourdieu (1986), capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized or incorporated form) that enables social actors to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. In its "embodied" state, cultural capital includes "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body" (Bourdieu 1986: 247) that become a part of a person's *habitus* and define his/her specificity. This set of knowledge and practical skills is acquired through cultural and collective transmission, and is used to attain personal and social improvement. More specifically, cultural capital differentiates roles and statuses, creates social agents, and secures them with symbolic and material profits. Social capital, on the other hand, is based on a sense of belonging to a group. It is "the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which

are linked to a possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital" (Bourdieu 1986: 248–249). According to Bourdieu, cultural and social capital might be converted into economic capital, as research among Javanese male sex workers in South Bali shows.

Body Work and Emotion Work

Learning to Perform the New "Self"

The gang practices that take place in Villa Mangga can be analyzed as "social machinery"[5] designed to convert "abstract" bodily capital into an object that will produce value (Wacquant 1995: 65–66). For the gang, "the body is the focus of unremitting attention" (Wacquant 1997: 68); it is "the template and the epicentre of their life, at once the site, the instrument and the object of their daily work" (Wacquant 1997: 66). It is what they depend on, and it must be meticulously molded and accurately managed. The young men put their bodies on the line and tailor their physical and emotional capacities to the requirements of the task at hand.

This can be explained using Loïc Wacquant's concept of "body work" to describe "the highly intensive and finely regulated manipulation of the organism in order to imprint into the bodily schema postural sets, patterns of movement and subjective emotional-cognitive states" (Wacquant 1995: 73). He draws the concept from Arlie Hochschild's notion of "emotion work," which refers to the "management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild 1983: 7). As Teela Sanders (2005: 323) points out about female prostitutes, sex workers are able to engage in emotion work on themselves and in emotional and sexual labor for their clients. They incessantly craft and perform their new identity for themselves. They also enact it with each other and with their clients every day over the course of the

years. This allows masculinity to be an identity in process: fragmented, reworked through the "repeated stylization of the body," a set of repeated acts within a regulatory frame that "produce the appearance of substance" (Butler 1990: 33). "Violence is first," said Alex, "everything else comes with time." It is after the initiation that the gang members begin to work on their new identity.

The story of Arie sheds light on this process of remodeling of the body, and is quite typical of stories that circulate at Villa Mangga. Arie moved to Bali from Surabaya in late 2009 when he was 18, after his brother Jackie had left Villa Mangga and moved to Sydney with his partner. Arie knew about Villa Mangga and its gang, "not only from my brother but from the other boys, because I would see them sometimes in Surabaya when they would come home and see their families and friends in their village." Jackie brought Arie to Villa Mangga for the first visit before he went to Sydney, and this gave Arie access to the gang. Despite his connection through his brother, Arie still had to undergo the initiatory fight. As he recalls,

> I fought and fought and the other boys were around, loud. I had bruises and scratches on my body for two weeks after that, I was so swollen I couldn't recognize my body. But that is the point, you see, you almost don't recognize yourself anymore: you are another person. (Arie)

Once a youth is accepted as a member of the gang, his "brothers" help him create a new fictitious identity, which is supported by a pseudonym, life story, family background, and childhood history. This new identity is clearly based on the desire for money rather than desire for sex with men. These are important aspects of creative self-invention that accompany corporeal changes, as it emerges from Arie's account. These are usually spurious accounts of social marginality. These men present themselves to potential clients as homosexual men who are in Bali to fully express their sexual orientation in contrast to a rigid Islamic and familial background.

According to my informants, in order to establish a solid emotional connection with a client, it is important to stress the inequities and social exclusion that come with the recognition of a homosexual identity. As Arie points out, "You have to pretend that you've always been gay (. . .) that your parents kicked you out of the house because they found out you were gay." Apart from underscoring sexual desire over compensated sex, these men recount life stories of family downfalls. Parents are usually presented as lower-class workers who have been hit by personal tragedies, such as sickness or a sudden loss of property: "A strategy is to tell that your parents work so you don't seem poor but something bad happened to them, that they are sick or that an earthquake destroyed your house." These statements are typically supported by extremely evocative photographic material fabricated by the group: "I took a picture of a man standing by an abandoned house in Bali and pretended it was my father outside our home in Java." Lastly, crucial in the creation of a invented character is the attempt to convey the image of the good worker, and often that of the dedicated student: "You can tell them you have a job somewhere but it is risky, especially if they come to Bali often. Best is to tell you are a student. I tell them that I study architecture because one day I want to be able to design and build a new house for my parents, you know, because after the earthquake our home got destroyed."

Aside from creating a fictitious persona for the sex market, these men work on what they consider their professional skills. Effort is put into learning at least one foreign language. Indeed, English is a crucial communicative tool, but often they become fluent in another language, notably the language of their partners:

> For example, when Aji met Michel he didn't speak French very well, so he signed up for classes at the French Alliance in Denpasar and even got a certificate. Now he is so fluent and his boyfriend trusts him so much that he took him to France to live with him and even gave him a well-paid job. At the

> beginning, yes, the other boys will teach you English, or the basics, the lines that you absolutely must know, but then it's up to you to improve yourself more and more; you have to make yourself more and more perfect. (Arie)

Gang members pay a great deal of attention to crafting their body in order to mimic what they perceive and describe as a "real" (*asli*) homosexual man. This includes learning how to perform a new gender role in both the private and public spheres. To be able to enact the more private aspects of their job, the actual sexual encounters with their partners, they rely greatly on images and footage from American, European, or Australian pornographic material. Again, Arie says,

> We watch gay porn to learn how the gays do it, the positions, the look, the gestures, even how they scream or what dirty things they say during sex. The positions are very important because you must know what they might want, you have to suggest a position, pretend that there is something that you like more in bed. It's also good so if you know you really don't like something you can avoid it. You have to make them feel that you are really involved in what you are doing. We want them to fall in love, to desire to be with us again and again. (Arie)
>
> In gay porn, most of them are actors, they are not gay. Some can't even have an erection. But they make it believable. That's what is important. (Arie)

In public, these young men mimic a series of codified postures and gestures that they believe are appropriate for a gay man. Some are learned by observing homosexual tourists and permanent gay residents in Bali, or by watching Western movies with gay characters and gay storylines. Other gestures are borrowed from Indonesian homosexuals who are part of the gay community in Bali—for the most part, university students and migrants from other parts of Indonesia, including Java, who work in the tourist industry mainly as waiters. They also learn the so-called "gay language" (*bahasa*

gay, *bahasa bencong*), a linguistic phenomenon based on Bahasa Indonesia that involves derivational processes including unique suffixes and word substitutions and a pragmatics oriented around community (Boellstorff 2004b: 248).

The young inhabitants of Villa Mangga also share a secret communicative code, much similar to the idiom of past gangsters of the capital city of Jakarta and known as *bahasa prokem*, historically used to conceal illegal and criminal activities and based on neologisms, loanwords, foreign words, resignifications and syllabic inversions, deletions, and insertions (Chambert-Loir 1984). Nancy Smith-Hefner (2007) demonstrated the resonance of *bahasa prokem* with *bahasa gaul*, literally the "language of sociability," a type of slang quite common among middle-class Indonesian youth. According to her analysis, *gaul* ideology expresses aspirations for social and economic mobility, an orientation toward the values of informality and commensurability, and an attitude of self-confident cosmopolitanism. *Gaul* speaks to solidarity, social flexibility, and self-assurance rather than status differentials: someone who is *gaul* is good at adapting socially (Smith-Hefner 2007). Her discussion facilitates the comprehension of the dynamics and interactions that regulate life at Villa Mangga for at least three reasons. First, the use of a specific jargon delimits the boundaries of the gang and distinguishes the insiders from the outsiders by including the former within a determined horizon of meaning about lifestyles and work ethics. Second, a linguistic form that emphasizes solidarity and reciprocity reveals the importance of affiliation, loyalty, and respect in the work environment. Third, explicit reference to social mobility is indicative of aspirations that encompass the contingency of material needs and have to do with the quest for a better social location.

Ecstasy and the Economy of the Night[6]

To be successful a young man who lives at Villa Mangga must violate Islamic prohibitions against sexuality, promiscuity,

alcohol, and drugs, and learn behaviors that move away from those he was taught in childhood and adolescence (see Lindquist 2009: 85). I have tried numerous times to discuss this topic with my informants. On one of my first days at Villa Mangga, I walked in on one of my informants masturbating while watching the prayer channel on television. Since then, the question of how to manage one's religious beliefs with work in the sex industry has been haunting me. However, as I have approached the subject with some of my closest informants, many seemed reluctant to engage in an explicit conversation and stated clearly that did not want to talk "about religion." Harry said to me that "here [in Bali] there are other rules" and that I should "not mix a talk about religion with all the talking about sex sex sex." Harry also said that when young men come to Bali they "forget religion" (*lupa agama*), but not in the mere sense that they deny altogether all religious beliefs; rather, in the sense that, as he continued on saying, "with this type of work, you must not think about religion."

From this point of view, I have noticed that drugs, especially Ecstasy, play a crucial role in performing the role of the sex worker and temporarily distancing from thoughts about religion and moral values, as they allow sex workers to engage in emotion work and transgress culturally powerful modes of bodily control" (Lindquist 2009: 84). Ecstasy produces a state of enhanced mood, well-being, and increased emotional sensitiveness, with little anxiety, but no hallucinations or panic reactions (Vollenweider et al. 1998, quoted in Lindquist 2009: 84). Furthermore, as demonstrated by Chris Lyttleton (2004), for Southeast Asia, while opium is considered "primitive" and heroin is an isolationist drug, amphetamine-type stimulants such as Ecstasy and MDMA are generally associated with mobility, modernity, and entrepreneurial spirit (Littleton 2004, quoted in Lindquist 2009: 84).

In the gay clubs of South Bali, Ecstasy produces not only pleasure but also "frames subjects who feel more ready to

engage with sex work, transgress religious prohibitions and sell their bodies" (Lindquist 2009: 84). It allows them to become the kind of man (or boy) the client will desire, or at least to engage in that mode of interpretation. As noted by Johan Lindquist (2009), researchers who have studied sex tourism from Western countries to Southeast Asia have pointed out that the condition of inequality inherent in the relationship between client and sex worker should ideally (from the client's perspective, in particular) be denied by both parties in the context of their interaction so that it can be presented as primarily a source of pleasure (Bishop and Robinson 1998: 164–165; Kruhse-Mount Burton 1995; Opperman 1998 quoted on this subject in Lindquist 2009: 83). This denial is necessary because many men are looking not only for sexual satisfaction but also for "romance" or, most generally, companionship. Outside closed institutions such as brothels, the monetary transactions can more easily be transformed so that neither party presents it as the primary reason for engaging in the relationship (Lindquist 2009: 83). The club, at night, is the place where such relationships of inequality can more easily presented as relationships of pleasure (Ibid.).

Always Harry, for instance, claims that the use of Ecstasy makes him

> more flirtatious with men, gives me the courage to go talk to an old man, touch him, play with him, but also be aggressive and hunt him until he starts to like me. I like taking Ecstasy because I feel superior, I feel brave when I try to pick up someone. If I don't take it, maybe I'm shy and waste time at night. Things happen really fast and I want to be tripping right from the start of the night and I want the man to see I am all over him. (Harry)

> I had never taken Ecstasy before coming to Bali. My brothers told me to take it to let loose a bit, and feel more comfortable when I go to the bar at night. You just go and don't think about anything else. That's what they said to me. Actually it works, it's like you are there but at the same time you are

> not there. Your body is, you play with it, and the men like it. If you have to have sex after the bar, it really helps to be tripping from Ecstasy because you don't really realize what you're doing and when it's over, it's over and the men fall in love with you. (Harry)

> You have to give it to your potential client, so you are tripping together, he enjoys the night and falls in love more quickly. There is nothing like Ecstasy to make a man fall in love. (Harry)

> I don't take it every night, and when I don't everything looks terrible. I see people's faces and they look disgusting, I can barely stand the music all night and I don't really want to drink. (Harry)

The circulation and consumption of Ecstasy designates a specific nocturnal economy in which moral assumptions are distanced and set aside to engage with sex work. In this context, emotional work is carried out through the use of drugs, and functions to create two types of masculine identities: the one of the sex worker who needs to come to terms with his own upbringing and education and fit into a specific role in order to make a living, and the one of the client, who needs to be constructed (and perceive himself) as the recipient of attention and unconditional affection.

Inclusions and an Ethic of Deprivations

Symbolic Violence and the Pressure to Succeed

Not being admitted to the ritual fight, failing to endure the pain of the initiation, or breaking the rules of the gang may result in the initiate being marginalized and excluded from networks of gang solidarity that guarantee protection on the street and support in the search for a lifetime partner:

> It is scary and risky to go look for a man alone. You cannot go hunt a man on your own; the boys from the gangs won't let you do that. A *bule* is not a person, he represents money, and a life. But the members of other gangs want a

> life too, and can kill you if they want the same person that you want. (Harry)

Along with the use of physical violence, symbolic violence also plays a crucial role in the process of self-making among these Javanese gang members in Bali. Symbolic violence is "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity," a work of inculcation that imposes "different sets of dispositions with regard to the social games that are held to be crucial to society" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 167). Social games include the game of business, honor, success, and social recognition.

As explained, gang members are not all equal; hierarchies, internal boundaries, statuses, and roles are reproduced and constantly reinforced. The gang is demanding, and its members are put under a great amount of pressure to succeed. A successful gang member is not only one who has found a lifetime partner who supports him from abroad or asks him to move back with him. Success (*sukses*) is also measured in the present time as the ability to provide for oneself and for the gang (in the case that one of its members is not supported by a client), and this also happens through illegal practices, such as theft or drug dealing. In the words of Dion, "All the brothers share with you if you need. I know that what I do for my brothers is like if I were doing it for myself, because I could not be here without them."

The pressure to succeed therefore becomes part of the individual's dispositions, or, to paraphrase Bourdieu, symbolic violence becomes part of the *habitus* of the individual and the group. It is not explicitly recognized as externally imposed violence, or as the expression of power relations; rather, it is experienced as part of a person's dispositions, perceived as legitimate, so that the idea of symbolic violence itself blurs the physical and cognitive boundaries between freedom and constraint:

> Any symbolic domination presupposes on the part of those who are subjected to it a form of complicity which is neither

> a passive submission to an external constraint nor a free adherence to values . . . The specificity of symbolic violence resides precisely in the fact that it requires of the person who undergoes it an attitude which defies the ordinary alternative between freedom and constraint. (Bourdieu 1982: 36)

Symbolic violence, embodied here in the idea of success, works as an indirect cultural mechanism that explains how order and restraint are established and maintained within the gang. Again, in the words of Dion,

> When you are part of this, finding someone, being successful is all you think about. You are obsessed with it, every day. Every single day you must do something about this. You cannot take a break. And when you find one you must watch out all the time. If they are in Bali and especially if they are not. If they are here you must be with them all the time, and if they are away you must make sure they don't talk to anybody around here [over the phone or on the Internet]. They might find out you have other clients. All the time, the pressure is on. It is your success, your reputation and the reputation of your brothers that are at stake. (Dion)

Duties, Norms of Conduct, and Personal Deprivations

At Villa Mangga, a successful ritual fight and the acquisition of the *gengsi* status mark the detachment from a former self and full inclusion into the gang, its networks of solidarity, protection, and support in the search for customers. They also guarantee street credibility and respect at the level of the local informal economy and gang-regulated politics. Furthermore, they provide new gang members with a peculiar worldview, a model for thinking about their masculine selves and their entrepreneurial skills. Gang members overcome a diffused sense of marginalization and uncertainty about the future.

The *gengsi* status implies privileges but also imposes duties, norms of conduct, and personal deprivations. The

performance of the new masculine role is time consuming and all-embracing. Each person puts his craft before everything else. His physical, mental, and emotional energies are channeled toward one purpose only, to entice clients and maximize profit. As explained, these young men invent what they believe is a new plausible biography, the story of the young homosexual who moved to Bali from conservative Java in search for love, work, and sexual freedom. However, they are well aware that foreign men have acquired a certain familiarity with some of the local stories, rhetoric, and the mechanisms of sex tourism and that they are suspicious when they hear the accounts of inequities and social exclusion that come with the recognition of a homosexual identity in Java. As a result, they have initiated a work ethic centered on self-privation that forbids any contact with young women in public places.

The sex workers of Villa Mangga speak of an ethic of sacrifice (*kurban*) and making a sacrifice (*bekurban*). In his brilliant study of corporeal practices among African American boxers in Chicago, Wacquant (1995) argued that the very idea of sacrifice is intimately linked to the attempt to maximize bodily performances during professional training and fighting in the ring. Among professional boxers, and among Javanese sex workers, the body is raw, malleable material and a form of capital: its use must be finely regulated to avoid the wearing effect of time and to compromise professional success. In this sense, "sacrifice is at once a means and a goal, vital duty and prideful mission, practical exigency and ethological obsession" (Wacquant 1998: 48). Twenty-four-year-old Dian, who currently lives and works at Villa Mangga, maintains that "not being able to hang out with girls in public will make the white tourists (*bule*) think we are gay, serious, really interested in them, so we'll be able to make more money, ask for whatever we want." Wacquant, consistent with some of the classical anthropological theories of sacrifice, underscored how collective privations create a sentiment of belonging and coappartenence among members of any professional

activity that has to do with the self-exploitation of the body: "[Sacrifice] binds into one great chivalrous brotherhood all those who submit themselves to it (. . .). And it bestows upon all those who adhere to its forbearing dictates the specific honor of the craft" (Wacquant 1998: 48).

Secret Relationships and Clandestine Encounters with Girls and Girlfriends

Relationships with the female world are complicated. As noted in other parts of the archipelago by Nilan (2011), young men seem to make a clear-cut distinction between "girls" and "a girlfriend." My informants distinguish between hanging out with girls (*cewek*) and being in a serious relationship with a girlfriend (*pacar*, or *girlfriend*, or *racap*, according to a widespread word inversion), and many underscore that "a real man must always have a girlfriend by his side" (Jay, 26 years old), or even that "a man with no girlfriend is not a real man" (Vickri, 28 years old). Girls are usually associated with the world of juvenile temptations, casual relationships, and with the excesses of gang lifestyle, while a girlfriend is perceived as the epitome of adult life, a further attempt to discipline the body and to achieve a full masculine identity. Such a double standard has little to do with the mere need to express sexual desire; rather, it is oriented toward a redefinition of the self through proper heterosexual marital life.

Among Javanese male sex workers in South Bali, secret relationships (*pacaran backstreet*, see Bennett 2005) are widely regarded as a preoccupation and invested with a variety of purposes and meanings. I have explained how these young men self-identify as heterosexual but engage in forms of compensated sex with foreign homosexual men, and how their professional activity places constraints on their ability to conduct courtship and flirtation with women in public spaces. All relationships with young women, they maintain, must go undetected from the eye of current or potentially new customers and must be pursued in secrecy.

The term *titik temu* means "meeting point," and the expression is used by these young men to identify the site of clandestine encounters. The *titik temu* par excellence is the unauthorized parking area of the now-demolished Sari Club, one of the three sites destroyed by the terrorist attacks in Kuta in 2002. Javanese sex workers gather in the early evening hours to sell illegal substances to foreign and local tourists, while simultaneously waiting for their girlfriends to share a moment of fleeting intimacy, hold hands, exchange kisses and affection, and talk about their future life as a married couple. Colloquially they use the English terms *prince* and *princess* to refer to each other: "I am waiting for my prince" and "Do not bother the prince and the princess while they are talking" are among the frequent expressions that they use while meeting in secret.

To arrange *pacaran backstreet* causes stress (*strés*), my informants maintain. Young male sex workers risk their professional reputation, their credibility and their profits if found in the company of women by their male partners. Nevertheless, these encounters are crucial because they allow the young men and women to get better acquainted with potential spouses and experience courtship and premarital relationships.

Indeed, *pacaran backstreet* should ideally culminate in marriage. Curiously enough, the term *titik temu* is also used to indicate "marriage," "the meeting point of two different minds." These young men establish an important symbolic connection between their juvenile private and romantic encounters in Bali with their girlfriends and the public wedding ceremonies of adult life in Java. Significantly, on their wedding day men and women will no longer be considered as "princes" and "princesses," but will be treated and honored by their local community as "kings" and "queens." At a further level of analysis, then, *pacaran backstreet* is a stressful event because of the broad expectations placed on sex work by these young men, their attempt to maximize material capital, and their effort to enter adulthood through marriage.

Other forms of clandestine encounters include online conversations and video-chatting, especially late at night, when sex workers are busy chatting with their foreign clients overseas; love letters, handwritten and left on the motorbike saddle, which are often washed away by tropical storms; and love songs, requested through the circuit of local radio stations. Sometimes these young men take the risk of being seen in public and visit the workplace of their girlfriends. They might share a meal together, exchange kisses, and cuddle. Some lie to their customers and pretend to be in Java visiting their families in order to spend more time with their girlfriends.

Marriage as a Cognitive Resource

Ethnographic evidence seems to suggest the relevance of *pacaran backstreet* in the transition to an adult life phase. It also points to the significance of marriage in the lives of these young men, who have experienced the violence and the hardship of sex work, and who, toward the end of their short career, around the age of 26, begin to reflect upon the contradictions of their time at Villa Mangga and weigh the costs and the possible consequences of their entrepreneurial activity. The young men of Villa Mangga arrive in Bali with hopes of hefty monetary gains and better lifestyles. Oftentimes, however, they are reluctant to satisfy the sexual requests of their clients, have to live with the social stigma attached to male sex work, must strive for the control of a saturated market, and many end up spending more than they earn to purchase drugs. In most cases, these mechanisms sharpen, rather than attenuate, a general sense of insecurity and disorientation, and foster a sentiment of self-detachment from sex work. Among those who have accumulated a sum of money sufficient to buy small land property, build a house, and arrange a wedding ceremony in Java, many choose to rush their departure from Bali. I will return to their stories in the following chapter.

In a context of extreme brutality and exploitation, the idea of marriage and the goal of marrying represent an important cognitive resource: they ease self-understanding within a specific work environment. Silvia Vignato (2007) aptly talked about cognitive resources in terms of "joints that facilitate life" and allow social actors to think and act upon social change, ponder the incongruities and potentials of life choices, and orient actions.

Clearly, intentions and practices are informed by specific gender roles, social expectations about masculine identity that are embodied throughout a person's upbringing, through family, school education, and religious participation. However, to interpret the behavior of these young men in terms of adjustment/resistance to pervasive institutions and cultural models is to reduce the analysis of human interaction to a binary opposition between structure and agency. The life experiences of these young Javanese sex workers show a more nuanced relationship with customary values, built around a process of self-understanding and self-awareness. Through the traumatic affiliation to networks and through the enactment of homosexual practices, these men become aware of the meaning of tradition in the personal economy of their own lives, and eventually embrace it at its fullest. As Donny, 29 years old, puts it, "At 29 I now know where I come from, and I know where I am going."

Through the idea of marriage, the older inhabitants of Villa Mangga question the discrepancies of sex work and make sense of their lives, beyond the apparent excitement and the collective euphoria of life in the gang. Speaking of his past clandestine encounters with his girlfriend in Bali, Hendra 29 years old, currently married and living in Surabaya, recounts that "meeting in secrecy allowed me to spend time with my girlfriend, but most importantly reminded me that I was a man, and not just a whore." Hendra used the verb "to forget" (*lupa*) when talking about sex work. Others emphasize the need to meet, court, and marry "quickly" (*cepat*, or *capcus* in slang terminology).

Disorders and the Repercussions of Violence

Other Workers and Street Violence

I consider here the implications and outcomes of physical and symbolic violence in relation to these engendered subjectivities. I elucidate the outcomes and side effects of violence by considering the interactions among different gangs, and between gangs and other sex workers in Bali. I question the idea that violence is just a creative element in the process of gender molding, and show its more destructive aspects that are played out in public and their repercussions in the "private" life of the gang within Villa Mangga.

I have shown that the inhabitants of Villa Mangga engage in body work and emotion work on themselves and in emotional labor for their customers, and I have argued that violence, both in the physical and symbolic sense, plays a crucial role in this attempt at entrepreneurship and redefinition of the self for the sex market. Scholarship on emotion work and emotional labor has, however, focused largely on the idea that these processes are emotion management strategies that protect sex workers from the potential stress of selling sex and that help them capitalize on their bodies (Bott 2006; Brewis and Linstead 2000a, 2000b; Lyons and Ford 2010; Sanders 2005). As Sanders (2005: 322) points out in her work about British female sex workers:

> Some sex-workers create a "manufactured" identity specifically for the work place. This manufactured identity is functional at two levels. Firstly, similar to other emotion management strategies, this technique is applied only in the work setting for the purpose of psychological protection from a range of negative effects caused by selling access to parts of the body. Secondly [. . .] sex-workers create a separate character so they can perform the "prostitute" role as a business strategy.

Research among male Javanese migrants in Bali, however, suggests that these ideas of management and performativity,

which are forms of "exceptional control of the inner world" (O'Neill 2001: 89) should be reconsidered, and that their limits and contradictions should be explored. Gang members may attempt to create order and attain control of their inner world by exercising physical and symbolic violence on themselves, but they fail to do the same when it comes to managing the boundaries with the outer world, including conflicting ideas of sex work represented by other gangs and hustlers in the sex market. What constitutes the "public" in the eyes of these men is twofold. The first involves the presence of foreign men and takes place in the so-called areas for homosexuals in Bali, the gay beaches, cafes, and bars, where the sex workers and their clients socialize and where tension is hidden behind a facade of stability for the sake of business. The second involves the struggle for predominance and territoriality between different gangs and between gang members, hustlers, and other sex workers, usually in places that foreign clients avoid for fear of danger, such as back alleys or the beach at night.

As mentioned, gang members go to the local gay bars almost every night in the hope of finding a man who might support them for life. Sometimes they meet up with the gay men they have hooked up with or seen at the beach in the afternoon, or whom they have previously met online in the chat room websites for homosexuals who travel the world. More often, in the case of those members who do not have a partner but still need to collect cash to provide for the daily needs of the community, they end up offering casual sex in exchange for money.

Mixwell bar and some of the other clubs are the places where the competition for clients becomes particularly heated. Many male tourists who go to the gay bars are only interested in one-off sexual encounters, and neither intend nor expect to establish a long-term relationship. Although they are aware of young men looking for long-term financial commitment, they prefer to pay to have sex with a hustler, who offers sex for little or no money, and only asks for

food and, more rarely, clothes. This usually triggers resentment and anger from the Villa Mangga gang. As Ilham (25 years old), one of the oldest and most influential members explained to me,

> Some *bule* don't want a boyfriend, they just want sex. So they go with hustlers... Hustlers are assholes. They come out when it's dark and want to take the *bule* for 50,000 rupiahs [$3.50]. We ask for 500,000 at least. They want nothing, because they invest little. We invest more and demand more. But on a low night when there is no *bule* or only one or two good Western men then we must be angry and must punish these assholes. (Ilham)

The punishment takes the form of violent action against the hustlers, including theft, destruction of property, fights, threats with weapons (knives, bats, guns), and intimidation. In general, Villa Mangga gang members always leave the bars as a group and go for early morning breakfast and chitchat, and will often storm the beach where hustlers have gone for sex, and engage in violent fights. "We beat them up and they bleed and they bleed and then maybe steal their money" or "we smash the motorbike of those bastards." As Harry points out, "If they want to be like we are they must not be hustlers and be in the gang and work like we do our work." Invoking his initiation and commenting on the assault of a Javanese hustler the night before, Harry told me that "if we bleed and hurt then they [the hustlers] must too and so maybe one day they can change their life."

Competition also takes the form of rivalry with other gangs over territory. Not all the gangs look for men in the same places during the day or go to the same club at night; different gangs hang out in and control different areas. For instance, as Ilham points out, "When we go to the beach everyone knows where we sit and put our sun beds. When we go to the bar they know which bar is our bar and where we must sit." More importantly, not all gangs have access to the same men. "We choose the *bule* first," says Ilham, "then if

we don't like him because maybe he's not committing, then the others can have a go." Moreover, establishing a relation with a man who for a long time was associated with a member from another gang is considered disrespectful: "If you do this I can get my gun, and you know I can," says Ilham. Daniel's words best sum up the code of territorial authority and the respect that disciplines social interactions among gangs: "I am the only Daniel in Bali. If you want what is mine I will beat you up hard when I see you, and then kill you but I wish I don't have to do that."

Magic and the Sex Market

Among other means, aggression toward other gangs or other gang members is sought after through the use of black magic. The anthropological convention, following Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1937), is to use the term "witchcraft" to describe an inherited ability to perform black magic, and to use the term "sorcery," by contrast, to refer to an acquired or learned ability to perform black magic. In East Java, and according to my East Javanese informants, the ability is believed to be acquired, and therefore I use the term "sorcerers" to refer to practitioners of black magic. Of course, people accused of being sorcerers do not admit to being sorcerers, and their sorcery allegedly occurs out of sight, in the middle of the night. Sorcery is thought to occur away from observation. Among my informants, sorcery is said to be enacted through casting a spell: humans call on supernatural beings such as genies or devils, recite mantras and cast a spell by blowing on a person. The spell can cause illness or misfortune.

Shortly after I began to undertake research at Villa Mangga, I would often hear stories of gang members becoming ill all of a sudden. These stories were usually recounted to me late at night. At the time, I was living with the gang, and I would often be awoken late at night or early in the morning and asked to talk about insomnia and "abnormal"

skin rashes. These were thought to be the signs of illness caused by sorcery. This is consistent with findings elsewhere in Indonesia and East Java (see Herriman 2007, 2010) that indicate that illness caused by black magic and sorcery are usually labeled as "abnormal" (they are, however, usually circumscribed to the inflation of the abdomen). More specifically here, according to some of my informants, insomnia and skin rashes were the consequence of the malevolent action of members of antagonistic gangs, who had sought the help of a sorcerer to harm their rivals and beat their direct competition. Indeed, according to my informants, difficulty in falling asleep produces a slow yet effective impairment of one's body, that is the deterioration of one's work capital, and also is a danger for the gang as a whole in terms of success on the sex market. It is often associated with chronic fatigue during the daytime. A similar argument can be advanced in the case of skin rashes, which are in turn thought to be the symptom of a malevolent HIV infection. According to my informants, HIV is visible on the person's skin, and skin rashes are unequivocal proof external aggression. Ultimately, insomnia and HIV can cause misfortune, loss of job, the end of a person's working activity, and isolation from the gang.

To prove that someone has been the subject of an attack is a tricky business, for at least two reasons. I reprise here the work of Herriman on sorcery in Indonesia to provide some context (Herriman 2007, 2010). First, there is a general distinction between the supernatural and the natural. While the former is regarded as *halus*, that is, imperceptible, unseen and immaterial, the latter is generally tangible. Magic is thought to allow the influence of the unseen over the material. It is invisible, yet it is believed to exist, and people act as if it exists. Second, sorcerers are rarely identifiable. Their presence and location remains a "social secret," and so does the specific occasion of their consultation with clients. In other words, there is little consensus as to where and when other gang members have sought the help of a sorcerer. There is scattered evidence, however, that "something happened," as

my informants maintain. For instance, sorcerers are thought to make great use of fingernails, and these are found in the carburetors of motorcycles, and what are generally identified as "sorcery objects" (for instance, a rice scoop or a strand of hair) are often found buried near the victim's house (Herriman 2007: 31–50).

I have been able to observe that the preoccupation with sorcery increased significantly between 2009 and 2010, when the general economic crisis impacted heavily on foreign tourism in Bali, and the number of male homosexual tourists in the areas of South Bali decreased drastically, thus opening up a period of great uncertainty and diffused social tension among gang members and among gangs. Violence, as well, escalated to unprecedented levels. These shifts point to the need of communicative codes to interpret and face a general sense of disquiet that pertains to the present and the future of these young men. In other terms, sorcery accusations provide a jargon for reading and making sense of the present oscillations of the sex market, while oftentimes violence is considered to be a viable and more immediate physical solution for dealing with competition and territoriality. In most cases, suspicion engenders violence: gunfights, theft, threats, beatings. According to my informants, it is crucial to establish whether somebody has been attacked. At this point, two options are considered simultaneously: divination by a white magic practitioner, and biomedical diagnosis. The concomitant appeal to two different sets of knowledge lies in the idea that neither of them is completely satisfactory. There is an integration of magic and medical knowledge, but there is not one unequivocal solution to the problem.

White magic practitioners, the above-mentioned *dukun*, rarely—and almost never—name a sorcerer or a specific customer. Rather, they point to a direction from which the malevolent act has originated. I never heard of single gang members being named by a *dukun*, but I have heard of a general direction being given (a gang that lives in the southern part of a street, or in a specific neighborhood or area of

a neighborhood). A direct accusation would provoke a dramatic escalation of violence, and there is general consensus that an appearance of stability must be preserved. This has largely to do with the attempt to avoid clashes with Balinese people and endangering the tourist scene with open outbreaks of violence, something that would put an ulterior strain on the already saturated and declining sex market. Furthermore, a *dukun* is never thought of as being able to cure the illness altogether. He can ameliorate some of the worst symptoms, or lift the spell temporarily, but never cure the illness caused by sorcery.

Biomedical knowledge is interrogated to obtain a scientific diagnosis and to obtain a cure. This is particularly evident in the case of a suspected HIV infection. While some gang members might test positive (or false positive) at first, most do test negative. Such a diagnosis is in most cases considered unsatisfactory by my informants, and doctors are often accused of "not seeing the illness." Doctors, in turn, have become familiar with such cases and have developed a specific vocabulary that understands these cases as "invisible disorders.", as one doctor pointed out during a conversation. Their impact on the life of the patient is acknowledged, but their scientific basis is denied.

Dominance, aggression, and intimidation toward a specific "other," that is, toward other ideas of the use of one's body in relation to sex work, is a means by which these men express and reconfirm masculinities. In turn, violence becomes part of the performance of masculinity. In other terms, new performances of masculinity are producing new masculine subjects (Elmhirst 2007). Violence is embodied in new masculine roles and re-enacted toward other masculine selves.

Balinese Vigilantes, Morality, and Extortion

Finally, there are conflicts that arise between the gang members of Villa Mangga and Balinese men and authorities. These

types of confrontations are perhaps less visible; however, they speak of the relationship between Indonesian migrants and the Balinese context at large.

It is frequently that patrol operations can be witnessed that are carried out by young Balinese men who storm at Villa Mangga at six or seven in the morning, enter the gate, and furiously begin to knock on every door. These men, who are informally working with Balinese authorities or with the police, are looking for money. As I have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the residents of Villa Mangga arrive in Bali unregistered, they have no formal occupation and, as such, they are subjected to forms of extortion. In 2009, these patrol rounds reached unprecedented levels of frequency and aggressiveness, and became a part of local and national narratives about morality, proper moral conducts, sexual behavior, and public spaces.

In 2008, Indonesia approved its long-in-the-making Anti-Pornography Bill. While most Indonesians support legislation that controls the production and distribution of pornographic materials, the Anti-Pornography Bill stirred controversy because of its broad definition of what constitutes pornography and, in particular, porno action. Indeed, the February 2006 draft of the Bill defined pornography as "a substance (*substansi*) in the media or a tool of communication that is made for the purpose of conveying concepts that exploit sex, obscenity and erotica" (Allen 2007: 101). Porno action was first defined as an "action, in public, that exploits sex, obscenity and erotica" and subsequently "the attempt to gain profit by marketing or displaying pornography" (Allen 2007: 101). As well as banning activities such as the depiction or selling of products that involve necrophilia and pedophilia, the Bill banned the depiction and public engagement in a wide range of considerably less sinister activities, including kissing on the lips and erotic dancing in public, and article 25 prohibited revealing "certain sensual parts of the body," defined as genitals, thighs, buttocks, navel, and breasts (Allen 2007: 102). In its own words, the Bill sought to "uphold and revere

the dignity and human values of a faithful and devout people in order to create a society that honors God Almighty." It described what it termed "every citizen's responsibility" to "protect, guide and provide moral and ethical instruction to society." Debate over the Bill split religious and political communities in what Bayuni has dubbed a "culture war" (Bayuni 2006) about public morality, freedom of expression, pluralism and, ultimately, about "what Indonesia stands for" (Bayuni 2006).

Local authorities in the Seminyak area, namely the all-male village-level institution of the *banjar* and the members of the local police, never attempted to enact directly the prescriptions of the Anti-Pornography Bill. The local economy profits greatly from wealthy foreign tourists who engage in lavish behavior, sex tourism, and drug consumption. The Seminyak area is home to hundreds of local businesses, expensive restaurants co-owned by expatriates, night bars, and clubs attended by sex workers. These are usually the places where prostitution and drug sales take place. Local Balinese men, who, in most cases, own and rent the lands where such activities flourish, are well aware of the phenomenon and have no immediate interest in corroding the informal economy with prohibitions and arrests. They are, however, interested in emanating restrictions and sanctions that would generate further income through a widespread system of corruption, bribes, and informal payments imposed both on local venues and on single individuals. Different categories of venues and individuals are subjected to different monetary requests, based on their visibility, their location, and their supposed generated income. In 2009, male sex workers became particularity hard hit by the so-called system of collecting commissions (*komisi*) by the men of the *bajnar*, local police officers, and the local mafia, which thought it could exploit some of the earnings made from sex work. Young Balinese men were identified as the armed branch

to conduct the operations of collecting fees and extorting money.

While patrol rounds seem inevitable, violent confrontations do arise at Villa Mangga, as gang members attempt to defend what they perceive as a violation of their home and their work:

> We know that what we do is not good. They think it's wrong, that it is against the law, that it is a bad thing. They [the Balinese vigilantes] come early in the morning, while we are sleeping after a night of work, they wake everyone up, they make so much noise and scream "you must pay, where is our money, you must pay!." They want money from us. Our money. The product of our work. We have to fight back or there will be no limit to the amount of money they ask for. Before, they used to come once a month, or once every two months, but now it is every week. Different groups come and expect money. Those people have no job, make no money of their own and want to live off of our work. This is not fair. (Harry)

Two issues stand out. The first has to do with the dignity of work, despite its moral connotations. While gang members acknowledge the ambiguity of their work practices, especially from a moral and exterior point of view, they are nevertheless determined to reject any form of exploitation. This has obviously to do with the need to protect their earnings but also to speak out about what they believe is unfair treatment on the part of Balinese society and Balinese men. As Harry pointed out, "Why would they want the money made through such despicable activities? They don't care about what we do, if it is right or wrong, they just want our money, they are greedy." What is also interesting is that, in the midst of patrol rounds, two different groups of young men were confronting each other, around the idea of work and the morality of work. I was unable to conduct further research on the topic, as my involvement with the gang prevented me from getting access to the world of Balinese vigilantes.

However, in the economy of the lives of the young men of Villa Mangga, patrol rounds and the fights that ensued were a constant reminder of the dangers and precariousness of their work activities, and of the fact that numerous social actors and interests revolve around the world of sex work, well beyond any project of entrepreneurship, a theme that I will explore in following chapter.

Chapter 4

After Sex Work: Immobility and Bonds of Dependence

Introduction

This final chapter[1] continues to explore the ideas of personal growth and work by shifting the focus to the life experiences of former sex workers. I have shown so far that studying male prostitution as sex work better reflects the ways in which young men understand their experiences of commercial sexual exchange and interpret their occupation in terms of calculation, opportunities, and responsibilities. The accounts provided by former sex workers are narratives about the limits and contradictions of that form of entrepreneurship that is sex work and that originates in the context of migration, violence, and sex tourism of South Bali. They reveal second thoughts, discrepancies, discontinuities, and idiosyncrasies, and speak of the short- and long-term consequences of violence.

Identities in the Mirror

Cannibals and Ghosts

Rizal is 28 years old and considers himself a former sex worker. Like many Javanese migrants who move to South Bali in search of lucrative opportunities as sex workers on the market for homosexual tourists but who fail to find a wealthy partner and attain financial security, Rizal spends

most of his day consuming alcohol outside the billiard room located on Jalan Plawa, in Seminyak (South Bali). After the unexpected and abrupt conclusion of a long-term relationship with a retired real estate agent from Perth, Australia, Rizal finds himself alone and ponders his options, in work and in life:

> I have got nothing to offer, and the *bule* won't look at me anymore because I am too old. However I have changed a lot while in Bali, and now I feel that I cannot move forward; I have no real skills, I feel paralyzed. I sit here outside the billiard room, where you have found me, and I wait for a friend to buy some cigarettes for me or to bring me something to drink. There is nothing else I can do. (Rizal)

To continue to live in Bali, Rizal relies on the support and help of some of his younger friends who are still working as sex workers:

> My younger brothers who are still desired by the *bule* and still make good money will help me get through the day. They bring me food, cigarettes and alcohol and that is everything I need. They will take care of me. Once you become old, you absolutely must rely on their flesh: their bodies still have a precious value on the market. We joke and say that we are "cannibals" [*kanibal*], because we feed on their flesh and muscles. In exchange, we give them what we can: we offer advice to help stay away from trouble and enemies. (Rizal)

I often ran into Rizal between four and five in the morning, while he sat alone on the dirty steps of the abandoned Kudos bar, once a popular gay nightclub in the lower part of Jalan Dhyana Pura. There in the dark, Rizal awaited patiently for his friends:

> I wake up when everyone else goes to sleep. My younger brothers always meet for early morning breakfast at one of the *warung* [food stalls] of the area. They are very hungry and tired because they probably drank a lot, they were high on drugs: they are usually extremely intoxicated. They bring me

> some food and tell me everything that went on at the bars at night: if one of them has found a *bule* to have sex with, if there have been any fights on the street with other sex workers or with the police. And then, they are off to bed. Like right now: can you hear the noise of their motorbikes? (Rizal)

When I first began to talk to Rizal, I was immediately drawn by the sense of profound loneliness that accompanied his words and that seemed to permeate the life of this young man:

> Dark. Dhyana Pura is very dark at night, because all the restaurants and all the bars have closed and turned their big neon lights off and everyone has left. Can you hear the silence? It is almost overwhelming. We must speak softly. Tomorrow the noise, the music and the chaos will resound on this street once again, but for now there can only be whispers. The silence is so haunting, you can almost hear my brothers as they race home on their motorbikes. They are going to Villa Mangga. That is their home. I used to live there myself not too long ago. At night, I would leave Dhyana Pura and drive off to my room at Villa Mangga. Nowadays, I sit here and wait for someone to bring me something to eat for breakfast. In a few hours I will go hang out on a bench outside the billiard room, and I will wait, again, for drinks and cigarettes. This is what I do every day, and this is what I think I'll do every day for the rest of my life. (Rizal)

When discussing the lives and experiences of his younger "brothers," Rizal sees himself in them and looks back at the years he spent living and working as a sex worker in South Bali. Rizal moved to Bali from Surabaya, East Java, when he was 19 years old and joined the Villa Mangga gang. Rizal often mentioned a young man named Fedry in the course of our conversations. Fedry became a member of the Villa Mangga gang around the time Rizal decided to leave the group. In the following fragment, Rizal describes Fedry's first couple of weeks as a new member of the gang:

> At first I didn't know Fedry very well. My brothers said he and Ronnie went to the same school, near Jambangan, but

> that was the only piece of information I had at the time. Malek knew Fedry's cousin quite well and recounted that everyone in their *kampung* remembered Fedry, because he was very tiny and very skinny, especially when compared to the other boys his age. To be honest with you, when he first came to Villa Mangga Fedry did not take up much space on the mattress in his room; he had no muscles (. . .), he was little, but a bundle of nerves and had a fearful attitude about him. He would eat in silence, look around frantically but walked as if he was blind: he would always ask the other brothers to drive him around. To be honest with you, he had no idea of where he was or what he was doing at all. (Rizal)

Fedry, 17 years of age, arrived in Bali in late 2008 with the help of a cousin who had already been working as a sex worker for three years at that time and had been involved in a relationship with a rich 63-year-old engineer from Melbourne, Australia, for over a year and a half. Again Rizal:

> My brothers always know what to do in this kind of situation because they have specific rules, and everyone knows the rules. Take Fedry, for example. He used to be worthless, and now he is priceless. And do you know what it takes to go from a nobody to someone who is worth millions of rupiahs? Do you know what it takes to be desired by the *bule*, to find monetary support and leave Bali for good? My brothers will beat you up, kick you, punch you, burn you with cigarettes; they will teach you the value of pain and the act of anal sex; they will prepare you for the market, for the customers, their requests and their desires. You will learn how to act, speak and behave like a gay man. Like they say, if you follow the rules you will know everything that there is to know about this life and you will be in control of your future. Your body will get you very far, maybe even as far as Australia, or Europe. You will be independent. You are a slave, but a slave of your own making. You make your own choices, as painful as that might be. This is what Fedry has learned. (Rizal)

Reflecting upon Fedry's early days in the gang, Rizal observes that

> Fedry arrived as I was preparing to leave Villa Mangga. I will never forget this coincidence. I think about it every day, as I see him drive by the billiard room in the afternoon. I wish him the best: to find a decent man, to become rich; to leave this island and see the world. Otherwise, he will probably sit next to me outside the billiard room. (Rizal)

Through Fedry, Rizal becomes aware of some of the limits and consequences of his work experience and acknowledges the failure of his long-term life project and expectations. He has acquired personal distance from the sex market, and finds himself talking about his life as a former sex worker. Rizal did not "go very far"; instead, he feels "paralyzed," "unable to move, to go anywhere," "stuck" outside the billiard room of Jalan Plawa as he depends on the help and support of younger gang members. By comparing his current state to similar life trajectories of former sex workers, he cannot help but wonder:

> You ask yourself: What have I actually been doing in Bali all these years? Nothing, absolutely nothing. I am still here, I am not free and I have nothing. First you try to learn as much as you can from your brothers, you plan a certain type of life for yourself, you devise strategies, but in the end you realize that you cannot have everything under control, that sometimes you make mistakes and some other times things just don't turn out they way you thought they would. You find yourself depending on those young kids. They think they have it all, just like I did. They will help you. And you, you feed on the product of their work. (Rizal)

> When you fist arrive in Bali, you have nowhere to go, nowhere to sleep. You basically sleep on the beach. It's very silent there. You are scared, everything is new. You can barely fall asleep, afraid that someone might come and steal your stuff. But there is a sort of inexplicable excitement about the things to come. Years later, when you're too old for the market and don't work anymore, you get up very early in the morning: outside it is still dark. You are no longer scared, everyone knows who you are, but you realize nothing new will happen

> to you. In Bali, you start in the dark and end up in the dark, in the still of the night. (Rizal)

As young men who become part of local street gangs, these Javanese migrants work strenuously on their corporeal skills in order to produce bodily capital and economic value, and achieve financial autonomy; they are euphoric and naive, caught up in their daily activities and driven by their immediate needs. As they grow older and leave (or prepare to leave) the sex market, they articulate a more explicit and critical reflection on their future, and on the ineluctability of their dependence on the work—and the "flesh"—of their younger "brothers." They are jaded, lack enthusiasm; their words present a more disenchanted vision of the world and recuperate both a sense of time depth and a certain analytical perspective that are absent among their younger friends. As Rizal asserts with no doubt,

> I am Fedry, he just doesn't know that yet. When I see Fedry I see my own choices before my eyes. I am in the process of seeing things more clearly now. Sometimes I want to go up to Fedry and talk to him. For him, you know, we are on the opposite sides of the world right now. After all, he usually wakes up when I go to sleep. (Rizal)

I would like to draw attention to the ethnographic significance of Rizal's words and thoughts about his own past and the lives of his younger friends, and their broad implications in the study of masculine identities.

As suggested by João Biehl, Byron Good, and Arthur Kleinman (2007: 15), when approaching the delicate and complex matter of identity, it is crucial to grasp the process of "orchestration of the self," that is the arrangement of events, achievements, and defeats into value-feeling states of hope and hopelessness, robustness and demoralization, competence and inefficacy. Social actors and former Javanese sex workers are by no means an exception. They develop concerns, obsessions, and perplexities, and they

also ponder the consequences of their actions. The description of their life experience and the attentive analysis of their words, their reflection on the physical and psychological demands and consequences of sex work, unveil some of the implicit mechanisms that occur in the formation of a specific idea of the self in a particular context. According to Biehl, Good, and Kleinman, the goal of such ethnographic approach is to

> (. . .) explore emerging patterns of self-formation and to comprehend how inner life and its relationship to values is changing; how will, thinking and judgment are evolving in specific settings; how these transformations affect suffering and our responses to it) (. . .). (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007: 12)

These authors us invite to take into consideration the notions of "self-critique" and "self-renewal." By encompassing the sterile opposition between social structure and individual (and collective) agency, Biehl, Good, and Kleinman underscore how social actors form a specific idea of the self by reflecting upon the voids and silences, the discrepancies and contradictions that they have experienced (and continue to experience) in life. A "subversion of the self" (Hirschman 1995) does not translate necessarily into the subversion of social structures; rather, it is a form of critical (re)thinking and a way of adjusting to being-in-the-world. Through circumstances subjects look at themselves in new and unpredictable ways; they become aware of the impact of their life choices and seek ways to make sense of their life trajectory and to "endure experiences that would otherwise be unbearable" (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007: 14). It is in this sense that Rizal's words acquire a pertinent meaning:

> I thought I knew all about myself and my body. It was what my brothers had taught me. I felt the pain but did not see the scars. Now I see them. Maybe not all of them, but I see them. (Rizal)

Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Sandra Teresa Hyde, Sarah Pinto, and Byron Good (2008) introduce two more elements that ought to be considered when exploring the construction of identities through a biographical approach. The first is the idea that there is a "sense of the hidden, the unspoken and the unspeakable, that appears in the fissures and gaps of the everyday life" (DelVecchio Good et al. 2008: 11). When Rizal sees Fedry drive home on his motorbike, he tells me that he would like to "say something to him," but ultimately he desists. When I asked Rizal to explain the reasons behind his hesitation, he told me that

> [a]s long as you're young and you are still working with your brothers, you don't want to hear silly stories about how you're probably going to end up one day. You so strongly believe in what you're doing that these stories don't make any sense to you. When I talk to Fedry I warn him about his enemies in Bali. I help him move forward in his daily activities. If I told him that one day he might sit outside the billiard room and wait for food and cigarettes I would demotivate him. He probably wouldn't listen to me anyways. Nobody wants to believe in failure. Some things are better left unsaid. (Rizal)

The second element is what DelVecchio Good, Hyde, Pinto, and Good call "the ghost," that is, a form of self-identification with the actions and the words of another person (DelVecchio Good et al. 2008: 11–17). To paraphrase their argument, ghosts appear to render explicit and to confront personal doubts and inner fears. In the case of former Javanese sex workers, the younger gang members of Villa Mangga seem to trigger a process of self-recognition that coincides with a moment of self-critique. "I am Fedry," said Rizal, thereby reflecting upon his own life rather than passing judgment on Fedry's actions:

> When I see Fedry I see my choices and my own life before my eyes. The same obsessions, the same dreams. And I wonder: would I do this again? Would I do it differently? What would I do if I could turn back time? Fedry and all my other

> brothers at Villa Mangga make me relieve the moment I left my village and joined the gang. They make me think about who I was and the person I've become. (Rizal)

Accumulation and Hazard

The billiard room is the place where the young inhabitants of Villa Mangga devise work strategies in the attempt to look for potential new partners among the foreign tourists who arrive in Bali on a weekly basis. These are older men who hang out at the gay beach in Petitenget in the afternoon, attend the gay bars at night, and often seek the company of young Indonesian men on dedicated Internet pages before they even arrive in Bali. Gang members spend most of their day together and are immersed in gang activities all day long, as I have shown; however, it is the afternoon billiard game that provides an opportunity to discuss explicitly "what to do with the new *bule*, who to 'hunt' and how to do it," as Rizal suggests:

> They argue, they yell, and they laugh together in that damn billiard room. Actually, it looks like they are having a good time, but the truth is that there is some serious business going on in that room in the afternoon. I used to spend a lot of time in there myself when I was young so I know very well what I am talking about. The brothers play billiard of course, and focus on the game, but most of all they are making important decisions about themselves and about each other. Everyone must be very present because those decisions involve everyone and affect everyone. You see, it's like an obsession, and the obsession makes them yell, stamp their feet, smash tea bottles on the wall. They'd even use their cues to beat each other up. They are aggressive, stupid, naive. (Rizal)

To sit outside the billiard room, in contrast, is to acknowledge one's exclusion from direct gang activities. There comes a time in the short career of these Javanese sex workers when they feel their presence within the gang becomes a burden for the gang itself and poses a threat to the well-being and success of all gang members. Between the age of 26 and 28, gang

members begin to perceive themselves as too "old" (*tua*). The young men of Villa Mangga seem to agree on the fact that foreign tourists prefer younger adolescent-looking men. At 26, sex workers feel they look "tired," that their bodies are "consumed," "worn out," that their skin is "rough" and their appearance is "not so fresh anymore" (they use the English language to describe all these expressions and feelings). Insofar as all members are required to provide for themselves and for other gang members in times of need, those who do not feel "desirable," "marketable," and capable of generating profit decide to voluntarily leave the gang. To avoid undermining the social and economic capital of the gang, these men exit the billiard room and the sex market, and are left with no job. Indeed, the idea of becoming old is also expressed through the word *ngangur*, which means "to be unemployed."

There is an exit ritual that is not always performed. It is less extravagant and violent that the initiatory fight that marks the entrance to the gang. It is called "jumping out" (an English expression), and involves the gang member not returning home with the gang after a regular night of work. When the time comes to head to the Villa after the bar and after an early morning breakfast, the now former member will drive to another location, a room he has rented somewhere else, or the room of another friend of his, perhaps also a former member of the gang. Another version of "jumping out" includes the gang organizing a symbolic goodbye party at Mixwell bar. Overall, when a gang member "jumps out," it means he no longer lives at Villa Mangga and is no an longer active part of the gang and its activities.

Outside the billiard room, former sex workers elaborate critically on their biographical and work trajectories. I once asked Rizal, "Why do you say your friends are stupid?" The vivid picture he offered in return provided a reflection on his life and that of his "brothers":

> My younger brothers do not realize that things don't always go the way they plan. When you are young you think that

> you can plan your every move, that you can be in control of pretty much everything, and foresee the outcomes and the consequences of every action. You see no obstacles, no difficulties; there is no goal you cannot achieve; but look carefully! Do you see the billiard table? Do you see the cracks, the bumps, the dust, the damages on the table? The cue is old and the tip is split in two. Under these conditions, it is quite hard to pocket a ball! To be honest with you, it's almost impossible at times! This is the reason why I think they are stupid. They can plan as many things as they want, they might think they know all the tricks to fool the *bule* and the other gangs, but in the end anything can happen, anything; and all of a sudden things can change. Take Fauzal for example. (Rizal)

Fauzal is 29 years old and sits next to Rizal outside the billiard room. When he was 23, he was in a relationship with Julian, a much older retired sales manager from the Netherlands who used to spend half a year in Bali. Shortly after Fauzal turned 27, Julian died while still in Holland, leaving Fauzal alone with no form of economic support.

It is interesting to notice that, rather than emphasizing a life based on capital and accumulation, Rizal and Fauzal insist on the unpredictability of the future and the inevitability of fate, beyond any tactical calculation or strategy. While the younger members of Villa Mangga work toward the creation of bodily capital to produce value and attain financial and personal autonomy, former gang members begin to question the efficacy of such corporeal transformation and cast doubt on the outcomes of these work stratagems. They stress the importance of chance, a concept that is similar to the notion of "roulette," to reprise again Pierre Bourdieu and his theorization on the forms of capital. In his essay (1986), Bourdieu contrasts the idea of a world based on capital accumulation with that of a world based on fate and chance alone:

> Roulette, which holds out the opportunity of winning a lot of money in a short space of time, and therefore of changing one's social status quasi-instantaneously, and in which the

> winning of the previous spin of the wheel can be staked and lost at every new spin, gives a fairly accurate image of (. . .) a world without accumulation (. . .) in which every moment is perfectly independent from the previous one (. . .) so that at each moment anyone can become anything. (Bourdieu 1986: 241)

While Bourdieu contrasts the regularities and orderliness of a society based upon capital accumulation with the unpredictability of a world based on hazard and gambling, the words of my informants seem to suggest the possibility of considering their life and work experience from both perspectives. Metaphorically speaking, there are two different ideas of the body and two divergent worldviews that shape take shape inside and outside the billiard room. Inside the billiard room, the body is conceptualized in terms of a tool that provides access to a world of freedom and financial and personal independence, the idea behind the recurrent expression "to be slaves of our own making," while outside the billiard room, the body is somehow re-examined in light of recent events and it is thought to be at the mercy of a fluctuating and unpredictable sex market.

Immobility and the Inability to Work

Among the former sex workers I have met, those who decide to continue to live in Bali and have not accumulated sufficient economic capital to support themselves believe that they are "incapable of moving" (*tetap*, literally "still," "motionless"). This state of immobility is also evoked by the word *sepi*, which indicates the absence of any human activity and is used by my informants to denote a sense of overall emptiness and desolation. It is also well exemplified by the condition of sitting permanently outside the billiard room. Through the notion of immobility, former Javanese sex workers question their place and their role within Indonesian society.

First and foremost, the idea of immobility has a physical and spatial connotation and suggests the inability to move

forward as well as the impossibility of turning back time and reconsidering a personal life choice. Many former sex workers maintain they no longer view Bali as a passage point to the "Western world." On the contrary, they describe their life on the island as a "permanent condition." This is, for instance, how Yudha, 27 years old, narrates the events that led him to leave his home city of Surabaya at the age of 19:

> Ferdian [a friend from Surabaya who had been living in Bali] came back to Surabaya with a lot of pictures of his "friend" from Texas. He said he took those pictures while he was traveling in America with his "friend." Actually, he never went to America. His "friend" took his pictures and sent them via e-mail and Ferdian just pretended he had gone to America. At the time, though, I didn't really care. I would look at those pictures and see a fancy sports car parked in front of a big house. His "friend" was also in the picture, but far away in the background; I couldn't really see his face. He was probably old. You know, when you look at those pictures you think you also want to move to Bali and find a "friend" that will take you to see the world. You don't really give much thought as to how you are going to make friends like that man from Texas. Actually you even think that all men from America are like that, that they have money, luxury. When you look at those pictures you don't just see Bali, you see America! You don't really think: oh, what am I gonna do in Bali? You think, I wonder what it is like to live in America. Bali is just a passage point. (Yudha)

Yudha did not find a stable partner and never traveled around the world. He went out with a restaurateur from Perth who had a restaurant business in Bali, but eventually decided to sell his property and license and move back to Australia by himself:

> When Ryan left me here with no money, I tried to look for another *bule* but many made promises that did not keep. After a while you know how these things work. The *bule* come to Bali, look for a local boy, promise the world and then leave. A lot of them are not rich at all, they don't own

> fancy cars, they live in small apartments. They spend a lot of money while they are in Bali because it's a vacation for them, but once they're back home, they are broke. At some point you realize all this. However at the same time you also know you cannot go back to Surabaya, to the moment when you thought all men from America had the same life that Ferdian's friend from Texas had. You know, had I known all of this, I would have probably tried a career as a photographer, you know I like to take pictures. I probably would have had better chances to travel the world as a photographer than as a prostitute! Oh well, I am still here. I am stuck. (Yudha)

Yudha also talks about the risks of social immobility:

> For people like me, there is no place to go other than here [the bench outside the billiard room]. When you live the life I have lived, and the life that my "brothers" have lived, there is no actual time to learn how to do other things. Not that you really think you're ever going to need other skills. Some of my "brothers" dance as go-go dancers at night, and that is a good thing because the *bule* will see you up there dancing and will want to sleep with you, but that is also something that you will not be able to do for the rest of your life. Yes, you've learned how to dance at the bar, but that's about it. It's really not going to change your life. So what am I supposed to do now? Look for a job? Earn a salary? I wonder, but really don't give it much thought. I drink a lot, that I do. (Yudha)

Former sex workers ponder the advantages and disadvantages of entering salaried work, but also face the difficulties of adjusting to a regular job, a fixed work schedule, and a low wage. Minimum wage in Indonesia averages around one million rupiahs per month ($10), the equivalent of two nights' worth of work on the sex market. Several "successful" gang members at Villa Mangga receive cash deposits for over eight million rupiahs a month from their partners abroad. Furthermore, work shifts at tourist facilities in South Bali are grueling, and usually average between 12 to 14 hours a

day with a half-hour break for lunch. To enter salaried work, then, means to give up a certain lifestyle:

> When you think about it, you ask yourself: should I look for a job? I mean, the salary is so shitty. One million a month? What is it? Nothing! You won't pay rent, or have your own motorbike, you won't be able to afford clothes, drinks, drugs, and all the things that you like. One million rupiahs to work all day under a damn boss, and everyone knows bosses are killers around here. It's not even worth thinking about that. (Yudha)

> If you're lucky you might get a job as a waiter. It's harder to work in a hotel, because they look for people with a degree in tourism there. It's easier to be hired at a restaurant or at a laundry shop. Here again, is it worth it? So much work and so little salary. You basically work all day and the only thing you can afford is rice. (Yudha)

The absence of any form of income generates bonds of dependence between those who have left the gang and now sit outside the billiard room, and the younger gang members who are active on the sex market and still produce value. In the next paragraph, I explore ethnographically this notion of interdependence among former and current sex workers.

"Flesh," Solidarity, and Bonds of Dependence

Former Javanese sex workers rethink the personal and corporeal transformations they have experienced in Bali in the light of their present condition. They reflect upon the idea of "becoming slaves" that characterized their early years as gang members and elaborate on the limited value of their body on the sex market. More specifically, they now rethink their body in terms of mere "flesh": my informants use the Indonesian word *tubuh*, which means "body" in the sense of "body parts," or even in the acceptation of "pieces of meat" (at times they also borrow the English term *flesh*):

> When you work on your body, you turn it into something that the *bule* want. You think of your body as the instrument

> that will change your life forever, for the better of course. Well, actually, it is just an object, and people use it as they please. Once you become old and don't know what to do with it anymore, that's when you realize it was just meat for sale. I heard a lot of *bule* say that once we get older we are just rotten meat, or expired goods, and they don't want to buy anything like that. If you really think about it, we've worked on our body but ultimately the decision is up to the customers.

The metaphor of the "meat" and the idea of "flesh," which substitute for the previous idea of the body as the focus of unremitting attention and the instrument by which to exercise control over one's future, are now used by these former sex workers to acknowledge the failure of their work activity and shed light on the inconsistencies and incongruities of the sex market. These young men who feel they have become too "old" to continue working as sex workers retrace and define past and present forms of dependence, and also weigh short- and long-term life perspectives.

> We are always going to be "brothers," even after you leave the gang and stop working. To quit working actually is a sign that you care about the needs of the gang, that you worry about the success of your brothers. On the other hand, if your body is still worth money it is your duty to take care of your older brothers. When I was younger, I also used to take care of our former gang members; now it is their turn to take care of me. Their flesh provides me with food, cigarettes, alcohol. I rely on their flesh, I depend upon it. One day they will also depend on somebody's flesh.

I have shown that older gang members voluntarily leave the gang to avoid jeopardizing the success of the group as a whole. However, as they explain, there are bonds of solidarity and mutual help that remain very strong and continue beyond the active participation in gang activities. These are often described through the notion of "need" (*butuh*). Former sex workers "need" the assistance and the

support of younger gang members because they "need" food, cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs, but also clothes and medicine:

> Everyone works tirelessly to bring food and drinks. We sit outside the billiard room and wait for our younger brothers to stop by around five o'clock in the afternoon. At night, then, they bring some food and some drinks before they go to work. When you've been drinking every night, like we have, you are somehow used to consuming alcohol at night and you wish to continue to do so. But alcohol is expensive, you know. Beer is cheaper, but hard liquor is expensive. Crystal meth is also expensive. But our brothers know the right people and can always spare some. (Rizal)

> Our brothers know we also need clothes. Some of them are so rich that they never wear the same clothes more than once. When they want to get rid of something they don't need they come here and give it to us. We also need medicines. When my teeth hurts, Ronnie always goes to the pharmacy and buys vitamins for me. He even brought Hendra some bandaging for his stomach once. (Rizal)

In exchange, former sex workers provide current gang members with useful advice for avoiding trouble and settling the conflicts that arise with other gangs in the Seminyak area on a daily basis. At some levels, violence is endemic in this region, although it is largely played out at night and away from the public eye, and street fights erupt among gangs to establish the control of a specific territory and the right to work in particular territorial niches at certain times of the day. On any given night, motorbikes are set on fire, indirect revenge is carried out in the back alleys of the busy tourist areas, and beatings occur at the beach. In the daytime, former sex workers from different gangs meet to discuss a possible solution to prevent further open confrontations. A compromise or agreement is usually reached in the form of a temporary truce, as no gang is interested in perpetrating a public display of violence that might endanger the sex market

of the tourist area. In short, former sex workers act as mediators, as Fauzal explains:

> We meet with former gang leaders and try to mediate for the sake of the market. We set the boundaries of our territory and commit to respect the work space of other gangs. These decisions require more maturity. If it was up to the young kids they would kill each other on the streets at night. (Fauzal)
>
> We talk, we make decisions and then we explain what is going on to our younger brothers. Sometimes we also speak with the police: it is important that nobody is arrested, or followed around. The police ask for money and we must take care of that as well. We also make sure that nothing is published in the press about gunfights and crime on our streets, or else nobody will come out at night and party anymore. (Fauzal)

The conversations between former and current gang members are interesting because they reveal the pedagogic value of these daily exchanges, when older members instruct their younger "brothers" on how to act toward the members of rival gangs:

> Some of them [the younger gang members] think they can control the market without seriously worrying about other gangs, but this is not the case. It is important that they know who is who, who is in charge of another gang, who is untouchable, who's got connections and protection. The consequences of stupid mistakes fall on the group as a whole so they'd better stay away from trouble. (Fauzal)

The notion of "flesh" is particularly effective because it sheds light on two different orders of dependence. The first ties the work of gang members to the needs and demands of the foreign tourists. As former sex workers maintain, the body is nothing but mere "flesh for sale," and ultimately it is under the control of those who decide to purchase it. In this sense, they argue, any attempt to master the body and to maximize its use to produce value is always partial and imperfect, and

the very ideas of freedom or mobility are inherently contradictory and illusory. Ultimately, it is the market that dictates the fortunes and misfortunes of young sex workers, regardless of their commitment and their strategies. From this point of view, those who "still sell their flesh for money" only exercise a limited control over their body. The second binds the life experience of former sex workers and the work activities of young gang members, where the former expect and await for help and support, while the latter receive advice and protection in exchange. In this second acceptation, the "flesh" is a resource that the young men of Villa Mangga share with those who have quit the gang for the sake of the community. In this sense also, they only partially dispose of their own body. Here again, the body creates a bond of dependence.

Ideas about Success and Insuccess

"My Life Abroad"

I met Eddy several times while I conducted research in Bali. He is 32 years old and, at the time (2009), had already jumped out of Villa Mangga and moved to Paris with his partner, Nicolas, 58 years old, and they lived together in a studio apartment near the southern suburb of Villejuif. They would come back and visit Bali a couple of times a year, and were welcomed like true "superstars" by everyone, or at least Eddy was.

Eddy and Nicolas met in 2007, while Nicolas was traveling across Indonesia on business, scouting for Indonesian models for his agency back in Paris. He had stopped in Bali for a quick holiday and met Eddy at the gay beach, where they bonded over their mutual passion for photography. My conversations with Eddy took place in French:

> When Nicolas came to Callego beach he was just trying to get some rest and release the tension from his job. I had seen him around before, he had come with his sister to Bali a couple of times on holiday. He had a modeling agency in

> France and was very fond of Asian models. He told me he had been to several cities of Indonesia to look for some fresh new faces for some important campaigns he was handling in France. I thought he was probably very rich so I "hunted him down" until he invited me to dinner. I think he liked the fact that I wanted to be a photographer in life, I think that tricked him into wanting to go out with me. He did not think I wanted his money because I lied to him and told him that I was already doing some photography work here in Bali for a friend of mine. This made him really happy and convinced him about my "true" feelings for him [he smiled]. (Eddy)

There is another version of the same story. This was recounted to me by another member of Villa Mangga, many months later:

> Nicolas used his modeling agency as a cover-up for buying and selling drugs across Indonesia, and Eddy, we all know that, was the specialist of drugs, he was "the" biggest drug dealer at Villa Mangga and in Bali. He barely sold any sex while at the Villa, instead he made most of his money by dealing ecstasy and hashish. Yes, he had a passion for photography, but you should have asked him how he bought his digital cameras, plural. The reason they became friends is because Nicolas was looking for a partner in crime and, why not fuck Eddy on the side? After all he was very handsome. (Felix)

Whatever their mutual interests, Nicolas invited Eddy to come live with him in Paris and become life and business partners. They married via civil union and opened a new home-based modeling agency that dealt mainly with Asian models living and working in Paris.

In the summer of 2011, months after I had left Bali, I met with Eddy at a bistro in Paris. I was in the city on holiday with my partner and wanted to catch up with him. He showed up at our "rendezvous" all dressed up in fancy designer clothes, and I remember he was wearing Dior glasses and carrying around a five thousand euro Chanel bag. We

had a cappuccino and talked for a bit about his life in France and his relationship with Nicolas:

> I am a Parisian man now, I live in Paris, work in Paris, I am Paris. I hope you did not want to meet me to talk again about Villa Mangga. At best we can talk about Maison Margiela [he laughed in a snobbish way]. I don't work in that hole of Jalan Dhyana Pura now, I work in fashion, photography, I travel the world. I don't even think of Bali anymore, my life is here. We only go back to Bali every once in a while to do some business, and because Nicolas still likes to vacation there. You know, young boys, fresh meat. Remember all that? (Eddy)
>
> Nicolas…What about Nicolas? I am lucky enough if I see him for dinner. I don't care about Nicolas. He just needs to front the money and I take care of our business. He's a dirty pig, he's probably getting laid with some second-rate prostitute in the Marais right now. I don't care about what he does, as long as he's able to afford me this lifestyle, and leaves me alone. I am fine here, I have so many Indonesian friends, and friends from all over the world as well. I am fabulous, darling. What about you, do you still think about your old days as the white bitch on the block? (Eddy)

Eddy had no doubts about the fact that he would continue to lead a high-profile lifestyle for the rest of his life: "Trust me, baby, there is no way this is going to end. Nicolas and I have something in common that nobody is going to destroy." At this point, I did suspect for a bit that they were heavily involved with drugs. He gave me a few tips about expensive restaurants and shopping, and then left. A transvestite friend of his had come to pick him up by car, which is a rare occurrence in Paris.

A year later, I received a long e-mail from Eddy in which he announced he was in the middle of a breakup with Nicolas:

> I need your help my friend. You are the only person I can trust in this stupid Europe. Nicolas is sick of me, I think he wants another boyfriend, maybe a cheap boyfriend, or somebody younger and more fresh. He says he wants to break up

> with me and go to Bali. Stupid French man, he thinks I'm too old for him and that I am spending all of his money. This is his sister's fault, she's been putting things into his ear, that I don't love him, and that I am just a greedy whore. What does she think? That he loves me? He just used me all this time to make money with "you know what." (. . .) I can't go back to Indonesia, I'm too old, what am I supposed to do? Join the gang? Everyone will laugh at me, I will be a joke around town. Please help me, if you sponsor me, I will come to Italy with you. Or maybe you can talk to Nicolas, he likes you. (Eddy)

What struck me the most about Eddy's e-mail was the fact that he did not consider for a moment reaching out to his friends for help. After all, I thought, he was always welcomed with great enthusiasm every time he would visit Bali and the rest of the gang there. Obviously he knew that those bonds of friendship had a more opportunistic and envious side to them, and was afraid to be marginalized and ridiculed. As his persona (and name) largely rested on the supposed "successful life" he was able to establish for himself away from Bali, his inability to hold on to his capital and material resources would have been scrutinized and he would have been looked at as a failure.

I did call Nicolas on that same night, and we had a frank and honest conversation about him and Eddy:

> Look, you know me. I love to live it up. Eddy is old, doesn't even want to fuck anymore, and I don't blame him. He's been with me for many years. But the real problem is that Eddy doesn't want to go back to Indonesia with me for some traveling and we need to do that, we really need to do that for a month or so every year. You know what I am talking about. Otherwise, he can kiss his luxurious items a big goodbye (Nicolas)

I had figured by then that their partnership disguised illegal business across Indonesia and felt uncomfortable continuing to talk to him over the phone. In March 2013, Eddy

returned to Indonesia permanently. I had been following his breakup on his Facebook page, which was filled with angry posts and even more angry exchanges between the pair. I contacted Eddy via Facebook chat when I noticed he posted the following status: “At Charles de Gaulle airport. Fuck you bastard French man”:

> Yes, I am going to Jakarta. I am still fabulous and still working a lot. I will have my own agency there and start a collaboration with a movie producer soon. I will be also a casting agent for Indonesian movies. You won’t see me in Bali anytime soon (Eddy)

A few weeks later, I was contacted by a mutual friend who lives in Bali, who told me he had spotted Eddy by the bushes of Callego Beach, which is the place that the young men of Villa Mangga identify as the spot where low-class prostitutes go to in order to make some quick cash in the afternoon. The e-mail read, “Here is a picture of your French pal” and contained several pictures of Eddy taken with a mobile device. I did not want to pursue this form of gossip, which I had distanced a bit from since I had returned to Italy. However, a few weeks later a new picture of Eddy appeared online as his profile picture on Facebook. It portrayed Eddy with a much older gentleman in Paris. Among those who commented on the picture, somebody asked if that was indeed Eddy’s new boyfriend and if he had returned to live in Paris. He wrote, “My new man, a true man, in our new home in Paris.” I wrote Eddy a private e-mail to say hello and teased him a bit about his new relationship and his grand Parisian comeback. This is what he replied:

> I cannot lie to you my friend. You’re too cool. I am not in Paris. I am in Surabaya. The picture is photoshopped. That man, I don’t even remember his name. He was stopping by Surabaya and I gave him a blow-job. After that I took that picture and posted it online, just to make Nicolas jealous. (Eddy)

Nicolas lives in Paris with a young Thai man he met a few weeks after Eddy had left France. His old apartment in Villejuif is listed for sale.

Glitter and Gold

While in Paris, I also met for ice cream with Yoni, 32 years old, who also had moved from Surabaya to Villa Mangga and then Paris in the blink of an eye, after getting "engaged" to Tony, a 49-year-old bank clerk. Yoni and Eddy knew each other from their days together at Villa Mangga. However, since they had moved to Europe, they had never talked to each other. Yoni's story differs from Eddy's in that Yoni is open and explicit about the reasons that led him to move to France despite his strong wish to remain in Indonesia and return to Surabaya, where he had a wife and a daughter:

> I know what Eddy is doing in Paris, he's playing Samantha Jones from the show *Sex and the City*: fancy clothes, fancy restaurants, fancy everything. A superficial life. The problem with Eddy is that he does not have a project, or a plan for the future. He lives in the present, a very chic present. (Yoni)

> I moved to Paris for Ina [his daughter, 16 years old]. Tony knew about her and about my wife, well ex-wife. He knew I needed some financial stability to be able to afford a good education for her, and guarantee she will have a good life. When he fell in love with me he thought I was gay, but he is not stupid, he is a good man. He knew what I was doing, but we became friends, and then best friends. When he asked me to move to Paris he told me I could also bring Ina along and give her a good life, a fantastic life. I don't live in Paris, I live outside Paris, very far from Paris; Paris is so far I never come to Paris, I only came in today just for you. I work everyday, make my own money, live at Tony's house, but it's not all glitter and gold, it's a hard life, with a family, a job, and the responsibilities. (Yoni)

Through Tony, and thanks to his full-time job at the Asterix amusement park, which is located close to his home in Plailly,

around 20 miles north of Paris, Yoni was able to obtain a visa for his daughter, who now lives with him and attends high school in France. What I admire most about Yoni, and have always appreciated, is his humbleness and honesty, and a certain crude perspective on things past and present. As he maintains, he feels "complete" with his daughter by his side and a job that helps him provide for himself and for her, and that every once in a while leaves him with a bit of money to send home to his family in Surabaya. However, this feeling of completeness is bittersweet, as he longs for his home village of *kampung* Malang where he would rather settle down and live:

> I have made the most of my situation. People in Bali must think I am crazy. I have everything here, but it's not always the things that you have, it is also the streets you walk on that make you happy. I'd rather be driving around my bike in my village than having to take a train to come see a friend [he was talking about me]. I feel lonely here, I don't know anybody except my colleagues from work who go home every night and I don't see until the next day. I don't have time to come to Paris and hang out with the Indonesian community. They meet every Wednesday at Bastille, but I am tired in the evening, must check on my daughter, cook dinner for her and Tony, and then I usually pass out. If things continue to go this way I will never ever find a woman for me. (Yoni)

There is a feeling of loneliness and isolation, and an ethics of deprivation, that shows through Yoni's words, almost as if he wanted to remind himself (and point out to me, wisely so) that "not all that glitters is gold" and that there is no such thing as success:

> I have stopped talking about success like I used to when you were there [in Bali]. What is it, after all? I have a family, a house, a job, and all I would want to is to spend time in my village. Think about this, all I want is to go back to where I come from. All this success and then you want to go back. It's funny, man. (Yoni)

As we said goodbye, he concluded by reminding me that "I am old now, I don't look for success anymore, I look for one day of freedom from my life. I am a housewife now, a desperate housewife."

Where Success Will Take You

Felix, 31 years old, was the person who told me Eddy was not working as a model agent or a photographer in Paris and that he and Nicolas were circulating drugs across Indonesia. At the time I thought he might be speaking out of envy, although later I changed my mind and heard the story firsthand from the main actors involved. Felix was, and still is, a very cocky person. He likes to brag about his money, his multiple partners who support him, and his travels. The last time I met Felix was in March 2013. As I walked downstairs from my boyfriend's apartment in the center of Milan, with my laptop and a bag full of dirty laundry, I heard somebody say, "Hey, Bali."

Felix was visiting his partner from Italy and staying just around the corner. He was taking a walk by himself before going to bed. It was a bit strange to see him in my neighborhood. I knew Eddy and Yoni were living in France, and when I met with them I was mentally prepared to have a conversation with them in a context that was foreign to all of us, but to see Felix right in front of the bakery where I have breakfast every morning felt disorienting. My impression, however, was that he was not puzzled at all, as he started off our little chat by talking about Eddy, once again, like years before and like time had not passed:

> Did you see what happened to Eddy? That idiot is back in Indonesia, he's hiding in a corner somewhere in Jakarta. He must be so ashamed of himself. I told you that he was just a stupid ass selling drugs, didn't I? You didn't believe me, and look who is right now. (Felix)

Felix's attitude was a bit haughty, and in the middle of the street that annoyed me, so I asked him, "So what is it that

you do these days?" He told me he was visiting his "friend" from Milan and that he would be going to Rome the next day, and then London, New York, Washington, Las Vegas, and Chicago. To put it blatantly, he had a "friend" in every city he was going to visit, and that was his idea of touring the world. I asked him if he felt "successful," but at that point he sat on the bench outside the bakery and gave me a big pat on my shoulder:

> Come on, we are men now, who are we kidding? We are not at Villa Mangga, and these are not the steps outside the gay bars: this is your house, and it's my life. I am a prostitute, and I will always be one. My "sugar daddies" pay for my plane tickets, jet me around the world, fuck me and then send me off to another country. When I go back to Bali I have one partner who lives there and that's it. These men know what I know, and what you know: this is prostitution. Success is keeping this lifestyle for as many years as you can. For me, success now is to save some money, something that I should have learned a long time ago. Had I put some money aside, I would probably not be a prostitute now, but who knows, my opinion is: once a prostitute, always a prostitute. Just be smart about, don't be like Eddy. Success can take you anywhere, but you remain what you are: a prostitute. (Felix)

We had a couple of drinks and then he texted me once he "successfully" made it to Rome. As for me, I "successfully" did my laundry.

Going Backward

My brief exchange with Felix had haunted me for a few days, and I decided I would make a courtesy phone call to my closer informant, Bonny (28 years old), and talk a bit more about success, now that my days with the gang seemed so far away, and everyone I was meeting again seemed to be revisiting that notion. Bonny also was a resident at Villa Mangga during my research time in Bali, and is now living in Oslo with his partner.

Bonny and I were very close in 2010 because we both liked to party until early in the morning, and most of all liked to play dress up and create the most extravagant costumes for Mixwell's theme parties. One of my favorite was the angel and devil costumes we wore a few times, and I still treasure in my wardrobe. I mention it because he nicknamed me "angel," and I would call him "devil," and we still use these funny names when talking to each other. Bonny's partner, a 43-year-old sales manager named Anders, had only been to Bali once, fell in love with Bonny, and immediately asked him to move to Norway, where they got married. I remember the day they met and the day they left together only a few months later. That felt like the end of an era, and coincidentally, I left Bali a few weeks later. We promised each other we would keep in touch constantly and we did, but never managed to actually meet somewhere in between Norway and Italy.

I told Bonny that Felix suggested that success is a mere perception of the present moment, and that ultimately there is no such a thing as going forward, achieving one's goals: chances are that a prostitute will always be a prostitute. I had talked to Bonny so many times that I knew exactly what kind of activities he was busy with in Norway: going to Norwegian language classes, going to lunches, dinners and parties with his schoolmates, attending the clubs at night, and chatting online with his friends back in Indonesia. He told me he was becoming quite fluent in Norwegian, which is something his partner really cared about. Even though Bonny was aware that in Norway most people have a very good level of English and that a foreigner might just get around by speaking English, he was also motivated to go to school, in order to make Anders happy and keep himself active, with some sense of discipline.

Here is what Bonny had to say about success:

> Angel, my Angel, my success has nothing to do with going forward or making money today. My success looks like going

> backwards. Look at me I am a spoiled child: I go to school everyday, which I never did when I "really" was a child. I hang out with my school friends, at the school cafeteria. I do my homework. I go bowling. I go to parties in the afternoon. I will never grow up, I will never go somewhere else. I am Peter Pan. This is Neverland. (Bonny)

The stories of Eddy, Bonny, Felix, and Yoni tackle the issue of "success." These men have all traveled to live across the world, and in theory they are all good examples of good transitions from adolescence to adulthood, at least in the eyes of those who still live in Bali and are still a part of the gang. When in Bali, Eddy and Yoni recount endless anecdotes of their days in the capital, with detailed descriptions of historical places and fascinating people, and instill dreams and fantasies about a better future; Felix is constantly jetting around the globe and never returns home without a bag full of expensive gifts for his old friends of Villa Mangga; and Bonny is happily married and financially set for life, almost a model to look up to and admire. However, their words reveal the flip side of success, which is that it always comes with a price: betrayal, the routine of a "normal life," exploitation, and a sense of chronic irresponsibility, which are the opposite of the ideas of integrity, excitement, self-realization, and maturity that sustain the very idea of becoming a successful man.

Embodied Violence

At Villa Mangga, everybody knew Ferdian as "the Master," because of the particular work skills he had developed over the brief time he spent with the gang. In fact, Ferdian arrived in Bali in October 2008 when he was only 18 years old, as he recounted, and quit the gang a little over a year later, in November 2009, when he moved back to Surabaya. I got to know Ferdian pretty well because while in Bali, he was financially supported by a dear friend of mine from Italy who sojourned on the island for six months a year.

His head shaved and a vertical scar that cut through the left eyebrow, Ferdian was very tall, skinny, yet muscular. His eyes always wide open, I used to tell him he had the expression of a "serial killer." His thoughts were impenetrable, and one could never tell what was going on through his mind. With time I learned to tell his raw image apart from his shyness. In fact, Ferdian was a very introverted guy. He talked very little and was almost invisible: while hanging out with the gang, he always occupied a somewhat peripheral position, either by walking at a certain distance from the rest of his fellow gang members or by standing in a corner, looking angry. There are numerous stories that circulate about Ferdian, but one in particular recounts that during his ritual initiatory fight to the gang, Ferdian had fought back so hard that he broke his opponent's jaw. This episode became legendary, not only because novitiates usually never fight back, but because at the end of the fight Ferdian challenged the entire gang and demanded to fight against each one of the gang members. As a consequence, he was generally feared by his friends and had made a reputation for himself as the most violent among the gang.

Everyone knew Ferdian would take his job at Villa Mangga very seriously. In the course of little or no time, and in order to find a niche for himself in the overcrowded sex market, he specialized in the practice of sadomasochism. Sadomasochism (S&M) involves giving and/or receiving pleasure, often sexual, from acts involving the infliction or reception of pain and humiliation. Many practitioners of sadomasochism, like Ferdian, describe themselves somewhat as a "switch," as somebody who can either inflict (a sadist) or receive pain (a masochist). Ferdian used to speak at a very slow pace, and his voice had a robotic, almost mechanical sound to it:

> This is a business and if you want to work in this business you have to find your own place to make a lot of money. I want to make my money quickly and go back to Java. I don't want to stay here forever like my brothers do. It's a horrible business,

> why do it for the rest of your life? (. . .) I have taken up S&M because there is a great demand for it. You would never imagine how many sugar daddies who like to be spanked, beaten, fisted and tortured there are on the Internet and in Bali. I don't go to the regular chat rooms where my friends hook up with their boyfriends. Those are for old men who want company, but there is always the risk that they are chatting with too many people at once and end up wasting your time and then dating someone else. I don't hunt men at the gay beach. I go there to relax. I get my men on specific websites, for people who like what I do. I want results, money, fast. (Ferdian)

> When do you S&M you can be the Master, or the Slave. I prefer the Master, it gives me more pleasure to humiliate those nasty old people, but I can also do Slave, I don't care: it's not love, it's not even sex, I don't get any sexual pleasure, just the thrill of beating somebody up. If I am the slave, then the next time I want to be the Master to give back the pain.

> You would be surprised how many idiots fall in love with people like me. They mistake pain for love, they think I love them because I am ready to do this kinky perverse stuff, but for me it's just money. They pay much more and give you so much more money than a normal *bule*. They give you millions [of rupiahs] for a night, and will support you if they think you are their Master exclusively. (Ferdian)

Rational and calculating, Ferdian accumulated a good amount of money during his stay in Bali, enough to return to Java within 12 months after his arrival and open a tattoo shop in Surabaya with an artist friend of his.

Early in 2010, I flew to Surabaya with some Indonesian friends to attend a round of the Miss Drag Queen Indonesia competition and support our drag queen friends who worked at Mixwell. The contest was taking place in one of the bars near the red light district, and the venue was packed with locals and foreigners, mostly gay people, who had come to cheer on their favorites and friends. Right toward the end of the competition, a performance was abruptly interrupted by a squad of men bursting in violently and attacking random members of the audience. I stepped aside and hid outside the

bar, where I was able to watch the madness unleash. A couple of dozen Indonesian men were beating up anyone who would be within reach. A friend of mine had told me there would be a chance that this kind of aggression would occur, as the police had effectively not granted permission for the competition to take place. As I wanted to get away from that scene, I accompanied a friend to grab some food at a *warung* closer to the *kampung* Malang area. There, by coincidence, we bumped into some of the young men who were responsible for the attack. We recognized them from their bandannas. Among the group I spotted Ferdian, who had noticed me and shied away. I was determined to speak with him, but the gang left before I had the chance to approach him.

On the following day, I went to look for Ferdian at *kampung* Malang. It was fairly easy to find him at his tattoo shop. When he saw me, he exclaimed, "I knew I'd see you, I just wasn't expecting you this soon." I took him for a drive, and we chatted a bit about the events of the previous night: "These are my new friends now, my new gang, we are strong men," he told me. Since he had returned to Surabaya and started his business, he had become friends with a group of men who engage in sweeping operations around the city. While this group is not highly formalized, it has some connections with groups of radical Islamic extremists. Sweeping is a term that refers to groups of radical Muslim male youth visiting places such as hotels frequented by Westerners and telling them they are unwelcome, or attacking them. Sweeping is also targeted at local venues where alcohol is consumed, or places where activities are considered to invite sexual thoughts or practices, such as bars, brothels, cinemas, female *dangdut* performances, gay dance parties, or certain magazine publishers, and is most common during Ramadan. I asked him to explain to me the reasons behind his involvement in the homophobic sweeping at the competition of Miss drag queen Indonesia:

> This is because of what I did in Bali. There I lied, I pretended, made my money and left. But I hate drag queens,

> and I hate gay people, they are not normal, they are against the law, and must be punished. If you are a man, you must behave like a man, a real man. I have to behave more like a man than any other of my friends because of what I did, because you know...you know what I did. (Ferdian)

I noticed that Ferdian, to act "more like a man" than any of his friends, tended to exaggerate his already very masculine voice and gestures. In order to distinguish himself from gay men and buttress his masculinity, he chose to sweep around town and humiliate and denigrate gay men. I asked him if he was angry at himself or his friends for convincing him to go to Bali, join Villa Mangga, and enter sex work:

> What I did, I did, my God will forgive me. I made my own decisions but I regret it now, I wish I could erase that from my mind. (...) My friends will realize one day that what they do, it is not what men are supposed to do, and will change their life like I did. (...) I am angry with you, because you still make me talk about Bali. (Ferdian)

In addition to engaging in sweeping practices, Ferdian insists that he should never speak anymore about his past as sex worker, and that silence should prevail. He wanted to leave the past behind, and told me, "I cannot live with that ghost in my head forever, time to move on." I was not sure how onward he was really moving, considering the despicable acts of the night before. However, I felt I had reached the point where our conversation was put to rest by his request not to talk about Bali anymore, and I left with a question: "What did the Bali experience leave you?" He replied with a serious tone of the voice and said, "Money, a shop, and I am stronger than before." He wrapped his hand into a fist and pretended to throw it toward me, and then asked me if I needed a tattoo. He drove back to his new business, and I never heard from him again.

While singular in its own way, Ferdian's story is quite common among former sex workers who relocate to Java and

want to distance themselves from their years as sex workers. I have met a good number of them while visiting Surabaya, and most, if not all, were either reluctant to speak with me or embarrassed by my presence. They preferred not to talk about Villa Mangga, or Bali in general. The few who were willing to talk to me quite openly about their past were concordant in saying that the number of violent practices that they had experienced while in Bali had left a permanent mark on their lives and that they felt at times that they had come to consider violence (in its many forms as retaliation, physical violence, abusive behavior) as an inherent part of their inner self. They saw violence as a viable solution to facing many types of life situations, such as the loss of a job, the suspected cheating of a wife, and friend's betrayal. Not all of them were exhibiting a homophobic attitude such as Ferdian did, but all agreed that the most disgusting memory of Bali was without a doubt the act of having sexual intercourse with men. To show anger and aggressiveness toward homosexual and queer individuals was, as many maintained, quite normal, because as Ferdian put it, "they remind me of a disgusting thing I did, and they are not me. I am not them."

Life as Adults

The Impossible Marriages

Like many fellow gang members, Donny jumped out of Villa Mangga around the age of 26, after setting aside a decent amount of money to begin scouting for a home back in his village in Java. While most former sex workers tend to squander their earnings on expensive clothes and drugs, many do manage to save enough cash to be able to afford a small house and start a family, or to open a small street business. Like many of his friends, he is waiting for his girlfriend, Lea, who works as a hotel receptionist and lives in Bali, to be ready to leave the island and move back to Surabaya. However, he says, "This marriage is complicated, it's almost impossible."

Among the female Javanese migrant workers who entertain *pacaran backstreet* with the young men of Villa Mangga in South Bali, there is also a propensity to stable relationships and marriage; however, among young women the relation between work and marital life presents a number of significant differences. In their words, work in Bali is not something to quickly forget in order to move on to matrimony, like it is for male sex workers, but rather an opportunity to be seized over a longer period of time. Work offers the chance for a career and self-fulfillment: as such, it is not quite compatible with the return to Java and with married life. In other words, work does not lead to marriage, at least not immediately. Although young women intend to marry, some delay their departure from Bali, and some do not marry at all.

The migration path and the professional integration into the tourist sector of these young women is also regulated by preexisting gender-based support networks. These young female migrants arrive in Bali and seek salaried employment in hotels, restaurants, and massage parlors, fascinated by the stories of relatives, friends, and acquaintances, tales of unlimited work opportunities. Their arrival coincides with their exit from the traditional *kampung* house of their parents (*rumah*), their stay in a boarding house (*kos*), and the routine of a new work schedule.

These are important changes in the lives of these young women. Boarding houses are scarcely supervised: three or four girls share the same room to save money on rent, there is no curfew, and guests are free to walk in and out at any time. Boarding houses are often managed by Balinese women (*ibu kos*, landlords) who exercise no effective control over their tenants. For all the above reasons, there is a general perception among Balinese people and among families in Java that these young women (and daughters) live in a promiscuous environment (*pergulan bebas*). Several informants, for instance, Lea, Donny's girlfriend, who is 23 years old, felt "under scrutiny," but did not worry because, "no matter what we do or don't do, we are Javanese and Javanese girls

are always sluts (*pelacur*)." Her words reproduce a historical identification of female migrant workers with prostitutes in Bali, but are indicative of a state of social reprimand.

These young women find work as waitresses, receptionists, and cleaning ladies at hotels, resorts, or private villas. Some are apprentice beauticians and masseuses, while others work in the public relations business or as entertainers in night clubs. Their work shifts are long and grueling (10–12 hours) with two half-hour breaks for lunch and dinner, and one day off work a week. Their average salary averages about one million rupiahs (about 800 euros) a month. Their employers, for the most part expatriates and permanent residents, believe they are lazy, slack, unprofessional, and evaluate their performance on a regular basis. Some think of them as disposable: girls usually get fired if they arrive late for work more than once a week, are caught talking to each other during work hours, or become pregnant. Others think of them as sexually available and frequently ask for sexual favors in exchange for a bigger share of tips at the end of the day, a higher salary at the end of the month, the promise of being awarded a promotion later in the course of their careers. These women tackle the issue with evident embarrassment, but show no hesitation in stating that "the fact that your boss asks you to spend a little bit of time with him after work doesn't make him a bad boss (*killer*), because a bad boss is one that doesn't pay you if you work overtime or doesn't give you a promotion" (Lea).

In a context of social stigma and psychological pressure, harassment, and sexual molestation, the young women I have talked to maintain that they are willing to give up their good name (*nama baik*) and their good reputation to keep their job position and possibly advance in their career. This is an interesting aspect of the female work ethic, if one considers that promotions are rare and apprentices earn little or no money, or are often replaced to avoid full-time, full-salary hiring. Furthermore, plenty of stories of young women fired for no apparent reason circulate in Bali and in boarding houses. Dina, for instance, 21 years old, works

as a waitress at a burger restaurant to become financially independent (*mandiri*) and raise a family. As she recounts, "I love my job because it gives me independence; maybe one day I'll become manager in another restaurant and I'll make more money, have a few kids and be able to afford them a good life, because you know, a man's salary is never enough nowadays." Donny's girlfriend, Lea, has similar aspirations and hopes to become the manager of the hotel at which she works.

Just like their male companions, young women adopt a pragmatic aptitude toward marriage, with the intention of investing their earnings and start family. The idea of marriage, however, is not a powerful cognitive resource as it is for young men; it does not allow a young woman to think of herself within the work environment and through social change. On the contrary, marriage seems to impede self-fulfillment. Many girls have described *pacaran backstreet* as a "waste of time" (*membuang waktu*) and maintain that they are too young to marry. Some think of their clandestine encounters as a nuisance (and also mention "stress"): oftentimes they have to adjust their work schedule to meet with their boyfriends, or ask their employers for a leave of absence. Moreover, they also worry about being seen with men in public, afraid they might be judged as too libertine (*bebas*).

These women, however, do not abstain from having a relationship with a boyfriend: they like the attention and gifts they receive, and are afraid they will not find a partner whenever they decide to return to their village and get married. Ani, 24 years old, asserts that "[our] boyfriends make good money and give us good expensive presents: mobile phones, designer bags, nice clothes. And also, if one day I decide to get married, who's gonna marry me? A man can come to Bali, sell his butt, go back to his village and still be treated like a hero, because he's rich; I can work all my life but if everyone thinks I'm a slut in Bali I will always be a slut. And who's gonna marry a slut, uh, you tell me?"

Grueling Work Shifts

While waiting for Lea to temporize and make a career out of working as a receptionist, Donny does not want to end up on the streets, a victim of alcohol and substance abuse, much like Rizal. For this reason, he applied for and got a job as a waiter at an Italian cafe in the Seminyak area.

Donny works six days a week on a rotating schedule that is given to him on a daily basis. Most of weeks he finds out about his day off on the day before, and he never has time to arrange to run a few errands or even see Lea. His boss, an Italian man in his fifties, does not allow the trading of shifts between staff members, and Donny cannot even bridge together a couple of days to go back to Surabaya. It happens frequently that Donny is assigned the night shift and the subsequent morning shift, on a back-to-back schedule, and when that happens he feels tired from not getting enough sleep, as the restaurant only closes from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m.

Adjusting to a work ethic and duties has proven to be a very hard task for Donny: what annoys him the most is that he has to punch in and out on time, or else he will see his salary cut by 10 percent a month, that his boss is too strict with him and the other employees, and that his lunch and dinner breaks are too short:

> The hardest thing about working under someone is time. You always have to be on time, and that's a good thing, but it's a time set by someone else, not you. You have to punch in and if you're late, he will take money off your salary. If you forget to punch out, the same. He is always watching what me and the other staff are doing: if we chat, get distracted. He doesn't even give us lunch or dinner here, like they do in other restaurants. We have to go out and buy it for ourselves and spend our own money. We only have twenty minutes to do that. (Donny)

With a doubt, the salary also represents a cause of discontent. It is very low (one million rupiah) when compared to the

flow of money circulating at Villa Mangga, and is not sufficient to maintain a decent lifestyle:

> I don't want to live like before [at Villa Mangga], I don't need to go to the bars to buy cute jeans and t-shirts every day. I want to hold on to my money for my future. But this jobs pays very little, and sometimes I have to use my savings if I want to do something bigger, maybe go back to my village. (Donny)

Last, there is a sort of discrimination that Donny feels is directed toward him by his boss, and that he generally understands is directed toward most former sex workers (or those who are thought of as being former sex workers) by their employees, as they are considered to be worth little money and to be desperate to requalify on the work market:

> If they know you were a prostitute they will use you again, pay you a misery and maybe want to have sex with you for free. My boss is gay and when he hired me then he took me upstairs [he lives upstairs from his own restaurant] and wanted to have sex with me. He probably recognized me from the bar, or he knew, I don't know. I said yes because I wanted the job, but it was a humiliation because I only wanted this job to stay here with my girlfriend, not because I was desperate to get the money. (Donny)

Young men (or perhaps one should begin to say men) like Donny, who remain in Bali and attempt to find a job, also express a certain sense of being stuck and of immobility. As they wait for their girlfriends who want to try out having a career in the tourist industry before getting married, they are unable to move from Bali, and are caught in the time frame of salaried work, which allows little or no freedom and places limits and constraints on their lives. There is a diffused sense of resignation and doubt that a marriage might take place any time soon, if at all, and the worry that a person will end up wandering the streets of Bali once again, more tired and with progressively less and less money.

Counter-migration, Relationships, and Compromise

Not all marriages are impossible. Some are possible and entail a compromise. At the same time, not all processes of counter-migration are always definitive, and the past inhabits the present, quite literally in the case that follows. Euan, for instance, got married and lives in Java with his wife and a child born in late 2012, but is still supported and visited regularly by his German partner, Hans, 38 years old, who goes to Indonesia three times a year. His ties with Bali are, therefore, not fully cut.

Euan was 17 years old when he moved to Bali, after his brother Daniel, three years older than he, had already been living and working with the gang for a couple of years. There are many cases of siblings who have overlapped at Villa Mangga, but Euan and Daniel are by far the most memorable pair, because of the interest that they generated among foreign tourists, and the money they were making at the time when I lived with them at Villa Mangga. While Daniel had two stable partners, one from Germany and one from Holland, Euan had four, one from Germany, two from Holland, one from Italy, and one from Australia. All of them were unaware that he was entertaining multiple relationships at the same time: he would arrange for them to come visit at different times of the year and carefully kept them at a distance from Bali's gay street. He managed to cash five checks every month, for a total of about 2,500 euros per month. Quite irresponsibly, his brother used to say, he also wasted his money on expensive clothes, drinks, drugs, his high-maintenance bike, and on traveling back and forth from Bali to Surabaya to visit his family, so that his finances were fine but not as much as they could have been.

Euan's girlfriend, Tika, also from Surabaya, lived not far from Villa Mangga. Euan and Tika had been dating in secrecy for a year when he asked her to marry him. Meanwhile, Hans, Euan's German boyfriend, had found out about the existence of at least one of Euan's numerous partners, a man from Italy,

and had since asked Euan to be in an exclusive relationship. Euan accepted, mainly because Hans had promised to transfer three times the amount money he had been sending up to that point, and interrupted all communications with the rest of his "boyfriends." Additionally, Hans had asked Euan to move back to Surabaya, to avoid any further contact with Bali and the world of sex work. While Hans did not know explicitly that Euan worked as a sex worker, he was highly suspicious and demanded that Euan stay at a distance from Jalan Dhyana Pura and Bali. Once in Surabaya, Euan had some demands of his own, first and foremost that Hans would buy him a house. Right after Hans purchased some land and built a house for Euan, which took a little over a year, Euan proposed to Tika, and the two moved in together.

To date, Hans still knows nothing about Tika and about Euan's son. When Hans visits Surabaya, Tika returns to her sister's house, and he is greeted by everyone as "Euan's good friend." There is no doubt that these visits and the visitors themselves look suspicious among Euan's neighbors; nevertheless, Hans interacts well with the rest of the community and has recently opened a hair salon at which Tika, whom he thinks is Euan's cousin, works full time as a hairdresser. Overall, in the eyes of the community, Hans is a "good man."

Euan's marriage to Tika is made possible by Hans monthly payments and the earnings of the hair salon, which Hans splits two-ways with Euan. While he was able to return to Java, show off his capital, and fulfill his duties as a man, Euan's fate was still somehow bound to Bali, as he materially depended on his "boyfriend's" financial support.

Further Out

As they become part of a local gang of sex workers, the young Javanese migrants of Villa Mangga deliberately manipulate their bodies to delimit the boundaries of their professional activity. This is a collective effort and an inventive process that occurs in a context of violence and extreme competitiveness.

The strenuous and problematic representation of a fictitious self is the most crucial part of the commercial exchange that takes place in South Bali, and the commitment to gang activities is all-embracing and time consuming. In this sense, masculinity is reworked and reshaped to comply with the exigencies of the sex market and in order to achieve financial security and prepare adequately for the transition to adult life. The impact of these transformations on the lives of these young men is most visible on the long run, as they retire from sex work and prepare to face life outside the gang.

Outside the billiard room, at an ice cream parlor in Paris, or at a tattoo shop in Surabaya, former sex workers have the opportunity to look back at their experience in Bali from a different perspective. This moment of reflection is obviously the product of a negotiation with the researcher and originates as they are solicited to talk about their present lives and their feelings: many in fact would rather not speak about their life as sex workers and would like leave such traumatic experiences behind. While thinking about their days at Villa Mangga, they are able to trace a continuum between the state of dependence of their younger friends, who rely on the requests and decisions of their foreign partners, and their own condition of physical and social immobility and dependence. They also question the validity of determined networks of solidarity and support, and in many cases all ties are cut and new forms of social isolation emerge. While all these men felt strong and secure as part of a gang, their single individual trajectories reveal states of vulnerability and solitude and a certain bitterness about things past.

Their words and their biographies show that there are forms and bonds of dependence that have nothing to do with self-improvement and growth, that are contingent and that reiterate over time and in different places, whether a person depends on a partner to lead a certain lifestyle (like Eddy), to educate a daughter (like Yoni), to see himself in the mirror and feel stronger (like Ferdian, who depends on his own acts of violence toward a minority to feel realized),

or to just wait to get married (like Donny). Such bonds and ties almost never cease to permeate their lives. While looking for connections, social integration, and social ascension, and while attempting to put together the pieces to achieve a full masculine identity, these men have found themselves weak and marginal, possibly far more outside of and disconnected from society than they once were before embarking on their journey to Bali.

Conclusions

The young men of *kampung Malang* articulate an explicit idea about growth and their need to "move forward in life." While they are involved with street gangs in Surabaya and then in South Bali, they conceptualize their life experience in terms of a transition to adult life. This perspective shows a substantial continuity in terms of expectations and preoccupations with the previous generation of men who live in the same area. I have argued that, to look at youth as a life phase in isolation is counterproductive in a context in which youth share the same goals and objectives of their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. In this respect, there are models to understand masculinity that encompass the gap between generations and are well reiterated in contemporary Indonesian society.

From this point of view, I have tried to suggest that work in the informal economy plays a pivotal role in the process of constructing a full-fledged and socially recognized masculine identity, which coincides with the capacity to draw together sufficient material and symbolic resources and establish a future for oneself and one's family. The new urban landscape of Surabaya, and its circuits that are imagined for the middle class, have contributed to instilling a sense of disconnection from the flow of capital and opportunities that animate the life in the city, and created a feeling of social isolation among the residents of the inner city who are left wondering about their future and that of their sons. As a result, young men have found ways to come together and have created networks of solidarity and reciprocal support, the gangs. In this

particular area, these bonds are durable and do not extinguish themselves during the teenage years.

From *kampung* Malang in Surabaya a corridor of migration that leads to South Bali allows for the transformation of these networks into more sophisticated and formalized types of organizations. While the existence of such paths of migration has long been acknowledged, the study of the relationship between male migration and male sex work and illegal activities has so far been neglected. In South Bali, the corporeal and the economic aspects of work are intertwined and concur in the formation of fabricated identities for the sex market. Through notions of discipline, respect, and an ethic of sacrifice, the young men of *kampung* Malang who are a part of the gang of Villa Mangga work strenuously to create a better future for themselves.

The study of youth gangs of sex workers in South Bali, which represents the specificity of my research, opens up a new field of research that merges the attention to group formations with the ideas of work and the issues of sexuality and corporeal manipulation. While the cases presented in this book might be very specific and context bounded, they do, however, offer fruitful insights into the underresearched area of male sex work in Southeast Asia and Indonesia. To date, in fact, there are no works on the subject, despite its growing relevance. This has do to with the difficulty in accessing a field of research that is imbued with violence and that exposes social actors to the commodification of intimate sexual practices.

The study of youth and growth is always intrinsically problematic because social actors, the anthropologist's informants, grow up and often move on to different paths in life. While I have attempted to contain such unpredictability by situating my research in a long-term perspective and have studied the case of former sex workers in South Bali, Java, and in some parts of the globalized world, the issue of how of to present these stories by constructing a single framework of reference remains open.

What the different life experiences of former sex workers reveal, however, is the ambiguous quality of social relations. Social interactions in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia have been described by Indonesians and social scientists as based on norms of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual assistance. They are ideally conceived as egalitarian and harmonic, and hold a positive and constructive value for the individual. These ideas are in part evident in the collective assemblages that are youth gangs, both in Surabaya and South Bali. However, from the point of view of those who were once a part of one of these gangs, these bonds seem fragile and based on deception and illusion. Their force is destructive, and those who were once so eager to "move forward" find themselves immobile outside a billiard room or stuck somewhere across the globe.

Notes

1 Men's Things and Male Activities

1. When I first visited *kampung* Malang, I was not aware of the fact that it had been the subject of scholarly work in the field of sociology and urban development studies. Particularly, the seminal study of Peters provides rich and detailed information about the political, economic, and urban changes that have occurred in the area in the past 20 years. While choosing to use a pseudonym, throughout this chapter I make constant reference to this body of work and rely heavily on information provided by the author to substantiate the sociological texture of my research (see Peters 2009, 2010, 2013).

2 Growing Up in Surabaya: Youth, Street Gangs, the City, and Beyond

1. A similar idea is evoked by street children and homeless youth interviewed by Brown (2009) to describe movement through thin alleys in Surabaya.

3 Male Sex Work in South Bali: Bodies, Violence, and Entrepreneurship

1. Parts of this chapter are developed from "'Slaves of Our Own Making': The Fabrication of Masculine Identities between Java and Bali." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 39: 115 (2011), 373–389. http://www.tandfonline.com/.
2. *Bule* literally means "white," but is used in a broader sense to describe Western, and in some cases rich Asian, tourists. Some of the men engage in long-term relationships with wealthy Asian men from Singapore, Malaysia. and Japan. They may also have relationships with rich Indonesian men, but this was not the case during my research.

3. The term "beach boy" designates young men who loiter about the beaches, bars, and cafes patronized by Western tourists, hoping to strike up a relationship with them (Jennaway 2008: 50).
4. The literature on violence in Indonesia is vast (see, for instance, Siegel 1998). However, I chose here to focus on the discourses that circulate among my informants, and I consider violence ethnographically here as a "rite of passage" as well as a set of embodied practices in a specific context.
5. I have borrowed the expression from Wacquant (1997). His study of professional boxers offers fruitful insights into the analysis of similar bodily crafts centered on the dramatized ostentation of specific corporeal qualities (Wacquant 1997: 123).
6. I borrow the expression "the economy of the night" from Lindquist (2009) and his discussion about the use of Ecstasy among female sex workers.

4 After Sex Work: Immobility and Bonds of Dependence

1. Parts of this chapter were elaborated from Cannibals and Ghosts: Forms of Capital, Immobility and Dependence among Former Javanese Sex Workers in South Bali (Indonesia). In J. Gelfer (ed.), *Masculinities in a Global Era*, New York: Springer, pp. 229–254.

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