PART 2

Habitus and physicality

Background

For some years now I have often heard Yogyakarta's Sosrowijayan neighbourhood described as either a 'typically conservative kampung' or a 'tourist ruined commercial zone'. In Part One I sought to problematise this division by examining music making and capital conversions among *becak* drivers and street guides. Part Two begins by focusing on women in Sosrowijayan, with subsequent chapters mapping out manifestations of gendered physical behaviour at musical events that took place in kampung and commercial venues across the city. By analysing and comparing nonverbal forms of communication and interaction in these cultural spaces, I seek to identify connections between intergenerational/communal and cross-cultural/commercial influences on gendered identities, and in turn between the kampung and commercial activities that took place in and around Sosrowijayan's public spaces. These influences can thereby be related to the village/urban, *campursari/musik jala-nan* and *becak* driver/street guide divisions already identified and scrutinised, but now analysed across multiple spaces and genres.

The lives of male street guides and/or street children have been the subject of rigorous research on inner-city Yogyakarta.¹ A useful starting point for the present discussion is to schematize the public life of women in Sosrowijayan. I suggest that three broad groups interacted socially around the neighbourhood during my research, each of which tended to gravitate toward some musical worlds and not others. First were those not especially kampung-bound nor commercially exploited. These included public-oriented wives of kampung association leaders, as well as some university students and NGO workers. Second, some women in staff positions, approaching the age of 25 and facing expectations of marriage and children, sought financial and other means to escape 'kampungan' pressures and avoid dependency on men by developing their English language, business and, in some cases, musical skills. And third were a dozen or so women I wish to call '*perek*', from *perempuan eksperimental* and meaning 'experimental girls' (Murray 1991; Richter 2008b). These women regularly sat about in tourist cafés and hotels, often meeting up with western travellers and entering

1 Dahles and Bras 1999; Dahles 2001; Solvang 2002; Beazley 2000; Berman 2000.

into sexual encounters with them, in the process entering a murky middle ground between prostitution and relationship. *Perek* were emblematic of commercial zone sexuality, in both their day to day clothing, makeup, and mannerisms, and their frequenting of commercial establishments by night.

Building on Part One's analysis of the roles of music in street-based capital conversion strategies, in Part Two I broaden the focus to gender and physicality across multiple settings, guided by the following questions. Do kampung environments provide safe havens, or are they unduly constraining? Do commercial-venue activities increase personal freedom for women, or are they sites of sexual exploitation? To what extent are westernism, Islamisation, and indigenist Javanism related to these tendencies? What insights might comparisons between these citywide and Sosrowijayan-specific cases lend to these questions?

In the following chapters I examine intergenerational and cross-cultural influences on gendered and sexualised interactions as they emerged during music performances in kampung and commercial venues. In kampung there was great age and generational variation, while class and ethnic markers were especially prominent in commercial venues. As will be discussed, *campursari*, *jalanan*, and related genres such as *dangdut* and rock influenced, and were influenced by, factors such as setting, event theme, and audience characteristics. Attending to particular actors and variants of the central genres will further demonstrate how musical performers, participants and organizers contributed to peaceful exchange and coexistence between social groups during the early post-Soeharto years.

HABITUS, GENDER, AND SOCIALISATION

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* helps to link musical performance to everyday gendered relations. *Habitus* conveys the idea that people's dispositions and habituated physical movements are products of their structured social worlds. The concept attempts to transcend both excessively 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' accounts of the roles of structure and agency in social phenomena (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:115-40). Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* in his studies of the Kabyle peoples in Algeria, where binary oppositions were manifest in housing arrangements and in women's downcast expression and modest behaviour, as against men's outward engagement with other men (Bourdieu 1977, 2001). Excessive emphasis on structure reduces the *habitus* to, at most, a semi-conscious habit. In

the current context, the concept of *habitus* could thereby be invoked in claims that generational hierarchies determine kampung interactions, just as money drives the *habitus* in commercial venues. Too much agency, on the other hand, reduces the social world to a 'discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles' (Bourdieu 1986:241), thereby providing no way of accounting for the buried structures perpetuating the social reproduction of inequality.

Bourdieu attempts to account for structure and agency when he states that *habitus* is 'a product of history [...] an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures'.² *Habitus* is therefore a way to explain how people's senses of reality and perceptions of life chances are conditioned by mental structures they have developed through experience. By shifting the emphasis somewhat, I want to suggest that a person's involvement in a variety of experiences can broaden their scope of imaginable and realizable positions. In this light, the idea of *habitus* 'plasticity' helps to focus attention on the fact that deeply embedded, habitual behaviour, or what Bourdieu (1977:78) calls 'history turned into nature', is at the same time influenced by the physical and mental agility for 'playing the game' that interaction in differing social settings enables.³

Without a doubt, a person's *habitus* in Sosrowijayan is tied to shifting social fields and their enactments in the politics of kampung and commercial-zone identity. Where I depart from Bourdieu's foregrounding of social-structural constraints is in my contention that a person's habituated thoughts and behaviours do not merely reflect deeply embedded structures developed through (especially early-)life experiences. Rather, I would argue, experiences throughout life to varying degrees allow actors to actively and consciously shape and reshape such internal structures and the thoughts and behaviours that manifest from these. This will be seen in the following musical events, wherein animated inter-gender interactions sometimes increased participants' agility at playing the game in multiple social and musical worlds, while at others they increased tension and volatility and thereby shut off scope for such social adaptability.

2 Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:133. 'Disposition', Bourdieu (1977:214, note 1) notes, 'designates a way of being [...] in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination.'

3 In an earlier publication I suggested the idea of an 'enriched *habitus*' (Richter 2008b), although I had reservations about the term. Here I posit that 'plasticity' better captures my intended meaning. This is adapted from studies of 'neuroplasticity' (Doidge 2007), which demonstrate how thoughts are not mere reflections of the brain's hardwiring, but can change the brain's very structure and function.

In relation to gender and power, Norma Sullivan's account (1994:83-7) of gender socialisation in an inner-city Yogyakarta kampung depicts women as dominant in the 'informal, private, domestic zones of everyday kampung life', but lacking the all-important prestige gained through public social affairs. Sullivan argues that from an early age domestic and neighbourhood socialisation prepares females for the more restricted communal life of the kampung, while males are on the other hand groomed for the wider, freer world of public life. By contrast, Shelly Errington (1990) cites the overriding sense, especially among western observers, that South-east Asian women enjoy higher status than their traditional Indian and Chinese counterparts, with such complementarity between the sexes in Southeast Asia readily evinced through language and work practices as well as systems of kinship and inheritance.

I contend that an analysis of gendered and related dimensions of identity at music performances can place such seemingly irreconcilable interpretations of gender oppression and complementarity into the same framework. Nonverbal communication and interaction at musical events demonstrate both a measure of agency and changing levels of autonomy or oppression during adult life. In the following chapters I shall interpret consequences of the breaking down or maintenance of social barriers, whether negative, in social marginalisation or conflict, or more positive, through increased and diversified experience for those involved. The analysis is informed by Howes' 'bodily modes of knowing' (1990:3-4), and rests in particular on the identification of, and comparison between, three manifestations of physical behaviour at kampung and commercial-venue events.

THREE FORMS OF MUSICAL PHYSICALISATION

Building on the everyday structure/agency tensions inherent in Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, I use the term 'musical physicalisation' to describe the manifested physical behaviours and gendered interactions that arise around or through music (Richter 2008a, 2008b). Musical physicalisation is any bodily movement that occurs through music. In addition to all forms of dance, this also encompasses other behaviours such as largely unconscious toe-tapping or trance motions, and even altered conversation postures. There are, I would argue, three principal kinds or variants of musical physicalisation manifested in Yogyakarta, which I will describe as 'detachment engagement', 'other worlds', and 'sexualisation'.

The first type of physicalisation, detachment engagement, refers to behaviours around music that proceed from complete physical immobility to active but still relatively understated engagement, and finally back to disengagement.⁴ People's detached and neutral appearance in the immobile phase may be deceiving. As will be further discussed, the symbolic importance of kampung wedding receptions can forestall inter-group interaction, and the *habitus* of many guests at high-class hotels may be so at odds with the surrounding environment as to render them stiff. In both cases, greater engagement occurs as social distancing is in various ways bridged, most often through music, though this tends to remain relatively subdued.

The second musical physicalisation, other worlds, refers to highly physicalised dance and/or related bodily movements that indicate a person's or group's attempted or actual entrance into another consciousness or alternative state of being. In kampung, women, men and children alike enjoyed viewing the *jatilan* trance dance, while in commercial venues other world physicalisation was most evident at the Kridosono sports hall. The third and final form of musical physicalisation is sexualisation, which refers to the physical movements at musical performances that individuals more or less explicitly model on sexual intercourse. Even when performers displaying these movements are not themselves sexualised, these may still be referred to as sexualisation to the extent that they charge the atmosphere with sexuality.

I seek to link these physicalisations with interpretations of Indonesia and particularly Java as, alternatively, Muslim, refined, and conservative, or home to a sexually uninhibited indigenism. Detachment engagement in part stems from analyses of Javanese culture that place great emphasis on how notions of prestige and potency mask realities of gender relations in social life (Sullivan 1994; Keeler 1990). As Errington notes, Javanese concepts of power do not readily equate with forcefulness and instrumentality. On the contrary, power may be exercised principally through agents that appear and act with a delicacy generally seen by observers as effeminate (Errington 1990:41-2), actions that can to varying degrees be seen in their artistic representations (Hatley 1999).

The other worlds and sexualisation variants of musical physicalisation question whether highly animated behaviours, rather than being mere outbursts of expression from the underclass, may con-

4 The period of physical engagement that occurs during 'detachment engagement' musical physicalisations can be seen as an unspectacular version of Victor Turner's middle, 'liminal' phase (1982) that occurs during rites of passage.

stitute exercises in power. At the least, actors at dance events can become acutely aware of the roles of their bodies in power plays, as Jane Cowan (1990:24) notes in relation to rural Greece, thereby providing a corrective to the overly ‘habituated’ connotations of *habitus*. Through the analysis of the following performances, I seek to highlight some of the difficulties in disentangling the various forms of musical physicalisation, especially among offstage dancing men and onstage dancing women. I will seek to show how this helps to complexify correlations that are sometimes made between power/oppression and physical immobility/mobility in the context of Javanese social relations.

Entertainment venues and commercial zones discussed in Part Two