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'Hujan emas perak di negeri orang, hujan keris lembing di negeri sendiri, baik juga di negeri sendiri.'
(Though it rains gold and silver in a foreign land and daggers and spears at home, yet it is better to be at home.)

Malay proverb

The theme of this special issue is intriguing: seeking to study roads as objects of contention or cooperation between various agencies.¹ The idea of roads as contested spaces is not new; they have, of course, been sites of resistance throughout history. But the prevailing wisdom of conventional development is to argue that roads, and more broadly transportation infrastructure, are one of the major inputs to the process of economic growth. From the beginning of the current development era in the 1950s there have been innumerable studies of the beneficial impact of new roads in providing increased access to markets and thereby offering opportunities for rural dwellers to earn increased income (see, for example, Haeefe 1969; Barwell et al. 1985). Equally, there are ample studies of the street as place of resistance, particularly in the age of nationalism from the end of the eighteenth century. But most of these studies lack a theoretical understanding of the role of transport infrastructure (of which roads are part) as an instrumental process central to

¹ The essay that follows is very much a preliminary summary. This reflects the fact that attempting to enter research through newly discovered doors often involves re-keying of theoretical and empirical perspectives. Thus this essay is more of an outline of potential research than a comprehensive set of research findings. I hope to fill out some of the empirical evidence in the future.

the modernization of the nation state. Here we are referring to the role transport infrastructure plays in shaping space.

In particular David Harvey (1989), drawing upon earlier work of Lefebvre (1991, first published in 1974), has drawn our attention to the spatial practices that produce space. These are divided into three groups. First, the material dimensions, such as the flow channels (including roads) and the material flows (for example, commodities) that occur in space and across space; secondly, representations of space that enable the material dimensions to be understood (such as maps); and thirdly, the spaces of representation that are the mental inventions of space (for instance, utopias). The building of a new road is incontestably a spatial practice, for this practice affects the flow of people, commodities, and information through space. This spatial practice also changes the relationships between points in space (the individual, the household, the village, the town). This is done in four ways. First, the linking of two points that improves the time of travel between those two points breaks down 'the friction of distance' by generally reducing transaction costs. Secondly, these improvements in transportation networks become an instrument designed for the incorporation of local space into national space. Thirdly, these spatial practices facilitate increasing domination of local space by individuals or groups (the state, corporations, and others) who control these spatial practices. And fourthly, the development of the transport modes (automobile, trucks, buses, rail, and air).

In Southeast Asia most studies of development regard spatial practices as being the result of structural change that is conventionally portrayed as being characterized by a decline in the contribution of agriculture to the gross domestic product (GDP) and an increase in industrial and service activity contributing to national income. Within Southeast Asia structural change has been most dramatic in the Southeast Asian core countries of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines, while the mainland states of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma that are involved in various forms of transition from state socialism have experienced much less structural change. In attempting to explain this process of structural change most economists place emphasis upon effective management by the state, foreign and domestic investment, and the relatively unfettered growth of markets within increasingly open global trading systems. Few are willing to admit that spatial practices may play a lead role in the development process (Mc Gee and Lin 1993).

In the last few decades this structural change has been accelerated by changing global processes that are often subsumed under the term globalization. Broadly there are three main aspects to this process. First, at the production level they are characterized by the so-called New International Division of Labour, which has involved the relocation and establishment of industrial

activities primarily in the Southeast Asian core countries. Taking advantage of advances in communication and production technologies, major international investors (often in collaboration with local capital) identified production niches throughout Asia. After an initial surge of development in the East Asian NICs (of which Singapore was a member) in the 1970s and 1980s, investment (particularly from Japan, USA, and Asian NICs such as Korea) spread to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. For a variety of reasons (state encouragement by generous provision of infrastructure, such as Free Export Zones, industrial estates, and freeway systems that provided access to transport nodes and access to labour markets) a large proportion of this industry was located on the periphery of the largest Southeast Asian cities.

A second global force that has led to the radical changes in Southeast Asian societies is the 'transactional revolution'. In a very general way these transactions may be divided into four groups; people, commodities, capital, and information. Because of the technological revolution over the last few decades, transactional space has been radically altered. Thus, while the movement of people and commodities is still subject to the constraints of time-distance relationships, information and capital can be moved between places almost instantaneously. Thus, for example, the development of JIT (just in time) delivery systems has reduced the order cycles for goods by 400 per cent in developing countries and led to the demise of the warehouse district within many cities in Southeast Asia.

A third element of these global forces relates to the 'consumption' of the end products. At one level there is an emergence of a 'global lifestyle' relating to dress, food, automobiles, entertainment, and the built environment. These components coalesce in the many shopping malls that proliferate in the urban landscapes of Southeast Asian cities. Adolescents lounge outside the fast-food outlets; heavy metal emblazoned T-shirts and 'dreadlocks' merge into the neon lights advertising McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken. Perhaps the most ubiquitous feature of this consumption is the growth of family housing, creating sprawling suburbs on the fringes of Southeast Asian cities. Each of these new homes becomes a container for the durable goods, the TVs, furniture, and stereo systems that have become part of this consumer revolution.

It is clear then that one important facet of this structural change and globalization is increasing urbanization, for as the demand for labour in agriculture declines as part of structural change, so the rural populations migrate to urban areas. Virtually all observers of globalization in Southeast Asia are equally convinced that it is leading to an increased centralization within urban systems in Southeast Asian countries. These global processes are contributing to the establishment of mega-urban regions that reinforce the

dominance of the main cities of the colonial era. In addition, within Southeast Asia there is increasing competition between the mega-urban regions to try to capture a greater share of business and tourism. This involves investment in the telecommunications networks, the airports, ports, and hotels that will be attractive to the agents of these global processes. The empirical evidence supports these generalizations very well. In the last forty years Southeast Asia has experienced increasing urbanization. What is more, the growth of mega-urbanization is also a pervasive element of the urbanization pattern in Southeast Asia.

Invading, destroying, and reconstructing the Southeast Asian city

The preceding section implies that current growth of cities in Southeast Asia is occurring on some kind of a tabula rasa. This is clearly not the case, because the majority of large Southeast Asian cities consists of series of layers of the built environment as discussed in my earlier study, *The Southeast Asian City* (Mc Gee 1967), in which I showed how one hundred and fifty years of accelerated colonial incorporation had created cities in which the 'indigenous urban tradition' in a cultural sense (and sometimes in the concrete manifestations of the built environment) was only one of the many layers of migration and economic functions frozen into particular urban locales by the '*mission civilatrice*' (Logan 2000). Essentially these colonial cities were a mosaic of socially divided quarters that were the spatial consequence of the plural societies that emerged. As J.S. Furnivall (1944) and others have pointed out, this colonial practice (that was also a spatial practice) reflected colonial priorities for a stable social order that reduced social tension and stifled political discontent.

At the economic level this frozen world of city locales was captured by the concept of dualism. Long before the fad of 'informal sector' studies, J.H. Boeke (1953) among others had conceptualized the economic structure of colonial economies as being divided between a 'traditional' sector primarily based on subsistence production and a 'modern' sector using capital and modern techniques of production and management. Essentially, this concept was used to divide rural from urban areas. But it was the insight of Clifford Geertz (1963) into this formulation that enabled the concept to be applied to the cities of Southeast Asia in the 1950s and 1960s. At the time, this dualism seemed to capture the economies of core Southeast Asian cities with a population swollen by rapid rural-urban migration, where the modern sector was growing very slowly and there was a proliferating informal sector of hawkers, *becak* drivers, squatters, and street hustlers living in conditions of poverty.

This simple economic model was reproduced in the social structure of Southeast Asian cities divided between a small elite of indigenous politicians, military, and business people and a mass of low-income people struggling for survival. As yet the middle class was minuscule, made up of middle-income civil servants, teachers, and small business owners. This social structure developed a particular political economy of space in which public, and indeed in many cases private, space (where no control existed to prevent incursion) was invaded by informal sector activities. Roads and footpaths were a significant part of this public space, and in many Southeast Asian cities informal sector activities, street vendors, prostitution, and low-income transport dominated this public space. The administrators of these cities had little choice but to permit these activities to continue or at most to restrict them to the poorer parts of the city.

The acceleration of economic growth and the impact of global processes outlined in the introduction have, however, introduced a new set of factors. The very rapid growth of the core economies of Southeast Asia has led to rapid industrialization, increase in the producer service sector, and a rapid growth of middle-class populations. This has broken down the 'frozen mosaic' of the urban ecology of the colonial and early neo-colonial city, creating more complex city regions reaching populations of more than 10 million in the case of Bangkok, Manila, and Jakarta (Mc Gee and Robinson 1995). This process has been extraordinarily complex, for in the majority of these cities political elites have been reaching back into indigenous history to create national ideologies. So a concrete iconography of statuary began to proliferate within the cities. This involved creating public space that was in effect sacred space. But it also involved creating the built environment of the modern city: central business districts, freeways, and office and shopping complexes. Both these processes attacked the urban space occupied by the informal sector, because as the car-owning population increased, the roads had to be cleared; as the demand for inner city land increased, land prices grew dramatically and low-income populations could no longer afford to live in the areas. The 1970s is full of battles over the built environment of the inner city, the *becak* of Jakarta, the squatters of Singapore, and the street vendors of Manila.

Much of my research in the 1970s was concerned with analysing these battles, particularly as they affected street vendors (Mc Gee 1974; Mc Gee and Yeung 1977). I used the argument that the state and the developers were using restructuring of the built environment as a weapon to destroy the informal sector and move their population into the wage-earning sector. In order to explicate these processes I adopted the idea of conservation-dissolution developed by Charles Bettelheim (1972), in which the internal imperative of the formal sector (Bettelheim calls it the capitalist mode of production) to expand operates in a jumpy and uneven manner, for at some points in time,

the process of dissolution slows for any number of reasons – lack of political will, financial crises, and the remarkable ability of the informal sector to conserve their activities in the face of attack. This is often helped by the fact that certain ethnic and religious groups are able to organize their activities so as to prove very resilient. This process of conservation is even more complex in the politically heated environments of the cities of Southeast Asia, where the streets are often used as sites of resistance by forces opposed to the existing political regimes. So in many cases the public spaces of Southeast Asian cities have become contested terrains, in which the developers, the state, the students, and the poor struggle for control of urban space. In the next section I want to explore the way this contest has worked out in some of the larger mega-urban regions of Southeast Asia.

Disentangling the four R's: evidence from the Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, and Jakarta extended metropolitan regions

If the argument goes that transport infrastructure has played a major role in influencing the patterns of urbanization in Southeast Asia, it is necessary to establish the empirical foundations of this assertion. In particular I want to focus here on the space-forming processes in Southeast Asian cities, although they cannot be separated from processes of social and economic change of which they are, in part, a reflection. One way to accomplish this would be to describe the patterns of urbanization for each city through a number of case studies, but this leads to a rather arid descriptive exercise. A second approach is to try and seize upon common urban processes that are shaping the urban space both in terms of the built environment, and social and economic change. I have attempted to do this with a rhetorical device that I shall label the four R's that are the leading letter of the four different processes. These are:

- 1 Restructuring, which is used to describe the process of economic change in the functions and economic activities of the cities.
- 2 Reshaping, which is used to describe the spatial process causing the changes to city morphology. These include renewal that involves the replacement of existing land use by another land use, and the expansion of cities beyond their boundaries.
- 3 Roads, which are used as a shorthand for the changes in the transportation infrastructure, and modes of transport such as the automobile.
- 4 Resistance, which has two aspects. First, the way in which the creation of roads may cause resistance to them as an object. Secondly, the use of roads as a site that can be used for political resistance.

In the remainder of this article, an attempt is made to show how these four processes exhibit common elements among the three cities. Of course, as Robert Redfield and Milton Singer (1954) reminded us many years ago, the task of urban comparison is not an easy one, because cities are complex and heterogeneous institutional entities. In addition, there is a serious lacuna in the databases of individual cities compared to nations, which prevents the analysis of data. For example, there are no accurate figures on city gross domestic product (Mc Gee 2001). In order to discuss these processes it is therefore necessary to give a little of the historical context of these cities.

Bangkok and Jakarta are located on the flat and relatively rich soils of two major rivers, the Chao Phraya and the Ciliwung. They have been historically significant as important regions of irrigated rice cultivation. Each city has played an important role as the major centre of political control and has become the major port of its country. Jakarta history can be traced back to the twelfth-century trading port called Sunda Kelapa, which serviced the Javanese Kingdom of Pajajaran. It was conquered by the Muslim Sultanate of Banten in the 1520s and renamed Jayakarta. Dutch traders began to construct warehouses in the early seventeenth century and slowly took over control of the town, building a new town called Batavia (Abeyasekere 1987). Bangkok was established much later, in 1767, when the Thai king moved his capital from Ayutthaya to the present city. It remains a royal city up to the present, with its core dominated by the royal precincts (Smithies 1986). Kuala Lumpur was established much later, in the early 1870s in a very different manner – by Chinese tin miners led by Yap Ah Loy – and became the administrative centre for the Federated Malay States in 1895 (Gullick 1955). Unlike Bangkok and Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur was located some fifty kilometres from the sea in a foothill zone abutting the main mountain divide that dominates the centre of the Malayan peninsula running from north to south. While there were small enclaves of rice cultivation in its hinterland, much of the hinterland was to be taken over by rubber plantations and tin mines controlled by colonial agency houses. This ecological and historical context was to provide a very different setting for the post-war expansion of the city.

All three cities experienced rather similar patterns of economic integration into the global system in the colonial period, markedly in the nineteenth century, when there was a large influx of Chinese, Indians, and Arabs. There was also an increasing number of colonial expatriates. Each city was characterized by the emergence of a highly segregated social landscape in which different ethnic groups carried on their own social practices and economic activities. In all three cities the Chinese assumed a major role in the trading systems and acted as compradores for the foreign agency houses. G.W. Skinner (1957) has a superb analysis of how this system operated among the Chinese in Bangkok. The cities all became important centres of political con-

trol and economic activity, but they remained ethnically diverse.

The onset of independence in Malaya (1957) and Indonesia (1945) and the increasing involvement of Thailand in the global economy introduced a new set of processes into the cities. In Indonesia and Malaya (later Malaysia, from 1963) the political elites reasserted the value of pre-colonial society in an attempt to make the cities become the centres of the new orthogenetic tradition. New parliament buildings were constructed and a system of ceremonial spaces including squares and avenues was put in place. In Thailand these systems were already in place, although the mood of nationalism turned more to attempts to create democracy.

During much of the post-war period, however, the governments of these Southeast Asian states embarked upon vigorous policies of development designed to increase living standards and national income. In this they have been remarkably successful. It is within this context that the spatial processes affecting the cities must be analysed.

Restructuring the cities

In the post-war period all three cities have experienced rather similar patterns of restructuring. In the immediate post-war years the structural patterns of the pre-war period prevailed, but the emphasis upon development led to an increase in government employment, education, the armed forces, and other public service activities. There was also a growth of office functions and retailing within the private sector. Post-secondary institutions began to proliferate until, for example, in Bangkok by the early 1960s almost all centres of post-secondary education were located in the city. Thus all three cities became the centres of student activism. It was this growing population of public employees and students that was to form the embryonic middle class that was to grow so rapidly from the 1970s. However, by far the largest proportion of the population was still engaged in the informal sector of petty trade, transport, and other service activities. Their numbers were constantly swollen by the movement of migrants from the countryside. Often they lived in squatter areas, illegally located in the interstices of the inner city or on the edges of the city. But from the 1970s on, this pattern began to change. The processes of globalization discussed in the introduction were crucial in this transformation. It must also be stressed that these processes did not occur simultaneously in the three cities, beginning first in Kuala Lumpur and later in Bangkok and Jakarta.

The next process that was to impact on the cities was industrialization, which broadly included two facets. First, the assembly of consumer goods such as automobiles behind tariff walls for the growing internal demand of

the middle class. Secondly, the creation of export industries, often in export zones. Both of these industrial processes were concentrated in the cities and their peri-urban regions. Thus in the case of Malaysia in the 1970s almost 60 per cent of manufacturing growth occurred in the Kuala Lumpur extended metropolitan region (Mc Gee 1987). In Bangkok two-thirds of the investment in industrial projects between 1979 and 1991 was located in the Bangkok extended metropolitan region (Krongkaew 1996). In the Jakarta extended metropolitan region manufacturing increased its share of regional GDP from 6 per cent in 1970 to 27 per cent (Soegijoko 1996). The location of this industry had important impacts on the space-forming processes of the cities, for most manufacturing was located in industrial estates outside the city cores. For example in Bangkok 'approximately 90% of Thailand's FDI went to the extended Bangkok region during the 1990s, much of it to the peri-urban areas where virtually all new foreign-funded manufacturing facilities were located' (Webster in press:10).

In the core areas of the city there was also a loss of manufacturing and a considerable growth of higher-order services as the cities increased their international role in finance, tourism, education, and medicine. This necessitated the core cities being linked to the major international entry points, particularly airports, by new expressways that often took the form of flyovers, thus avoiding destruction of the inner city. At the same time this growth of service activity was associated with a decline in the informal sector of the inner cores, as cities became economically and occupationally more formalized.

Reshaping of cities

The impact of the processes of restructuring put in place by the joint forces of international and national development was to radically reshape the cities into large extended metropolitan regions. These developments have been described in Mc Gee and Robinson (1995) and are not discussed in detail here. Basically they have created city regions that expanded into the surrounding countryside. This is described by Webster (in press), in the case of Bangkok, as falling into three distinctive zones spreading outwards from the core city: 1. the core; 2. the suburbs; and 3. the peri-urban zone. It should be stressed that the comparative analysis of the features of these three regions is very difficult because of varying definitions. In the case of Bangkok there are three administratively defined zones: a. the Bangkok metropolitan area consisting of 8 million people in 2000 (the core); b. the Bangkok metropolitan region, consisting of five adjacent provinces adding 3.5 million people (the suburbs), giving a total of 11.5 million people; and c. the extended Bangkok

region where major peri-urban industrial clusters are located up to 100 kilometres from the core, resulting in a total population of 17.5 million people. This means that of the current (2000) population of Thailand, about 13 per cent of Thais live in core Bangkok (BMA), 19 per cent in the BMR, and 28 per cent in the EBR. In the case of Jakarta it is more difficult to find data that can distinguish between these three zones, and the population data only permit a division between DKI (Daerah Khusus Ibukota, Special Capital Region) Jakarta (the core); and the surrounding districts (*kabupaten*), Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi, and the municipality (*kotamadya*) of Bogor that make up the suburban and peri-urban zones. In 1995 DKI Jakarta had 9.1 million people and the surrounding zone 11 million, making a total population of 20.1 million in Jabotabek (Soegijoko 1996). Kuala Lumpur is even more complicated, because authorities have frequently changed administrative boundaries. Broadly the Kuala Lumpur extended metropolitan region may be defined as: 1. the Kuala Lumpur core urban region (KLCUR) consisting of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and the adjacent districts of Klang, Kuala Langat, Sepang, Ulu Langat, and Gombak that has grown from a population of 677,000 in 1970 to 1.5 million by 1995; 2. the Klang Valley region including not only the KLCUR but also districts to the south and north containing 1.4 million in 1991, making up almost 50 per cent of the total population of the extended metropolitan region. It is estimated that it will have grown to 3.8 million by 2000 (Lee Boon Thong 1996).

In all three cities the core, which broadly relates to the oldest part of the cities (although in many cases boundaries have been extended), has experienced a slowing of population growth, although total populations have continued to grow. In the last three decades the economy of the core has been propelled by service activity including tourism, office functions, health and education services, and entertainment. For example, in the Bangkok city core in the late 1990s, 57 per cent of total output occurred in the service sector, although this figure was not as high in the core areas of Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. This growth in service activity has led to significant changes in the built environment, particularly in the older inner cities, with the replacement of low-income housing (sometimes squatters) and old shopping districts by new high-rise hotels, shopping complexes, and office buildings. This process of dissolution has generally not been associated with strong efforts at conservation or rehabilitation. Typical of such developments are the Golden Triangle Development in Kuala Lumpur and the plan to develop the old Kemayoran airport site in Jakarta.

While it is impossible to spatially demarcate the zone of suburbs put forward by Webster for Bangkok in the case of Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, the patterns described by Webster have also occurred in the outer perimeters of the core areas of these cities. In Bangkok Webster indicates that there has

been a rapid growth of suburban housing in a ring outside the core, consisting of three main components. First, the creation of high-income housing areas, often in conjunction with leisure activities such as golf courses. Secondly, the expansive growth of middle-income housing represented by row housing. Thirdly, a continued growth of slum communities, particularly in low-lying areas, along canals and railway lines, and near factories. The population in this zone has grown rapidly since the 1970s and much of the development of the formal housing is carried out by developers, who have often favoured developments that create integrated townships, including shopping complexes, entertainment, and so on. These developments leapfrog existing land uses, such as agriculture, leading to a particular landscape that has been labelled *desakota* (Mc Gee 1991). In all three city regions there has been a decentralization of industry, retailing, and residential living into these zones.

The peri-urban zone is also ubiquitous in all three cities. Webster makes the important point that most land in these zones is not as intensively used as land in the core or even the suburbs. Rather it is better to understand the land development process as a set of investment clusters in particular types of industrial development, often located in industrial estates. In Bangkok this peri-urban region has been a major source of foreign industrial investment in the 1990s. Examples of this industrial-cluster type of development are the Eastern Seaboard Development designed to create new port facilities and the development of natural-gas processing. In Kuala Lumpur the attempts to develop a high technology cyber-corridor between Kuala Lumpur and the new international airport at Sepang is another example. This development has occurred in conjunction with the creation of a new administrative centre, Putrajaya, in the centre of the corridor. Typically such developments occur along new arterial highways that provide rapid access.

Thus, in the space of fifty years these three cities had become large urban regions. The role of the transportation infrastructure was a crucial component in this transformation.

Roads and the extended metropolitan region

The creation of the extended metropolitan region has depended upon a massive investment in land transport systems. The first element in this development has been the creation of national road systems (the North-South Highway in Malaysia, the freeways to Surabaya and Bandung in Indonesia, and the northern highway to Chiangmai in Thailand). All these national highways funnel goods and people to and from the national centres. But they also have become major elements in the arterial networks that service

the extended metropolitan regions. A second component is the introduction of main freeway access between the city cores and the international airport. Despite the growing use of the motor car, the majority of passengers still travel by public systems, although in the Kuala Lumpur EMR private car ownership is becoming much more common. There is also a secondary network of roads that service industrial estates and new townships in the EMRs. These arterial routes are invariably serviced by para-transportation systems such as motorbikes and lorries that convey the poorer people.

In general, traffic studies indicate that internal travel within the core dominates the pattern of trips, although the movement to and from the city core to the outer zones is increasing and intra-zone movement is growing. The dominance of intra-inner-core passenger trips is a major cause of congestion. This is further exacerbated by the mixture of transportation modes that occur in the inner city, including pedestrians, bicycles, trucks, buses, and automobiles. It is hardly surprising that this congestion often leads to confrontation between public authorities and transport users in the core. A recurrent theme that resurfaced in the current fiscal crisis in Jakarta has been the attempts of city authorities to eliminate the *becak* (pedicab).

Resistance

Since, as argued in the preceding sections, transportation systems (of which roads form the major part) are the major element in the reshaping of the old city cores of Southeast Asia into extended metropolitan regions, then it is clear that this process can create much resistance by city dwellers. I see this resistance as taking three forms. First, resistance to the creation of new roads that destroy existing land uses. Thus the attempt to build extensive freeway systems that radiate out from the cores of these cities have created resistance within the city cores, so that in many cities flyovers have been built to avoid the removal of existing land use and reduce congestion in the inner cities. What one sees in this situation 'is a kind of layering of the built environment in which the modern city is high rise connected by "flyover" for automobile transport that passes over the "lower-order" city' (Mc Gee and Yeung 1993: 64). This enabled the middle and upper classes to penetrate the inner city to the new office districts while still remaining distant in space.

Secondly, there is resistance to efforts by city administrations to regulate the use of roads for particular forms of transportation. Thus there is often a continuing battle for urban space between automobile users and pedestrian-orientated lower-income dwellers of the inner city. This ongoing contest for public space can persist for many years, as is well illustrated by the case of *becak* drivers in Jakarta. In the early 1970s the city administration, led by

Governor Ali Sadikin, attempted to eliminate *becak* and street vendors from the main streets of the city (Cohen 1974), even attempting to prevent the flow of migrants into the city (Soetjipto 1977). It was a concept of modernity and development opposed to the poor (Sadikin 1992). In the 1980s the *becak* were removed from the city and sunk in Jakarta Bay. Since 1997 the ongoing fiscal and political crisis in Indonesia led Jakarta authorities to allow *becak* drivers to operate again. But once again the authorities have tried to eliminate them with raids and confiscations of *becak*. This produced a violent reaction, with *becak* drivers attacking city officials. What is interesting in the process is the manner in which the occupation of *becak* driving is defined as illegal through its use of the public space of roads. Many studies have shown that the *becak* form of transportation provides employment and efficient transportation in Indonesian cities (Critchfield 1970; Forbes 1978; Soedarno 1976), so that the road becomes an ideological space in which ideas are contested.

A third form of resistance is more complex and relates to the manner in which the public space (of which roads are a part) in the cities under discussion has been used to spatially reinforce political power as part of nation building. In effect, the creation of a network of roads within the city becomes part of the disciplining of space that is associated with modernity. Therefore, at times of political disturbance, roads can be blocked and the discipline that they represent attacked. In all countries, students and anti-government activists have used public ceremonial avenues as places in which to carry out protest marches against the political authorities. In some cases, as in Jakarta, it was students who led these protests, calling for 'reformasi' and the resignation of President Suharto. They utilized the main avenues of Jakarta for marches that focused on their cause. These protests were accelerated by the killing of four students at Trisakti University, which abutted the main road to the airport. Protests closed down the road to the airport for several days. Later these protests spilled over into broader riots in which the 'underclass' (*perusuh*) of Jakarta ran amok and attacked Indonesian Chinese neighbourhoods. Abidin Kusno, in his wonderful study of architecture, urban space, and political cultures in Indonesia, suggests that

[t]he idea of the street as a space of menace in Indonesia has its genealogy in Javanese culture. Streets, as Siegel (1986:117-37) writes, as opposed to the 'house', have often been seen as a space of the unpredictable, the locus of disturbances where the mad, the wanderers, and ghosts make appearances. This 'tradition' was institutionalized by the New Order so as to overcome Sukarno's street-based populist politics. (Kusno 2000:117.)

This concept of the culture of the street and its relationship to development is obviously a central theme in the discussion of the anthropology of roads.

Conclusion

The quotation that is cited at the beginning of the article was chosen to capture the image of immobility that is opposed by the idea of mobility presented once one is 'on the road'. Clearly the insertion of the idea of roads as a focus for change provides important insights into the processes of economic and social change in Southeast Asia that now appear to be characterized by greater fluidity. After all, the creation of road systems is one of the major spatial practices that is shaping the contemporary mega-urban regions of Southeast Asia. It is a process that is reshaping the relationship between people in urban and national space. This suggests that there are rich possibilities for an anthropology of the street. The research priority is now to work out how this concept can successfully be deconstructed, used as a framework for research, and lead to incisive investigation.

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