



The Hidden Territories of Jakarta

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The hidden territories of Jakarta.

Considered as centres of growth and services for the agglomeration, public and commercial centres have an emblematic position in the city. In the Jakarta Structure Plan running up to 2005¹, there are 8 primary activity centres: Glodok, Tanjung Priok, Senen, Tanah Abang, Jatinegara and Manggarai and two new areas that are to be developed in the West (near Kebon Jeruk) and in the East (Pulogebang). They are all hubs for public transport with bus terminals or train stations, and commercial activity with major markets and shopping centres. They are characterised by their central place in the life of the city, as nodes in both daily trips in the city and in fulfilling the everyday needs of the Jakartans.

These public places are important both in city management and in every inhabitant's life. But they have an ambivalent position: as major nodes, they seem to have priority in the city planning policies, going through movements of renewal and development. But at the same time these areas are dreaded as insecure places, where most of the disorders of the city can be found, from informal activities such as street hawking and peddling, to illegal ones such as gambling, petty theft and more serious criminality.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to address that relation - between city planning and those social practices resulting in what one might call disorder - by discussing the problem of control over those parts of the city. Based on results of fieldwork taken in one of these areas - Senen - up to 2000, this paper will examine relationships between official management, informal control and illegality in the constitution of new territories. More than a study of informal governance, this paper aims to answer the question of who controls the city. In the first part we shall thus examine the aspects of informal control at the source of insecurity in Senen and the governmental adaptations, showing the gap between formal city development and the way the city is appropriated. Then, the sources of insecurity in the neighbourhood, through criminality and petty theft, will be studied, before analysing the sources of informal or illegal control in the area and the constitution of "territories".

1. Disorder in order?

Senen is an animated centre of the city marked both by its strategic location and its vitality. From the huge market with several blocks to the bus terminal, the train station, the shopping centre and the run down cinemas, it is a major centre of contemporary Jakarta. Among the crowds and animation of the Senen market a certain continuity appears from the terminal, all along the market on both sides of Jl. Pasar Senen, up to the major Senen intersection. Endless lines of hawkers, not only on the pavements but also on the roads, create a kind of parallel market: they sell food, bags, pirated tapes and video CDs, second-hand goods and newspapers, even concealing the market entrances. Nothing there seems to distinguish one area from the other, except the specialisation of the different zones of the market. The only difference lies between the private blocks of the market (I, II, IV and V) and the public ones (III and VI). The latter have a more animated atmosphere, with hawkers in the grounds between the market building and the

¹*Jakarta 2005* (1991), p.24 sqq.

street. During the day, they sell mainly clothes and cakes, during the night in block III, and bags in block VI. The private blocks are more heavily guarded, with fences protected by *satpams* [guards] in uniform, who are much more noticeable than the *satpams* of the public markets. Inside the blocks, the animation comes not only from the small stalls next to one another, but also from the small peddlers, selling drinks and cigarettes. Thus, especially when walking outside, a certain continuity appears in this disorder created by the profusion of street vendors.

When going further into the market, divisions start to appear: in several areas of the market all the vendors selling identical products have exactly the same origin. In block III, for instance, meat and poultry sellers are from Banten, the vegetable area sellers are West Javanese, the clothes are Padang or Chinese and so on². Block VI is mostly a mix between the Padang and the Batak. In the private blocks, the remaining ones, there are many Chinese to be found. Even among the street vendors, such a division is reflected: in front of the market, they are mostly Batak, except in front of the third block where we can suddenly find Padang traders. There are several reasons for that separation, from regional specialisation to a sense of specific communality which results in the “stranger” who comes to sell there being rejected³.

In most of the media, Senen appears as a place of many problems: serious traffic jams are resented and blame is put on the bad conduct of bus drivers and the accumulation of hawkers, which leaves little space for vehicles on the main road approaching the terminal. Thus, the unregulated activities of street vendors are often resented by city officials and newspapers who present them as a burden, disrespectful towards city regulations, and as a problem to be solved. It is even seen nowadays as a source of disorder conducive to petty criminality.

A controlled market at a “border point”

At the beginning of the 19th century, the area of Senen started to gain importance: new developments took place and it became more and more diversified⁴. The residence of the General Governor was transferred to Weltevreden - the second colonial town of which Senen is a part - at the end of the 18th century, and military dwellings were built at the beginning of the 19th century, thus transforming the area into a residential and administrative centre⁵. Senen hence became a symbol at the southern edge of the city, a symbol of animation and economic vitality, at the border of the modern city and the traditional neighbourhoods, the *kampungs*. Even now, those peculiarities can still be noticed as figured on map 1. West of the market: the military compounds of Kwini and Jl. Prapatan (the Kalilio complex known as Siliwangi has been destroyed), and further east the government buildings of the Lapangan Banteng and Merdeka areas. West and south of Senen: the *kampungs* of Kramat, Kwitang and Bungur. Senen is still at the junction of the formal “official” city and of the poorer neighbourhoods of the city.

The history of the area as a commercial centre started in the 18th century, when a landlord, Justinus Vinck, bought the lands which were to become Weltevreden and created two markets there: Senen, taking its name from the day on which the market was held, on Monday, and the Tanah Abang market. The former specialised in edible goods (fruits, vegetables, etc.), the latter mainly in textile. The land was thereafter sold to several General Governors, and, meanwhile, the activity of the market expanded, from two days in the week - Mondays and Fridays - in 1751, to the whole week in 1766. At the beginning of the 19th century, it was already of great importance:

² We use here the common denominations used by Indonesians in the markets, who call the Minagkabau Padang, the Molluquese, Ambon, but the Javanese as such as well as the Batak.








³ An account of a Sundanese trying to come and sell meat - a Bantenese speciality - in the 3rd block was given: he was left aside and neglected by the others, so that he eventually moved. On such issues see Parakitri Tahi Simbolon (1991).






⁴ Most of our information here comes from two books: A. Heuken (1997), and *Senen 200 Tahun* (1969). See also Parakitri T. Simbolon (1991), p. 70 sqq.

⁵ It is only under the rule of Daendels (1808-1811) that the capital was moved to Weltevreden.

Map1



	Kampungs and residential areas
	Army complex
	1966 - 1973 (the market)
	1973 - 1974 (Planet Senen)
	1980 (Bus terminal, to be redesigned)
	1992 (Triangle and Atrium Mall)
	Mid-1990s (Kalilio & Kwini)

	Fly - over (1994)
	Level crossing
	Railway & train station
	Pedestrian bridge
	Flea market

228 plots in 1815, of which 139 were made of bamboo, and it was only after the fire of 1826 that the market started being constructed with hard materials. By Independence it was represented as a dense market, lively 24 hours a day but with negative aspects: disordered and filthy.

Thus the second facet of Senen appears in its history, the informal and run down aspects. At that time Senen brought together not only merchants and buyers, but also a crowd attracted by the animation of the wholesale market, running 24 hours a day. Up to the 1970s Senen had a whole range of entertainment that attracted Jakartans, ranging from theatres like Miss Tjitjih on Jl. Kramat or the Wayang Orang “Pantja Murti” – a movie theatre called the Rialto and the “West Java” up to 1920 – to several movie theatres, the Grand, the Rex, a casino and an amusement park, the Taman Ria Senen.

Leisure and pleasure

Planet

“The darkest area is the part of Senen called “planit”, a nest of prostitutes. Its inhabitants are in the thousands. This area is also the den of every kind of bandit and criminal. From the smallest bandit to the most wanted murderer. And it is quite common for communists on the run to hide there. They camouflage themselves with new names, becoming pimps or selling hot drinks or other things”⁶.

This description comes from a cheap detective novel and describes the atmosphere of a famous entertainment area located just behind the market near the railway : Planet Senen. It used to be one of the biggest prostitution areas of the capital until its closure in 1973. According to most of the witnesses it was the most crowded but also the most dangerous place in the city⁷. Its name was inspired by science fiction movies like *Flash Gordon*. In 1969, during the first journey to the moon, it was also called Apollo, thus giving an ironic image of the neighbourhood : following its time but out of time, deeply rooted in the most rundown aspects of city life but hence gaining an unreal dimension, from outer space. It had the reputation of being the cheapest area of prostitution, with drinks, drugs and gambling taking place there, usually card games and dice. There were also art performances: theatre, such as lenong shows, *dangdut* music⁸ and dancing (*jaipongan*).

The neighbourhood was 1,3 square kilometres wide, at the place where the youth centre currently stands. In 1968, there were 5328 inhabitants, in 1970, there were 6264⁹. The area was described by an observer as a maze of small streets, lined with slums : there were 618 in 1968. The impression of filth and overcrowding was enhanced by the darkness (no electric lighting except in the streets at the edges of the area), mud paths, no water (it had to be bought) and garbage everywhere. There, the girls would sell themselves in the small stalls where one would also find drinks. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood were mostly prostitutes, beggars and tramps, market coolies, unskilled workers, pedicab drivers, small traders, and soldiers and criminals. The soldiers were backing up the brothels, as unofficial security guards. In a police raid that took place in 1966, 269 *premans*¹⁰ and several soldiers called officially the “defenders” of the thieves, with

⁶ S. Putradjaja (1972), p.37 : “Dan daerah paling hitam adalah daerah Senen yang dinamakan “planit”, jaitu daerah sarang pelatjur dan tempat pelatjuran. Penghuninja beribu-ribu orang. Didaerah ini bersarang djuga segala matjam bandit dan pendjahat. Mulai bandit jang terketijil sampai bandit jang djadi buronan karena pembunuhan². Bahkan tidak djarang orang² buronan g-30-s/PKI bersembunji ditempat tersebut. Mereka menjamar dengan nama baru sebagai germo atau tukang djualan wedang atau lain²nja”.

⁷Besides the novel quoted, our main sources for the description of the area were interviews with former personalities of the area and from studies done mostly by Universitas Indonesia students such as: R. Suparlan (1973), and Syamsulhadi Honggoyudo (1975).

⁸One of the most well known *dangdut* singers is said to have started his career there. He is described as going to the area with bodyguards and smoking joints.

⁹R. Suparlan (1973), p.85.

¹⁰ *Preman* has several meanings, from a civilian, a free man, it now has more the meaning of a strong man, a thug and a criminal. Our aim here not being to discuss the evolution and the perception of that character prominent in the Indonesian underworld, we use it mainly in the sense of a strong man.

complete armed equipment, were caught¹¹. Of those 269 persons, only a fifth was arrested. In such an atmosphere, the police had great difficulty in catching any thieves in the neighbourhood, should they even want to catch them¹².

In the neighbourhood there was mainly a division between two main districts: the northern one, called the “Mosquito Island” (*Pulau Nyamuk*) was the territory of the Banten majority. On the southern edge it was mainly Makassar territory, but with other smaller groups. It was regularly the scene of fights, small ones but also between ethnic groups. Here all the elements of insecurity were gathered: density, darkness, filthiness, but also criminals, prostitutes and gamblers using drugs and drinking alcohol, all those elements that are until nowadays at the source of any feeling of insecurity.

Senen of the artists

As in other places and other times - the Montmartre of Paris for instance - that kind of neighbourhood also attracted a new category of people: the artists. Regarded with little respect, as outcasts, at the margin of society, they tended to look for inspiration but also for opportunities in such an area. Thus their presence in an area such as Senen can be understood.

Several authors have described the atmosphere in that neighbourhood, such as Misbach Yusa Biran in his collection of short stories, *Keajaiban di Pasar Senen*¹³. In the compilation of these short stories, the atmosphere and the role of the artists that gathered there is presented: a gathering of artists and would-be-artists, mostly poor, vagabondlike, meeting in the *warungs* [stalls] located on Jl. Kramat Bunder, under the *waru* trees. The origin of those gatherings is to be retraced to the 1940s when the bookstore Nasution opened, and, during the Japanese occupation, the artists started to frequent the area, adding a new lively dimension to the market. Thus, even when one asks the former *premans* about the presence of the artists in Senen, a sense of respect appears, which shows the importance of their role in shaping a new image of the neighbourhood.

Arts in Senen had the same reputation as the area: they were considered as disrespectful, of low standard, scandalous and the artists were people to be avoided. Among the arts that particularly developed in the neighbourhood, was literature, but also music and theatre¹⁴. Thus, in 1950, after the Liberation and the Revolution, there was a great dynamism in Senen: a theatre stage stood there and any kind of theatre could be played, without any particular rules.

The situation lasted until the end of the 1950's, 1959 and the Guided Democracy, when politics began to take a bigger role in everyday life and the artists started to split. It was at that time that Senen lost one of its particularities that was never to be found again in Jakarta, a place where artists could meet, established artists as well as total beginners. The area gathered at the same time a night and day market, permanent shops - Chinese mostly - prostitution complexes and more common leisure spots: movie theatres, coffee shops or warungs, the whole intertwined in a central position of the city at the limit of the military complexes (west) and the *kampung*s (east), thus giving not only an animated atmosphere but also a strong image of disorder.

Restoring a modern image of the city

In such a context, official concern has often focused on Senen, trying to address the gap between formal development and informal practices by changing and modernising the neighbourhood. A

¹¹ *Kompas*, 07/04/1966: “Planit diserbu”

¹² R. Suparlan (1973), p.93.

¹³ H. Misbach Yusa Biran (1971). We are also taking our analyses from an interview with the author in August 2000.

¹⁴ At the end of Dutch colonisation, forms of popular theatre were mainly the Opera Stambul, inspired from the *Arabian Nights*, with no written text, on an improvisation mode with sung texts, and the *toneel* which was also an improvisation theatre. It is only during the Japanese occupation, with the Dai Nippon control and the obligation to promote official themes that a new form of modern theatre, with a written text appeared.

project was examined in 1938 by the colonial government¹⁵, the market was supplied with electricity after the war as in several other markets¹⁶. In 1952, a book celebrating the seven years of the municipality of Jakarta presented the difficulties of market management, with the presence of uncontrolled markets due to the arrival of many people from the rest of the city and as a consequence of the war. It showed that the socio-economic functions of the markets were not in accordance with the original aims¹⁷. It is only in the 1960s that these projects were expanded. They were designed in a pure modernist style.

In 1962 for instance Governor Soemarno presented to President Soekarno a new modernist project for the area, inspired by the theories of Le Corbusier¹⁸. The project was integrated, with office buildings both at the South and North tips of the project, and, contrary to the actual market, all the buildings were linked, surrounded by parking space, with three sheltered corridors allowing pedestrians to gain the main complex. The buildings such as the one that was to become block 3 were elaborated in an architecture similar to the modern buildings on Jl. Thamrin, with those typical concrete structures preventing sunlight from getting into the office buildings. The Senen intersection was also to be transformed into a roundabout and no space seemed to have been reserved for the hawkers. They were supposed to enter the formal economy of the city. More than a traditional market, this project already seems to integrate parts of city planning similar to the ones elaborated in the 1990s mixing commercial and office space. None of the office towers, however, were ever built in the market.

From the model to reality it took almost five years : under the rule of Governor Soemarno¹⁹ an agency was created by the regional government, the Senen Authority, to carry out the transformation of the neighbourhood. A company was also created, mixing both private and public interests, PT Pembangunan Jakarta Raya (PT Pembangunan Jaya), to carry out the project. The funds came from the municipal government, but also from real estate operations in other areas of the city²⁰.

Despite the events of 1965, the area was totally reorganised as shown on map 1. The first floor of block I was opened in 1966, followed by the other blocks, the last one being the Inpres market - now block VI - constructed in 1977. In the meantime, in 1973, the wholesale market was transferred to Kramat Jati and the construction of the youth centre by Governor Ali Sadikin started right where Planet stood, thus erasing it, and the new bus terminal opened in 1980.

During those new developments, the official policies of the city aimed at eradicating the less modern aspects, the informal ones, ranging from prostitution to street hawkers. But when the new blocks opened, they were either too expensive for the vendors to settle, or, in the case of the Inpres market they did not have the authorisation to move in, thus creating reasons for further trouble²¹.

The latest transformations in the neighbourhood took place at the end of 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s with the “renewal” of the area designated as the Senen Triangle. It was an area mostly composed of Chinese shops and dwellings. After the eviction of its inhabitants, a “superblock” was constructed: composed of a shopping mall, the Atrium, a five star hotel, condominiums with luxurious, mostly empty till now, apartments and office buildings. The projects then moved more to the west and to the north, opposite the triangle, next to the Kwini

¹⁵ *Karya Jaya* (1977), p. 247.

¹⁶ *Kotapradja Djakarta Raya* (1952), p.349.

¹⁷ *Kotapradja Djakarta Raya* (1952), p.347 sq. : “*funksinja jang sosial ekonomis itu kadang2 tidak sesuai dengan apa jang dimaksudkan*”.

¹⁸ see also S. Abeyasekere (1987), p.168.

¹⁹ February 1960 to August 1964 and July 1965 to March 1966.

²⁰ *Karya Jaya*, p.244.

²¹ “Strangely, at *Pasar Inpres Senen*, which is intended for *Pribumi*, its administration refused, in December 1977, to register 70% of about 200 Kaki Lima traders from the area simply because they could not show a local resident card.” (Parakitri, 1991, p. 78)

and Kalilio neighbourhoods, at the corner of Jl. Prapatan and Senen Raya, with the eviction of neighbourhoods. Until the end of 2000, nothing had been built, apart some construction projects in the Kalilio area. In 2000 restructuring of the area took place in the areas that had already been renewed: the bus terminal is supposed to be expanded into a multiple storey building where street hawkers are supposed, as usual, to be given plots, and the Youth Centre is supposed in 2001 to be reorganised.

Therefore, from a commercial specialised spot - the market of the 18th century - the area grew denser and denser, mixing several types of land use, from commercial, tertiary ones, to dwelling places and recreation. It is only in recent times that the area became once again more specialised in tertiary activities, in a more modern form. That tendency can be seen through the statistics of the sub-district, the *kelurahan* of Senen : in 1954 there were 4 500 registered inhabitants, in 1985, 10 804 and in 1998 only 6 067, positioning that area as one of the less densely populated of central Jakarta. The statistics reflect the destruction of several parts of the city : the triangle where the Atrium was built, the Kalilio neighbourhood, but also the Planet area, mostly composed of slums.

All those changes were a means to deal with the gap between the image the city government wanted to give to its city and the everyday reality. They were supposed to upgrade Senen as a symbol of a modern and prestigious city, by giving the area a modern appearance, obliterating its run down aspects, its source of insecurity and criminality. The physiognomy of the neighbourhood changed completely, with more official buildings, better guarded, to render a modern image of the city. All of a sudden certain areas became more inaccessible, severely guarded by private guard companies, even, during major problems, with the army protecting it²². Thus, as regarding the protection and the control of the area, we can see several institutions taking part in that control : the regional government through several agencies : through the agency in charge of the terminal (the DLLAJR), of the market (PD Pasar Jaya for the public blocks, PT Pembangunan Jaya for the private ones), with their own guards for the Atrium, through its municipal police (Polisi Pamong Praja part of the Bureau of Peace and Order - *Kantor Ketentraman dan Ketertiban*), and in a broader sense, through its development and planning policies.

2. Visions of insecurity

In the newspapers from 1965 up to the present day Senen is always depicted as a trouble spot²³. The Planet area was already a major source of problem, and, although shopkeepers who have been in the neighbourhood for a long time find the area safer than it used to be in the 1970s²⁴, it is still described as one of the dark areas of the capital. According to the data of the Regional Government²⁵, it is still listed as one of the main dangerous places regarding :

- fighting between inhabitants, around the terminal,
- fights between school children (5 trouble schools are located in the area),
- mugging, pickpocketing and snatching
- demonstrations
- looting, riots and arson.

For the police, the area is also one of the worst in the Central Jakarta municipality : by examining the four major types of criminality: theft (with violence and heavy theft), car and

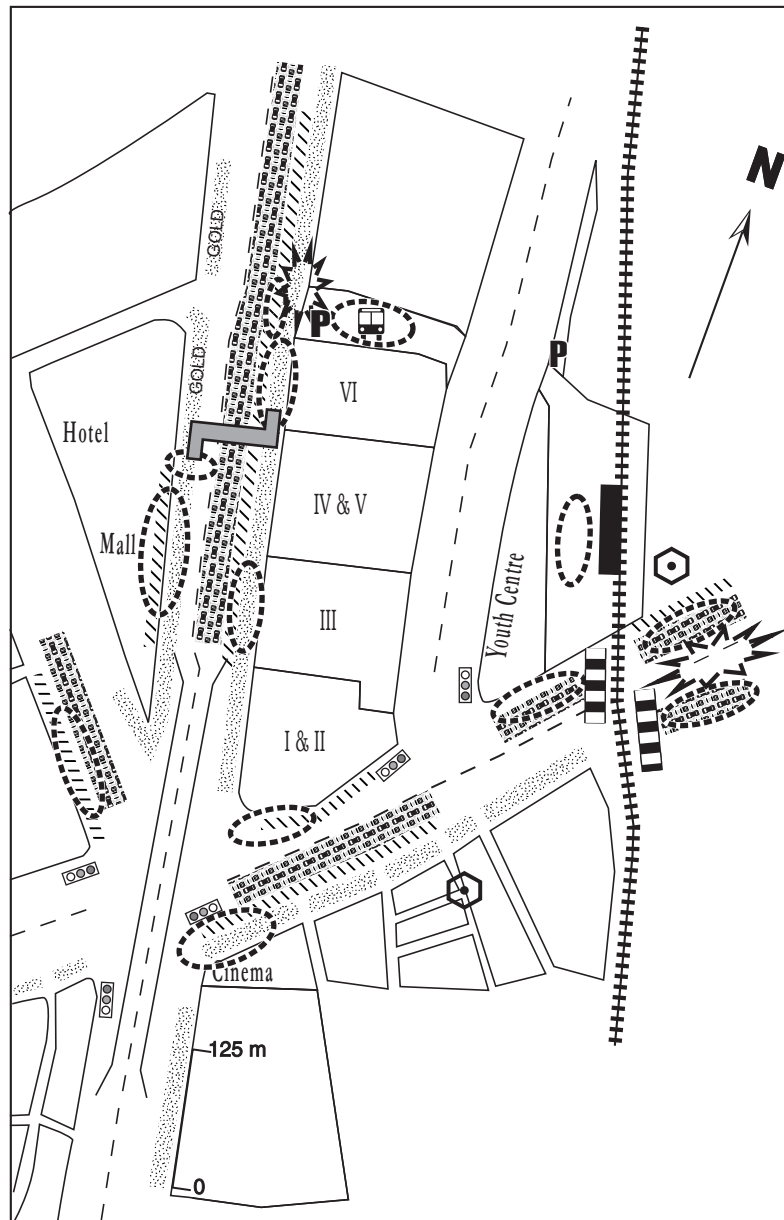
²² It was the case during the November 1998 riots when the Atrium shopping centre was saved by the Marines who stopped the mob from looting the mall.

²³ Our main sources were the *Kompas*, *Pos Kota*, *Media Indonesia*, *Sinar Pagi* and, for recent times, *Warta Kota* newspapers.

²⁴ *Kompas*, May 30th, 2000: “*Kawasan Senen Memang Angker*”

²⁵ Data from the Pusdalgangsos DKI, from February 1999 to April 2000.

Day insecurity in Senen



© J. Tadié, March 2001.

1. Infrastructure



Fly - over



Level crossing



Pedestrian bridge



Railway & train station



Bus terminal



Traffic Lights



Market Blocks

2. "Animation"



"Thieves market" / Flea market



Police station



Street hawkers



Crowds (commuters and shoppers)



Traffic jams



Major spots of insecurity (mugging & pickpocketing)



Major street battles

motorcycle robbery, and use of violence between December 1998 and December 1999, Senen comes first 7 months out of 12. The others months, it is at least in fifth position, among the 44 police sectors of the area²⁶.

But the data just gives a hint of the daily atmosphere of the area. Indeed, several groups of people make a living out of illegal activities, such as pickpockets and muggers. As can be seen in the newspapers, from February to August 2000, there were 12 muggings or thefts reported. Usually it is only when the police arrest or shoot the criminals that such facts appear publicly. But, according to the vendors and the policemen, the delinquents who get caught are mostly people not operating on a regular basis in the area²⁷. Indeed, regular ones know not only when and where to operate, but also know the policemen and army officials, even undercover, as well as the other security officials present there. In the terminal, all the regular thieves are perfectly able to identify law officers. Thus a system of illegality is created, where everybody knows everybody else.

Senen is one of the main areas of pickpocketing, a “nest of pickpockets” as the newspapers usually describe it²⁸. When shopping at the stalls outside the market, block 6 in particular, some vendors often warn people to be aware of pickpockets, some even pass notes to the rare tourists lost there with “Be careful” written in English²⁹.

Several types of people are operating : groups who are regularly posted in the neighbourhood, but also more “elaborate” gangs who go from one area to another, thus drawing a geography, a map, of the most crowded areas from Glodok to Blok M, from Kalideres to Pulogadung, and of the most crowded bus lines.

In Senen, the pickpockets are mostly positioned in a few areas as map 2 shows : the Batak pickpockets are mostly around block 6 of the market during the day, especially in the area just outside the building where street vendors, also of Batak origin, sell bags. At the end of the day, around 5 p.m., they usually move towards the bus terminal where they stay at the entrance on Jl. Pasar Senen, one of the most crowded areas. There are usually up to 20 pickpockets at this time of day. In the bus terminal, they are usually near the food stalls and in the northern part of the terminal where most of the buses wait, which is together with the Metromini stop, at the rear of the terminal, next to Jl. Stasiun Senen, the most favoured area for this kind of activities : lots of buses, many passengers at peak hours, all of this giving good opportunities to fade away after the action.

Outside the market, Batak pickpockets and snatchers are mostly under the pedestrian bridge leading to the Atrium mall (about 5 of them are positioned there at the end of the afternoon, when the crowd gathers), just outside the area guarded by the private guards of the shopping centre. This was also the case at the small garden just in front of the mall at the Senen crossroad before it closed and where several video compact disk sellers had set up their stalls. Around the market, the Jl. Pasar Senen is also one of the favoured places, with all the street vendors creating a busy and crowded atmosphere, especially at the red light and under the fly-over.

Other areas of pickpocketing in the neighbourhood are mainly behind the market, on Jl. Stasiun Senen, where the pickpockets coming from Southern Sumatra (Palembang) are to be found, and in the train station where they are mostly Javanese - *Arek*³⁰ - pickpockets. On Jl. Kramat Bunder, the Grand cinema is also a spot for those mostly of Makassarese origin. There at peak hours,

²⁶ Polda Metro Jaya, Resort Metropolitan Jakarta Pusat: “Laporan Gelar Operasional Bulanan Polres Metro Jakarta Pusat, Januari - Desember 1999”. Even if a great part of the criminal acts are not reported or registered, those figures still show tendencies for the district.

²⁷ *Kompas*, 30/05/2000.

²⁸ *Media Indonesia*, 20/11/1999 : « Jambret Terminal Senen Divonis 8 bulan », see also *Sinar Pagi*, 20/12/99 : « Awas ! Copet di mana-mana » ; *Warta Kota*, 31/03/00 : « Hujan rintik-rintik memuluskan aksi pencopetan », etc.

²⁹ For other accounts of the relationships between shopkeepers and pickpockets, see : Eko S. Priyadi (1997), pp.111 sqq.

³⁰ from the Javanese *arek* meaning child

crowds of people wait for buses coming either from the terminal or from the east and going west or south.

Thus, not considering the thefts that take place on public transport, we can see how there is a clear division of the pickpocketing activity in the neighbourhood. Each zone of pickpocketing corresponds to an area of intense activity. Through the example of the Batak networks clear zoning takes place not only in space (different areas), but also in time and according to the circumstances. Map 2 is not a static one: during rainfalls for instance, covered bus shelters are an ideal spot for such activities thanks to the crowd that gathers there. But when the use of the neighbourhood changes, when the garden in front of the Atrium shopping centre was closed, the pickpockets also move. When the street hawkers grow denser, as since the 1997 crisis, new places of action appear. It is thus a fluctuating map that is drawn here. The division of space that takes place seems to be established, but covers dynamic aspects due to the changes in the neighbourhood. The pickpocket activity, even if established, turns out to be essentially dynamic and still shows a capacity of adaptation, a fluidity even if it is organised as a system.

If most of the goods - handphones primarily - are sold to a main receiver in Senen, one can often find stolen handphones for sale in the neighbouring areas. As for jewellery, there is a range of street vendors selling and buying - mostly buying though - gold along Jl. Pasar Senen, opposite the terminal, north of the Atrium shopping centre. Most of the stolen jewellery, even from other areas of the city is sold here. According to some pickpockets, this is because no questions are asked, the prices are better, even if sometimes the scale is tricked, thus linking in another way informality to petty theft.

The reasons for such a permanence of this activity can be a source of questioning. Indeed the newspapers of the 1960s show that Senen was already a centre of pickpocketing. In the 1950s the pickpocketing in the market was mostly Padang led, the second ethnical group, far behind, the Makassar, and the third was the Betawi. As an area of intense activity and of passing through, one can easily understand why there is such a presence of pickpockets. What is less clear is why the area has remained as such, in spite of all the speeches on the insecurity of the area made by officials, newspapers, or even the police showing officially efforts to restore order.

The main factor to be considered is that, like other markets and bus terminals, several areas are often very crowded : from the train station, the market, the bus terminal to the shopping mall. But the organisation of the criminal activity plays a fundamental part in the process.

Senen is a main recruitment area for pickpockets, as can be the dwelling places. Hanging around in the market, for instance, can be a means of knowing more people for the newly arrived in Jakarta and a means of getting involved in such activities. To that recruitment factor, an elaborate organisation from apprenticeship to daily activity takes place. During the learning period, there is already a strong structure, with a clear division of tasks in the group. During the first year, the beginner learns all the tricks from his friends, how to strengthen his fingers, and follows them in the action. Usually they go in groups of 3 or 4 ("a person who pickpockets on his own is a madman!"), and divide the tasks : there is a captain, people distracting the prey [*tukang rem*], and the keeper [*kiper*] who hides the stolen object.

That kind of organisation contributes to the survival of the gang: the members give a contribution to the captain who keeps the money in case of a problem, as a pay off. A part of that money is also used for other purposes, in particular to pay for the silence of the witnesses, and to pay officials. In this case, several types of relations and contributions are to be found :

- beforehand : to give money to officials (between 1993 and 1996 it was of 25 000 Rp., in 1999, 100 000 Rp.) with arrangements with the police for instance, such as to give them an amount of money so that they stay in their office for two hours.
- during the action: when encountering an official, to pay for his silence.
- afterhand: when a policeman hears of a theft, he goes and asks for his share of the deed to the person in charge, knowing whom to ask according to where the deed took place.

These practices of course involve some individuals and not all the officials who work in those places, but they give us a hint of how such criminal activities can become permanent. What is important too is to notice the links between informality and insecurity. Street vendors, and stall keepers in the markets, for instance, often have antagonistic relationships with the petty thieves, which can lead to clashes, even within the same ethnic group³¹. Forms of co-operation can also be found, such as hawkers buying the gold, to street vendors hiding the stolen objects. Thus a first system is elaborated : the pickpockets interact with the hawkers, the officials, but also take advantage of the neighbourhood : its activity as seen with the traffic and the market, but also the different places: the traffic lights, the pedestrian bridges and the level crossings as seen on map 2.

3. Tigers and forests.

“*Setiap hutan ada macannya*” (Every forest has its tiger)

The forests

This popular saying describes the situation of Indonesian cities accurately, where every corner of the city has its tiger. Senen, as many other areas of the city, is divided into micro-territories which are all controlled by a leader.

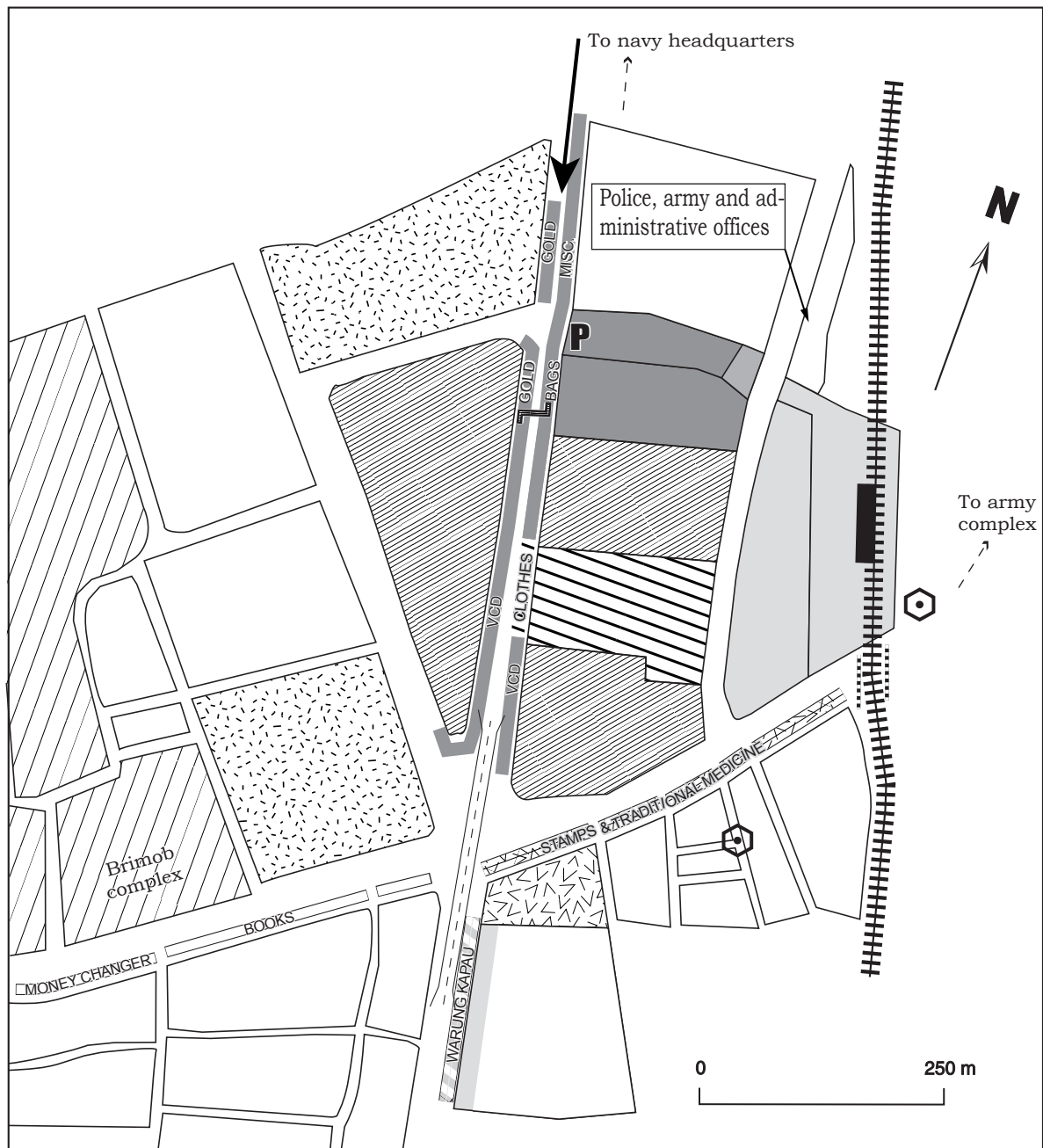
As seen on map 3 a clear division is nonetheless present. The major divisions in the neighbourhood are represented here. They have clear limits, but they are not easy to draw, as there is a tendency of the leaders either to say that they control the whole neighbourhood or that they do not control anything! The same tendency appears among the shopkeepers who are often reluctant to confess to whom they are giving security money. Yet some broad distinctions arise similar to the ethnic divisions between the vendors. The market itself is divided: the pavements seem mostly to be controlled by Batak *premans* with the exception of the pavement just in front of block III, which is controlled mainly by Padang. The bus terminal and block VI are mostly Batak too, with some Palembang *premans* in the terminal. The third block is the territory of Bantenese, West Javanese and Padang strongmen. Although there is a chief of security to be found in those areas, the situation in the markets may be more intricate than portrayed : from people who control a whole block to others who get money from some shops in a market to be ready to fight when there are problems, the *satpam* being regarded as insufficient. As for the peddlers in the market, they are also subject to unofficial taxes from the official market guards.

Outside the market area, several zones appear : until recently, the Ambonese were said to control the Kwini area, west of the Senen triangle. But, with recent city projects, most of them have moved. Opposite, in the Kwitang area, it is more a Betawi neighbourhood still ruling over the area. The *warung* Kapau (a kind of Padang food) on Jl. Kramat Raya seem to be a mixed neighbourhood. Whereas it used to be an East Javanese pavement, there are nowadays several groups from different origins collecting money there : East Javanese still, but also Betawi people from the nearby neighbourhood of Tanah Tinggi. Separated by a small alley starts the Makassar zone. Its main interests are the Grand and Mulia Agung cinema theatres on the corner of Kramat Bunder, with shops on the main street and stamps and medicine hawkers. Opposite Kramat Bunder, the train station and the youth centre area are controlled by Javanese from East Java as well as from the North coast of the island (Semarang and Demak).

There is also an intricate division of the neighbourhood reflecting another layer of control : the army and police also take benefits from the neighbourhood. The role of the police and other special forces has already been described in their relationships with the pickpockets and the snatchers. Regarding the military, their presence is already felt through their presence in the neighbourhood : being at the border of military compounds since the colonial period, a lot of






³¹ The Batak sellers of block VI, for instance, did not dare to complain to much, being afraid of being beaten up as had already happened.

Map 3 The territories of Senen







© J. Tadié, November 2000.










1. Land occupation

-  Kampung and residential areas
-  Army complex
-  Waste land
-  Privately owned blocks
-  Street vendors and their specialisation

2. Infrastructures

-  Fly - over
-  Level crossing
-  Pedestrian bridge
-  Railway & train station

3. Informality and control

-  "Thieves market" / Flea market
-  Police station till 2000
-  Intervention from city officials (DKI)
- Ethnic Control :**
 -  Batak
 -  Palembang
 -  Padang, Banten & Sunda
 -  Javanese (East & North coast)
 -  Mixed (East Javanese & Betawi)
 -  Makassarrese

army units are represented in Senen, and soldiers can often be seen at the market. Among the ones who take part in the control of the area, two categories appear: some soldiers work for *premans* in their turfs, others - usually higher ranked - are independent. Mapping those "army territories" is the hardest task, as they are the less apparent and the most confidential, regarding the position of those bosses. Nonetheless, most of the ones involved in the neighbourhood seem to come from two major units: from the Military police and from the Brigadir Mobil, an elite unit of the police who have a centre located near the neighbourhood on Jl. Prapatan. Their position can often be felt in the market through battles with market people. For instance a battle occurred between soldiers from the Yon Angmor unit on Jl. Tanah Tinggi Barat and the market guards in 1999. In August 2000, several stalls and even a part of the Atrium mall was damaged by Marines coming from their centre on Jl. Gunung Sahari, north of the market. In both cases the problem started with a small fight involving a few soldiers with market people, before they gained the support of their friends from the barracks. These fights also show an attempt of if not controlling, being respected in the area.

What appears here is a microscopic division, mostly based on ethnical networks. Since the transformation of the neighbourhood, some areas have changed, like the Senen triangle that has become a zone beyond the control of traditional *preman*, but of security societies of whom the guards, the *satpams*, are members. The same applies to the north-west corner of the Senen crossroad between the Jl. Senen Raya and the Jl. Prapatan, where, due to projects linked with the Cendana family (the former president's family), the inhabitants have been expelled and emptied land can still be found. Of the other areas which have experienced some restructuring regarding informal control, there is also the Jl. Kramat, next to the flyover that has become a quiet neighbourhood, with the Kapau warungs being the only exception.

The Tigers

The leaders can be considered from several aspects summed up by the ambivalent meanings of their name and their activity. They are usually regarded as personalities of the area, as persons in charge of the security, as they would like to be seen, but also as *preman*, thugs, criminals³². Those distinctions come from their ambivalent role in the neighbourhood and from the ambivalent meaning of to control - *pegang*. "*Pegang*" has an active and a passive sense. From holding, controlling, mastering, it also means to run affairs. The leader is the master of an area in the sense that he is both supposed to be involved in the area and to run it but also possesses it. He seldom has to get involved in illegal deeds directly, leaving this to his followers, intervening in cases of major conflicts to settle them. Thus a range of meanings coming also from the ambiguity of the way they are called.

In such a system, the head of a neighbourhood is usually helped by his followers (*anak buah*) who take care of everyday aspects, from collecting money from the stores and stalls to the fighting when needed. The relationships between the leader and his *anak buah* are usually of a paternalistic pattern, as seen by the term itself³³. The followers are supposed to respect the leader, who, in exchange is supposed to give them job opportunities and regular wages. Some of the leaders, not only have professional relationships with their recruits, but also informal ones: they invite them out to bars and other leisure spots, find new positions for them, etc. Most of the followers were from the same region as the leader. Recruiting, if the word may be used, happens through personal relationships: a friend or a relative brings somebody to the leader, asking him to give him a job. He is then tested to see if he can calm down situations. If he is not really able to do so, he can still be one of his *anak buah*, but of the "eating" class, the ones that are just there to inflate the number of followers, are given small tasks and take part in the fights only when they involve the whole group; if he is able to fight well, he then becomes an active follower. Among

³² In fact the different meanings of *preman*, as seen in note 10, covers those dimensions.

³³ *Anak* means child. For a further account on the followers and their importance, see R. Cribb (1991), p.19.

the “disciples”, there were also some soldiers who had been recruited when hanging around in the market, even after fights. Their aim was to earn more money in order to increase their poor wages as ordinary soldiers. For the leader, it is always in his interest to have soldiers under his orders: they are well trained, fit, and armed and are therefore of great benefit. The instinct of the criminal is to look for protection as a former leader told us. This point works both for the leader and the follower and is to be seen with the relations they have with policemen or army officials. Most of the ones we met, either presented us to their friends (policemen) or showed us their name cards, thus making it easier to solve difficult situations.

It is with that type of organisation that the forest can be controlled.

The relationships between the shopkeepers and the people who work in their territory, presents usually an ideal picture of harmony with the community: they have been chosen by the shopkeepers, without any problems from other groups or from people in the neighbourhood. The reality seems to be a little discordant. For instance a leader has said that he has to be forceful with the shopkeepers who do not want to give a daily contribution. If this is the case, they just jam the lock of his store, so that after a while the leader obtains his “contribution”. Other means were to send to a *warung*, for instance, one’s followers and have them ask for free cigarettes or eat without paying. The owner, if he cannot fight back, either moves or pays. In the case of one of the cinemas of the neighbourhood, the head used to force the spectators to buy the tickets from them at a higher price. If they tried to buy a ticket at the teller they would be hit with a knife. As for more violent accounts, we never heard of any from the main chiefs.

Controlling the area is usually done through violence. Most of the accounts the *preman* want to give is that they were usually chosen by friends: it is the case of the Makassarese in the 1960s at the train station and at the vegetable market, who were helped by friends from prison, but also the case of the Arek of Jl. Kramat who were helped by the former leaders, before organising the neighbourhood themselves. Other methods consist in provoking the local leader and defeating him. Thus the story of the Madurese leader of a nearby market who came there first with his friends, opened a stall and refused to pay the local leader, a Betawi. Through fighting, the Madurese ended up controlling the area. In the terminal the Batak took control by fighting against the Ambonese first, then with the Arek and the Bantenese.

Thus the control of a territory can be summed up through three Indonesian terms that are often heard:

- *bergaul*: to live with friends
- *berwibawa*: to have an attitude that allows you to control and influence other people through your behaviour and actions, for the relationships with the shopkeepers and the *anak buah*.
- *berani*: to be brave and intrepid, to be able to fight, which can be obtained from mastering a fighting or a self defence sport and also by acquiring magical powers.

These characteristics were actually brought to their paroxysm after the war with the Dutch when Senen, like major parts of Jakarta, was controlled by one major organisation, Cobra.

Cobra

Since the independence of Indonesia, several organisations have been controlling the area, among which the biggest was Cobra. At the origin of the organisation stood an emblematic character: Imam Sjafé’i, commonly called Pak Pei³⁴. Pak Pei was a Betawi from Kampung Bangka, more to the South of the city. He first came to Senen before the Japanese occupation. The story says he was first a thief at the vegetable market, then he took control of the market by killing the former *jagoan* [tough guy] from Bogor. During the war he was head of a group of *laskar*, of youth troops, fighting against the Dutch. He was thus sent to Karawang, east of Jakarta, where he was at

³⁴ Our sources are mostly from accounts of former members of the group. On the role of the *laskars* see Cribb, R. (1991), pp. 71 sqq., pp.109-110 and p.183.

the head of a battalion mainly composed of thieves and pickpockets. At the end of the war, he was in Yogyakarta where he joined the Siliwangi Division. As he was illiterate, he entered the army with the rank of a captain instead of major as most heads of battalion. But most of his followers did not enter the army, being illiterate when the official republican army was reducing the number of its soldiers. They were thus sent as reserves for guerrilla action in case of failure of the Renville treaty.

According to the accounts, Sjafei decided to form Cobra at the beginning of the 1950s taking advantage of the unemployment of several former *laskars*. He thus created what was supposed to be a security organisation, gathering the *jagoan* of several areas: from Senen to Tanah Abang, Pasar Rebo, Jembatan Lima (Glodok area), Meester Cornelis (Jatinegara), until Kebayoran Lama. Each Kecamatan had a Cobra representative with its own recruits. Each leader was reporting to Senen where Sjafei had its headquarters. It had, thanks to Sjafei's background, strong relationships with the army.

The funds came from the shops, the Chinese ones mainly, who had a sticker representing a standing Cobra on their stalls, thus marking the territory of the organisation. But the organisation was also present in the markets and even in dwelling areas. It also had some funds from gambling and casinos located in Senen and also in Glodok, but those incomes were mostly Sjafei's business. Apart from the district division of the parts of the city controlled by the organisation, there were also divisions in Senen, with a manager for each part of the market and for groups of activities and people like the *gelandangan*, the poorest, the vagrants. That period is still remembered by the Betawi as a period where the original ethnic group of Jakarta was running the show. It is also seen by several inhabitants of the neighbourhoods under their management as a period where everybody was afraid, where people pretended to like the members of the gang because they feared them.

The organisation was dissolved at the end of the 1950s, in 1959, to the demand of Military Commandment of the city and because of rivalry with other "security" organisations such as the Pembantu Keamanan Kota and the Keamanan Ular Belang who also forced shopkeepers to have their sticker on their walls. But Pak Pei remained a prominent figure of the Jakarta underworld during the Sukarno era, still having the reputation of being able to mobilise thousands of people for any demonstration³⁵. This achievement can be seen through the end of his official career, as the Minister of Security Affairs, mainly in charge of the security of Jakarta, during the "100 Minister Cabinet" from February 24th to March 28th 1966³⁶. His task there was mainly to control the student demonstrations. He was thus on March 18th arrested as a follower of the communist party, which he did not seem to be, as seen by his release a few months afterwards.

Thus through the history of Cobra, we can see how all the elements of informal control were gathered: a strong man with his disciples, strong connections with the officials of the city and the army, a strong control of his recruits to avoid major conflicts.

Conflicts

Tracing local conflicts is a difficult task for the researcher : often not mentioned or only partially in the newspapers, they tend to be minimised by the protagonists except in some rare violent cases. Indeed when asking the protagonists, they seldom like to confess they had to fight to obtain their position or that anybody could have threatened them. Here we try to retrace some of the most important conflicts after 1965, especially after the fall of the Cobra gang, the major ones that still mark most of the minds in the neighbourhood. For those reasons of unfaithful memory, some of the dates vary according to the different versions and the memories of the persons interviewed.

³⁵ Cribb, R. (1991), p. 183.

³⁶ "Kabinet Dwi Kora yang disempurnakan". Bibit Suprpto (1985).

Since the end of the Revolution, several conflicts have taken place, mostly ethnically based : Banten vs. Makassar, Banten vs. Batak (a short time conflict), Padang vs. Ambon, Makassar vs. East Javanese, army vs. premans, and so on, regardless of the more “official” ones, such as the riots that took place in Senen³⁷. Here the youth gang battles that took place in the 1970s for instance, involving the Siliwangi youths from the military complex nearby or the smaller gangs from Tanah Tinggi are not discussed, as their aim was more to obtain respect than territorial control over the neighbourhood.

The first one, the Banten vs. Makassar, in 1966, was probably the longest and the most significant. Depending on the sources, it originated from several factors: either from a conflict coming from Tanjung Priok, between the coolies - from Banten - and the sailors - Makassarese - or from a rivalry for the control of the Planet complex. In both cases, the important matter is that the conflict took place over both territorial concerns and ethnically based networks. According to the second version, given by two Makassarese respondents, who were responsible for the “security” of the Makassarese area along Kramat Bunder, it originated from other ethnic groups such as the people from Tegal or from Cirebon, who took the banner of Banten - the other dominant group in the complex - to fight the Makassarese. Their aim was to get more vital space and influence. One of the factors confirming that hypothesis is that the heads of the Banten, at the time Haji Said and Haji Hassan, would have been friends of the Makassarese. The peace was then organised in one of the theatres of Senen, Miss Tjitjih, but the battle continued: it was like a street battle, vicious and ferocious, where the only law in place, according to the participants, was the “law of the jungle”. During the battle the Makassarese were expelled till the neighbouring area of Tanah Tinggi and it only ended thanks to the intervention of the army and the army battalion located there. There was no organised ‘peace treaty’ but it ended. We can therefore see here the important role of the armed forces in such a neighbourhood: the army protecting the Makassarese (one of their leaders was indeed part of that battalion), the police protecting the Bantenese (some of the officers came from that region), in a pattern that is still to be found till nowadays.

The second big fight was in August 1978, between the Makassar and the East Javanese - the *Arek* or the vagrants. According to the Makassar description, if a policeman had not been mugged, the Makassar side would have been eliminated by the Javanese. Their motive, they say, was social jealousy, the Makassar controlling the Grand movie theatre and also the shops surrounding them, whereas the Javanese only had the revenues coming from the parking business.

The Javanese version sheds more light on what happened : according to their leader, it originated in a misunderstanding that had severe consequences : the Makassarese already controlled the movie theatre and the stores next to them, the Javanese the parking and the shops on Jalan Kramat. The fight originated from drunk *anak buah* who fought for having tried to collect money on the other camp’s territory. The result was a battle. The Javanese, hearing that the Makassarese would avenge themselves from the former fight, gathered their troops, coming not only from Senen but also from Cikini, Sarinah, Guntur, Blok M, Pasar Baru and Pecenongan, the major East Javanese concentrations in Jakarta, showing a sense of solidarity hard to find nowadays among the Javanese. Not to get confused during the battle, they all had a white scarf around their head, and several types of arms: matchets, sickles, spears and sharpened bamboo sticks. At the end of the day, the Makassarese came not from Kramat Raya, but through the neighbourhood, more to the north-east. The Makassarese were behind. In front of them was a jeep. The Javanese thought it was one of their enemies: they attack it. Unfortunately there were no Makassarese in it, but a policeman. The result: 13 trucks of Brimob were parachuted, they entered most of the house of the neighbourhood, firing, and 36 people were arrested. They were liable to three years of

³⁷ The major riots that took place where were the 1974 Malari riots, but also in 1996 and 1998. As they have political origins, from outside the neighbourhood, we do not take them into account, except to notice that during the 1998 upheavals, both local premans and shop keepers and vendors were guarding the market.

imprisonment, but thanks to a neighbour whose brother was a prosecutor, they only got 6 months of imprisonment. As for the chief he fled to Surabaya, coming back now and then to Jakarta to continue expanding his business thanks to his followers. The Makassarese were also looking for him, wanting to kill him.

However, the main significant difference between the accounts of the protagonists nowadays is the date: 1978 in the memories of the Makassarese and 1972 in the Javanese case. The difference between those two dates is quite relevant: in 1978 the car spare parts shops moved from Kramat Raya to Senen, thus explaining in the case of 1978 the battle between the two groups for expansion. 1972 was the date of the creation of PT Parkir Jaya, thus giving an explanation for the conflict and comforting the Makassarese explanation of economic and social rivalry.

Through this example we can also see how, if we have a permanent picture of the territory controlled by one thug or another, it remains mainly dynamic, being a melting pot between different factors: poverty, the search of fast income, city planning, private entrepreneurship, a balance between forces in presence (official and unofficial)

Those cases underline the importance of different factors in territorial constitution and domination : fights, agreements, followers, the types of relationships with official institutions. Those connections used to be even clearer immediately after the war against the Dutch.

In managing the city, the main objectives of the developers do not seem to have been fulfilled. The Senen area has grown more modern, with new city developments such as the new market blocks, then office towers, luxurious condominiums, shopping malls and five star hotels. Insecurity is still a major concern, as seen by the interventions of the Central Jakarta Mayor, calling again for a better control of the neighbourhood and the suppression of all forms of disorder, from informal street vendors, to petty criminals still gathering there. Actually, even the modern shopping mall, the Atrium, that is overprotected by security company guards, also has forms of disorder, with several forms of prostitution taking place there, recalling the practices that took place opposite the square at the Grand movie theatre and further back are remnants in a milder way of the Planet times.

The example of Senen thus reflects the situation as might be seen in most of the public places in Jakarta as well as in other big cities, with every corner of the city being mastered by groups of people, be they from city agencies, the police, the army, or thugs. The presence of law and order thus appears like an equilibrium resulting from the interactions of those different actors and the common inhabitants of Jakarta. The reactions of the Jakartans, like in other countries, may be increasingly seen since 1998 through polling in local newspapers where safety appears as a major concern, but also through popular discontent, with the rise of vigilantes, of people in markets, bus terminals, common neighbourhoods, who punish thieves, pickpockets or muggers themselves by beating and more and more often killing them. If those acts can seem barbarian, especially when compared to the deed of the victim, they still reflect a reaction to the way the territories are organised, with the expression of a growing lack of confidence in government policies.

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