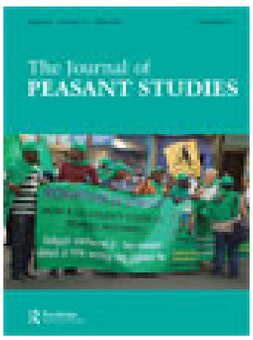

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'Waiting for the call to prayer': exploitation, accumulation and social reproduction in rural Java*

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses processes of exploitation, accumulation and social reproduction in rural Java. Using fieldwork in a primarily agrarian and a predominantly non-agrarian village, it underlines the ways in which pluri-active labouring class households contribute to processes of accumulation through a variety of forms of petty self-employment and wage-labour – above all sharecropping and female homework, which is interwoven seamlessly with reproductive labour. Agrarian accumulation is dominated by traders and absentee capitalist landowners. Forms of exploitation are linked to petty capitalism's relationship to capital-in-general. The article briefly discusses the *potential* for labouring class collective action given the villages' relatively flat social structures.

KEYWORDS

Social reproduction; exploitation; accumulation; homeworkers; sharecropping; gender relations

Introduction

This article analyses processes of exploitation, accumulation, and social reproduction in rural West Java. In doing so it underlines the ways in which pluri-active labouring class households contribute to processes of accumulation through a variety of forms of precarious, informal wage-labour, and petty self-employment. The article proceeds through a comparative analysis of the specific forms through which 'unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers' in two villages close to the city of Tasik Malaya – one with a primarily agrarian economy and one with a predominantly non-agrarian economy.

One key mechanism of exploitation is highlighted in each village. In the largely non-agrarian village, it is female homework. This was its most common form of wage-labour, interwoven seamlessly with reproductive labour. In the still primarily agrarian village, sharecropping was the primary mechanism of exploitation. Sharecropping is seen here as a disguised form of wage-labour, which ties the sharecropper to a particular plot of land for the duration of each paddy season. In this village, there were no capitalist paddy farmers and agrarian accumulation was primarily the preserve of traders and

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*The article's title is based on a quote from one of our respondents whose agricultural and reproductive labour stretched back to the 1970s. Please see page 15 for a more detailed explanation.

absentee capitalist landowners. A third mechanism of exploitation – usurious moneylending – is discussed in relation to both villages. In an Islamic cultural context that frowns on usury, these were often concealed in market transactions such as the sale of agricultural inputs and consumer goods on credit. Both villages were relatively homogenous in socio-economic terms with high levels of exploitation by outside capitalists, prompting questions in the conclusion about potential routes to shifting the balance of power towards classes of labour.[1]

The article's focus, then, is on the contemporary dynamics of exploitation in the region of Tasik Malaya in rural West Java, how they vary across villages where agriculture is more or less important, how they are located in broader capitalist dynamics, and, more briefly, what the political implications might be. In the still primarily agrarian village, which is located further from the city beneath Galunggung volcano, mostly city-based absentee capitalist landowners had bought up *sawah* (paddy land), which was cultivated through highly iniquitous sharecropping arrangements that yielded profits of around $2000 per hectare per year (see below). And so, although there were no capitalist paddy farmers in the village, paddy production still contributed to the surpluses of absentee capitalist landowners.

The village with a largely *non*-agrarian economy is located just a few kilometres from the city's eastern edge and has higher levels of commuting. Here exploitation through *non-agricultural* wage-labour is more common and female homework has become the most widespread type of wage-labour in recent years. This involves petty urban capital outsourcing production to villages and pushing wage-labour into the interstices of reproductive labour, thereby increasing the surplus labour time from which petty capitalists can extract surplus value. Homework lengthens the working day as women can move seamlessly between this piece-rated wage-labour and heavy reproductive labour burdens without leaving their homes. Homework, then, illustrates how the productive and reproductive spheres are intertwined in the everyday lives of women homeworkers who shoulder the core reproductive work of raising the children who will populate tomorrow's production sites while simultaneously working full days for today's capitalists. More broadly, homework further increases the pluri-activity of classes of labour who make up almost 90% of the population in the two fieldwork villages.

Pluri-activity comprises multiple low-income forms of wage-labour and petty commodity production (PCP).[2] In our fieldwork villages, as well as homework and agricultural labour, it includes wage-labour in small nearby food factories, building sites and petty capitalist street-vending operations. The main forms of petty commodity production that it encompasses are small-scale farming and food production and trading. Migration – mostly for street-food vending from one village and factory work from the other – is the subject of another paper (Pattenden and Wastuti forthcoming).

Classes of labour's long working days across multiple forms of wage-labour and petty commodity production increase surplus labour time and lower local wages (90% of wages in the fieldwork villages were below government-stipulated minimums), increasing capitalists' profits and ability to compete. Pluri-active classes of labour also contribute to the

[1]Those involved in combinations of wage-labour and petty commodity production, including farming (see Bernstein 2006).

[2]Petty forms of self-employment that produce goods or services at a level that contributes part or all of a household's living, but without any accumulation.

accumulation of capital-in-general by lowering the costs of capital's expanded reproduction as a whole. They put downwards pressure on wages in general, and provide cheap goods and services through petty commodity production and wage-labour for small businesses. These low-cost goods and services cut others' reproductive labour time and the costs of reproduction, further increasing surplus-labour time across society (employees spend less time making food and so have more time to work), and allowing employers-in-general to lower wages. Food sold in and around the village and in the nearby city cuts the reproductive labour time of other labouring class households and of urban middle-class households working for the government or as white-collar employees of larger businesses. So, the production and sale of cheap food increases the availability of labour, reduces wages and lowers reproductive labour time and costs – both locally and for the broader economy.

The few cases of accumulation identified within the villages are mapped in the next section. Although surplus value produced in the countryside was primarily appropriated by urban-based capital, appropriation of surplus value *within* the villages was still significant – mostly through trade, and the charging of interest on agricultural inputs and basic consumer goods. Nevertheless, the villages were relatively socio-economically homogenous with well over 80% occupying similar socio-economic positions as members of classes of labour. Ninety-nine per cent were Sundanese and 100% were Sunni Muslim. All of the farmers in our fieldwork villages, with one solitary exception in each case, were petty commodity producers rather than petty capitalists. The absence of profit was underlined by farmers and sharecroppers alike with an oft-cited phrase: 'hasil ti sawah uih deui ka sawah', which translates roughly as 'the value that comes from the land goes back to the land' (see also White 2018, 2). Nevertheless, as already noted, the value produced in our fieldwork villages' sawah added to absentee landowners' surpluses (by over $5000 per year by our estimate; see below), and so is part of the broader process of capitalist accumulation.

The fact that exploitative activities were mostly pursued by those operating from outside the immediate social context is politically significant as it helps to foster unity within. But collective action in rural settings remains difficult – both due to the long shadow of state violence under Suharto (1965–1998) (e.g. Tornquist 2020), and due to the fragmented nature of simple reproduction. Dependence on capital for wage-labour – be it local capitalists or absentee capitalist landowners – creates its own constraints, and especially so in a context where capital-labour relations are socially embedded over long periods (see below).

Collective claims could potentially appeal to relevant existing laws relating to sharecropping (and absentee landownership) and minimum wages. Better minimum wage enforcement would, though, require simultaneous measures to lessen smaller capital's contribution to larger capital's profit margins, while better implementation of sharecropping legislation would not necessarily improve labour's position if the landowner simply shifted to directly hiring wage-labour, or, in the case of absentee landowners doing so through a farm manager. The impacts, though, might be greater where levels of absentee landownership are more widespread, as they are in our fieldwork villages. Even here, though, they would likely be contradictory in the absence of a broader shift in the balance of class forces.[3] Slower moves in the direction of eroding socio-economic and socio-political hierarchies might be facilitated by greater levels of more labour-intensive

owner-operated agriculture within the kampung, but this would require broad-based access to loans for the hefty start-up costs.

The arguments advanced here are based first and foremost on fieldwork data collected in 2019 and 2020, but the paper sits within a long tradition of research on agrarian change in rural Java. This has documented various forms of exploitation through sharecropping, wage-labour and usurious moneylending (Hart 1986a; Hüsken 1989; Stoler 1977; White 1976, 2018; White and Wiradi 1989; Wolf 1990; or for colonial plunder, see Breman 2015). Pluri-activity, which is central to this paper's findings, has been prominent in Java for decades and carefully documented in earlier studies (e.g. Hart 1986; White 1976). In a recent article charting processes of agrarian change from the late 1800s to the 2000s, White (2018, 14) points out that while processes of differentiation and land concentration within villages and through urban absentee landowners have proceeded, this has 'not produced a large capitalist farmer class' but growing numbers of sharecroppers and pluriactivity *across* social classes – all of which resonates very closely with this article's fieldwork findings. Female homework and the many moves between productive and reproductive labour have also been documented – both in detail (Wolf 1990) and in shorter interventions on women's homework (e.g. Hartiningsih 2000). And the literature has also addressed labour circulation for street-vending, agricultural labour and factory work and analysed their political dynamics over time (Breman 1995; Breman and Wiradi 2002; Mather 1983; Saptari 2008; Silvey 2003).

The paper proceeds with a brief outline of research methods. It then introduces and compares the overall patterns of accumulation and simple reproduction in the two fieldwork villages (henceforth kampungs, or hamlets, as Java's villages are made up of multiple hamlets). The following two sections develop the article's exposition of dynamics of exploitation and social reproduction through discussion of female homework and non-agricultural wage-work more generally and of sharecropping and agricultural labour. A shorter section on moneylending follows these. The final section concludes.

Wage-labour, petty commodity production and capital in two West Java villages

This section's overview of simple and expanded reproduction in the two kampungs sets the scene for the ensuing analysis of mechanisms of exploitation. The next section focuses on homework in Kampung 1 and the following one on agricultural wage-labour in Kampung 2. Street-food production is also touched upon. Readers who are more interested in questions of social reproduction, or of exploitation in agriculture may wish to skip this section. Around 75 hours of semi-structured interviews were conducted by the authors in August–September and November–December 2019. There were 49 household interviews (21% of all households), 12 follow-up interviews and multiple interviews with key informants. Interviews focused on economic activities and relations but extended into life histories and intra- and inter-household socio-political dynamics.[4] Fieldsites were

[3]With thanks to Ben White for making us reflect more on the complexities of enforcing sharecropping laws.

[4]We initially planned to interview 30% of households, but covid-19 prevented this. Not all activities are mentioned during a first interview, and repeat interviews were only conducted with some respondents. Another thorny issue is at what point a migrant ceases to be counted as a member of a household. Those intending to return to the kampung and who send back part of their city wage were included in this paper's household data.

selected after visits to a number of villages in 2018 and 2019. Surveys of all 233 households in early 2019 provided a basis for selecting interviewees according to socio-economic position, occupation, and street and kinship cluster. Covid-19 prevented a third fieldwork phase, but a handful of additional interviews were completed in early 2021.

Kampung 1's greater proximity to the city and urban labour markets, slightly higher levels of PCP, and sparser capital-labour relations, translated into slightly greater socio-political equity. This was demonstrated through the smaller share of paddy appropriated by landowners and the somewhat higher agricultural wages (see below). Expanded reproduction in both kampungs was limited to a handful of households. Outmigration from Kampung 2 was more likely to be permanent than circular. In Kampung 1 it was more likely to be circular. People mostly migrated from the latter to sell street-food and from the former for factory work (see Pattenden and Wastuti forthcoming).

Table 1. Some Characteristics of Kampung 1 and Kampung 2.

	Kampung 1	Kampung 2
Primary Basis of Economy	Mostly non-agricultural, primarily street-food-based	Primarily agricultural
Estimated Total Land	13 Hectares	23 Hectares
Commuting	Higher; closer to city	Lower; further from city
Migration	More cyclical	More permanent
Migration (type)	Street-food sellers (wage-labourer) (over 80%)	Large Factory Workers (Motorbike/ plywood/garments) (majority)
Households belonging to classes of labour (petty commodity producers + wage-labour)	88%	
Among classes of labour, households that are primarily PCP or wage-labour	59% W-L/ 41% PCP	74% W-L / 26% PCP
Petty Capitalist/Capitalist Households (%)	7.9	4.7
Government Employees/ White-Collar Formal with side business (%) (includes retired civil servants)	6.3	4.7
Total Number of Households	126	107

Flows of capital and labour in Kampung 1

Less than 20% of households in Kampung 1 primarily made a living from agriculture. Most of its 5 hectares (12.5 acres) of paddy land (*sawah*) and most of its approximately 8 hectares (20 acres) of dry hilly land were owned by landowners from other villages and from cities (see Table 2). Ten people (five women and five men) rented and managed up to 0.42 hectares in the kampung or in nearby kampungs. Two groups of 4–5 women primarily worked as agricultural labourers and a further handful of men and women worked part-time. Since a prolonged drought in 2017, paddy land had been rented out for 2 kg of dried paddy per bata[5] – equivalent to around 45% of the harvest, and 1.43 tonnes per hectare. Prior to that, sharecropping on a 50/50 basis – known as *nengah* or 'halves' – had predominated.

[5]A bata is equivalent to 14 m^2. 714 bata make up one hectare. 289 bata are equivalent to one acre. During the drought those cultivating through nengah still had to repay landowners for seeds. Under the new system the tenant pays for the seeds, and only pays the landowner after harvest.

Table 2. Land use and forms of rent/sharecropping in the two Kampungs (c.=approximately).

	Kampung 1	Kampung 2
Total amount of land	13 Ha	23 Ha
Amount of Sawah	5 Ha	12
Absentee landownership	c. 2.85 Ha	c. 8.5
Sawah owned by government	1 Ha	0.14 Ha
Sawah owned by Kampung members and average size	c. 1.15	c. 3
Fishponds (Balong).	n/a – c. 50 bata around houses	7 (mostly owned by three absentee landowners)
Amount of Hilly Dryland (mostly wooded)	c. 8 hectares (mostly uncultivated/planted)	4 ha
Amount of Hilly Dryland with absentee landowners	5 hectares	n/a
Known uses of hilly dryland	1.08 Ha rubber; 0.42 Ha coffee; 0.28 Ha Papaya; small areas of banana and cassava.	Bamboo, fruit.
Average number of Paddy-growing seasons	2.5 (50% irrigation in dry season)	3 (river canal-irrigated)
Predominant rent/sharecropping arrangements	2 kgs paddy/bata (~55:45)	Sharecropping on merlima (40:60) or nengah (50:50) basis
Additional cultivation arrangements	Gadai[a]; Tutung[b]	
Land cost	Lower	Higher

Notes: Sawah = wet paddy land; Nengah ('halves', or *parohan*); Merlima ('fifths'); Kiridit (selling goods on credit); bata (local land measurement – 1 bata = 14 m^2. 714 bata = 1 hectare; 289 = 1 acre).
[a]Mortgage: landowner borrows money and gives use of land to lender until repayment occurs, often long-term.
[b]A loan against future harvests and labour (see below).

Kampung 1 residents as a whole *only* owned around 1.25 hectares, and the government owned an additional hectare (*tanah bengkok*), which was rented out in tiny parcels by the kampung's representative on the village council (*lurah*). Nobody made a profit from paddy, which was mostly consumed in the kampung. The largest landholding was less than one-third of a hectare and only five households had enough land to meet their rice needs – a number that drops with each passing generation.[6] The mostly uncultivated wooded dryland provided firewood and fodder and was used by a handful of people to supplement incomes by growing durian, rambutan, banana, cassava, and timber. Two of the three outside landowners used it to grow rubber and coffee.[7]

The outside landowners were mostly *Hajis*[8] who had accumulated from *kiridit* businesses in cities like Bandung, or from *krupuk* production in Sumatra. Krupuk are cassava crisps, while kiridit refers to door-to-door sales of consumer goods on credit at high interest rates – in other words, a form of short-term loan masked by the trading of consumer goods in a cultural context where usurious moneylending involving the collection of interest (*riba*) is frowned upon. From the 1980s to the early 2000s these were the main activities of those who migrated to accumulate. Some went bankrupt and came home empty-handed, some built large houses or bought land on their return, and one,

[6]Putting this in a broader context, 99.2% of households in Kampung 1 were landless or owned less than a quarter of a hectare of sawah, compared to 65% across nine Javanese villages in the early 1980s (White and Wiradi 1989, 278). Stoler (1977, 79) found that 77% of 478 Central Javan households did not have enough land to meet household rice needs. And Wolf (1990, 86–90) found that 89% owned less than 0.57 hectares in her fieldwork village. She characterised the 54% with average landholdings of 0.135 hectares as predominantly proletarian, and those with average holdings of 0.355 hectares (34%) as predominantly agrarian. One to two generations later, our findings simply indicate that the latter have merged with the former, whose landholdings have in their turn become even smaller. In fact Wolf's figure of 89% is exactly the proportion that we found to be predominantly proletarian – in our terms 'classes of labour'.
[7]For a detailed analysis of dryland (*kebon*), see Kosuke et al. (2013).
[8]Mostly better-off and male individuals who had visited Mecca.

who had employed 40 sellers at one point, came home with a clutch of rooms for rent in Jakarta that he still lives from. A few never returned. Instances of k*rupuk* production were fewer and more likely to be attempted in the home area.

The most common form of PCP in Kampung 1 was the production and trading of street food, followed by farming. Non-agricultural labour – within the village, in the nearby city and as migrants – was over four times more common than agricultural labour. The most common form of wage-work in the kampung was female homework – either packing *krupuk* or making toys from balloons. Others worked in small food factories. Construction work, which had been more prominent earlier, was mostly done by older men who had worked on large projects in Jakarta and Bandung before returning home to work on smaller jobs where, according to one veteran construction worker, owners showed them more respect. Younger men now mostly migrated as street vendors, working for the handful of petty capitalist operators from the kampung or nearby villages (see Pattenden and Wastuti forthcoming). There were a handful of higher-waged labourers working locally – mostly mechanics.

Households were involved in multiple activities, with the poorest working in more – typically four or five. One of the poorest households in the kampung was involved in local food factory work, migrant street-vending, home krupuk-packing, and coconut selling, and also ran a small back-street kiosk. A slightly better-off household combined construction work, food factory work, agricultural labour, street-food production and trading, and, as a fall-back, fodder collection from the forest. A still slightly better-off household, which had formerly worked as migrant street-vendors, now mixed home krupuk-packing and toy-making with rubbish collection, animal-rearing and farming on rented land. Another slightly better-off household combined farming on leased land with buffalo ploughing and home toy-making, as well as local construction labour as a fall-back. The best-off labouring household encountered was made up of a young couple who worked as a mechanic and a cake-maker. The best-off PCP household owned 0.14 hectares, leased 0.42 more, raised a couple of goats and traded small amounts of fertiliser.

Table 3. Bases of simple and expanded reproduction in the fieldwork villages.

	Types of Wage-Labour and PCP *in order of individual incidence* (wage-labour unless denoted as PCP).	Bases of Accumulation
Kampung 1	1= Home Krupuk Packer, street-food producer/seller (PCP); 3 Street Trader (mostly migrant); 4 Agricultural Labourer; 5. Farming (PCP); 6. Small food factory (mostly commuting); 7. Construction labour; 8. Home toy-maker; 9. Village kiosk (dry goods) (PCP); 10. Creche worker; 11. Street-food producer (PCP); 12. Private school teacher; 13. Tailor (PCP); 14. Others (2 or less): goat-rearing (PCP); mechanic, musician, security guard, nanny, cashier, parking attendant, garment factory worker, fodder collector.	Cilok production/trade; Kiridit; Krupuk Factory, Private school owner, Fruit and seed producer/trader.
Kampung 2	1. Agricultural Labourer; 2. Part-time construction work; 3. Full-time large Factory work (plywood, motorbike, garments); 4. Farmer (PCP); 5.Street-Vending (city); 6. Street-food producer/trader (local); 7. Home krupuk packer; 8. Small brick-making factory	Shop owner/vegetable farmer, Local kiridit, Contractor, Fish trader, Vegetable producer/trader,

Flows of capital and labour in Kampung 2

The second kampung was beyond comfortable commuting distance from the city. Here *most* households had *primarily* land-based livelihoods, and over two-thirds depended

to some degree on its always canal-irrigated paddy fields, vegetable fields and fishponds. Like Kampung 1 most of its land was owned by a handful of absentee landowners. They were outnumbered by small owner-cultivators, who were in turn outnumbered by those sharecropping the land of the absentee landowners, who were in their turn outnumbered by agricultural labourers who worked both in the kampung and nearby. A similar proportion of Kampung 2's households belonged to classes of labour, but a greater proportion of those households primarily made a living from wage-labour as opposed to PCP: 74% as opposed to 59% in Kampung 1 (see Table 1).[9]

A clear generational divide marked out middle aged and older women and men who mostly worked in agriculture, and younger workers who were more likely to work in factories, as street-food vendors in the city, or as fish workers in the village. The latter was a male-dominated domain that encompassed village ponds and city markets, and touched networks of *premans* – the quasi-gangsters who operate protection rackets, and regulate market space physically and socially.

Petty agrarian capitalism was a little more prominent in Kampung 2. There was a solitary capitalist dryland farmer-trader who usually employed around ten workers (dryland farming required more than twice the amount of labour as rice fields). One of two large store owners also did dryland farming. They were close relatives of a petty contractor-cum landowner-cum fish producer whose wife, a daughter of one of the kampung's two wealthiest households in the 1980s, added to her income as a government school teacher by running a petty *kiridit* business in the kampung. This might be defined as pluri-active petty capitalism, with a number of activities threaded together to facilitate expanded reproduction.

As well as the government teacher, two fishpond managers and a fish trader earned at high enough levels to diversify into forms of petty accumulation, but did not appear to do so, and so are understood here as petty commodity producers rather than petty capitalists. The two fish producers operated in three ways – cash rent, *ical-lepas* (sell and release) that simply involves providing baby fish and selling it when grown, and *cepengan*, which is the fishpond equivalent of sharecropping with the value of fish sales split 70:30 in favour of the landowner. Nearby there was a petty capitalist duck egg trader, two paddy traders and a fertiliser trader who all played a notable role in the kampung (see below).

In spatial terms, there were three types of capitalist operating in and around the kampung: firstly, agrarian traders who accumulate by appropriating surplus vale from kampung residents, and thrive on a relative lack of competition. Secondly, there are those who break out of the confines of the locality to accumulate through networked operations across the region – above all the fish and vegetable traders. And thirdly there are absentee landowners who invest in the countryside as part of a portfolio of accumulation-facilitating investments.

The absentee landowners included a road contractor and builder from the kampung who had long lived in Tasik; a resident of Jakarta whose wife was from the kampung and who owns and rents out rooms and runs a printing business in the capital, as well as owning close to 20 hectares of land in the vicinity of Kampung 2; a civil servant who comes from the kampung but lives and works on the island of Batam; a buildings supplies trader from a nearby kampung; the wife of a former provincial governor and senior

[9]74% and 59% are estimates. The data are accurate for the households we interviewed, but for those that were only surveyed it was not always possible to be sure whether incomes from wage-labour or PCP were greater. The margin for error might be as much as 5%.

military figure (known as 'Ibu Governor' or 'Mrs Governor'); and the family of one of the largest businessmen in Tasik, also from the vicinity of Kampung 2, who had made his mark in passenger transport and sunk some of his excess capital into land. Two of these owned rice hullers kept in a neighbouring kampung.

The three types of capitalist occupy three different social spaces. The locally-focused traders and moneylenders occupy the social space of the kampungs and are very close to the farmers. The absentee landowners mostly occupy middle class and wealthy urban social spaces. The networked fish producers and traders, and their workers, occupy a distinct third social space. Their workspaces tucked away on the edge of the kampung double as drinking dens, with the drinking culture acting as part of a strategy of labour control. Frequent journeys are made to cities across the region where some rub shoulders with urban *preman*. As well as drinking, fishing competitions are often an integral part of this culture. Endang, a three-decade fish trader who says he feels sixteen, employs a local body-builder. While we talk to him an older man saunters in and whispers something in his ear about a haul of fish in a nearby village that is ready for collection. Unlike the limitations of place-based accumulation, this third type has more possibilities, but becoming rich requires negotiating a complicated politics.

Kampung 2 has more *balong* (fish ponds) than Kampung 1 and over double the amount of sawah. Nineteen out of 23 hectares of land in Kampung 2 are used for paddy and fish production. Around two-thirds of the land is owned by the five absentee landowners. Of the one-third that is owned by kampung residents, the largest holding is 0.42 hectares and the average is around 0.14 hectares. An owner-cultivator with 0.14 hectares may earn $11.7 (160,000 IDR) for each day of work (over treble a labourer's income) but his *average* monthly income is not enough to survive let alone accumulate. The kampung's PCP farmers sell labour-power as much as buy it. This does not mean that there is no exploitation by farmers in the kampung. There are two *badegas* who go regularly to take care of water levels in the sawah, mostly at night. They also fix bunds, hoe, and harrow, and are paid one-tenth of the harvest. Over three-quarters of paddy produced in Kampung 2 is sold – generally as wet paddy that traders from nearby kampungs collect direct from the fields.

Non-agricultural labour: homework in the interstices of social reproduction

White (1976, 275) found that women in a Central Java village worked a total of 11.1 hours per day in 1972–1973. Women in this article's fieldwork villages reported working for up to 16 hours in 2019, with the bulk of the difference being due to increased time spent on wage-labour and petty commodity production. This adds weight to one of this article's central arguments about how the dynamics of capitalism have increased surplus labour time through low-paid pluri-activity. It is this appropriation of time from classes of labour which allows petty capitalists – the main employers of those in our fieldwork villages – to stay afloat in the Indonesian economy, and helps larger capital increase profits and compete in the national and global market-places.

Women are disproportionately affected. Wage-labour in Kampung 1 was immediately notable for its low wages, especially women's wages (see Table 4). Lower wages mean that a greater amount of surplus value is extracted from women relative to men. And women's surplus labour time is also lengthened by the extension of their working days across the spheres of production and reproduction (see below). Within the latter

women prepare and repair children and husbands for the workplace. Reproductive labour, in other words, is foundational to capital accumulation and conditioned by patriarchal ideology as well as capitalist dynamics (see Pattenden forthcoming).

Women's working days encompass reproductive labour, petty forms of self-employment related to street-food production, and wage work. Unlike in Kampung 2 where agricultural labour predominated, the most common form of wage-labour in Kampung 1 was female homework – in the form of krupuk-packing and toy-making (see Table 2).[10] While factory work was preferred by those whose children had grown up, or those yet to become mothers, homework facilitated frictionless movement between childcare, housework and the labour process without any spillage of potential labour time during journeys to work. Homework allowed small capitalists to squeeze wage-labour into the interstices of social life and the pauses in reproductive labour when household tasks abated. In doing so they expanded surplus labour time, pushed down labour costs, and stayed afloat on a perpetual high tide of competition.[11]

As well as wage-work in their homes, women were also involved in petty commodity production – above all the production and sale of street-food, which reduced the reproductive labour time and costs of others. And so women workers, as well as the daily and intergenerational provision of workers for capital through their own reproductive labour, and contributions to capitalist accumulation as low waged workers, also reduced others' reproductive labour burdens, thereby increasing their availability for wage-labour and lowering the costs of capitalist reproduction in general.

Table 4. Wage-Rates in Kampungs 1 and 2 arranged from lowest to highest.

	Median number of hours of work for a full-time worker	Estimated hourly rate[a]
Home-based krupuk-packing (female)	10 hours (piece-rated)	2750 ($0.2)
Creche Work (female)	2.5 hours (time-rated)	2887 ($0.21)
Home-based Toy Making (female)	9 hours (piece-rated)	5333 ($0.39)
Female Agricultural Wages	5.5 hours (mostly time-rated)	6672 ($0.49)[b]
Krupuk Factory Dryer (male)	14 hours (time-rated)	7143 ($0.52)
Construction Labour (male)	8 hours (time-rated)	7500 ($0.55)
Male Agricultural Wages	5.5 hours (mostly time-rated)	9090 ($0.66)[c]
Large Factory Worker (Plywood, Tasik)		9808 ($0.71)
Street-food-vendor (commuting)	8 hours (piece-rated)	10,000 ($0.73)
Cake-Maker (female)	8 hours (piece-rated)	10,000 ($0.73)
Minimum Wage		10,986 ($0.80)[d]
Construction Mason/Carpenter (male)	8 hours (time-rated)	12,500 ($0.91)
Parking Attendant	12 hours	$1.21
Car Mechanic	9 hours	$1.62

Notes: [a]Rate is based on median reported daily wage divided by median reported number of hours. The hourly rate for homework is derived by cross-referencing homeworkers with greater/lesser reproductive labour burdens, and also with those who pack *krupuk* in factories. Rupiah dollar conversion based at 13, 750:1 in accordance with prevailing rate at the time of fieldwork.

[b]Female agricultural wages vary. Cash wages for transplantation and weeding ranged from 25,000 with snacks to 45,000 without, rising in villages closer to the city. Per day in-kind harvest wages once dried and husked ranged from 32,000 in Kampung 2 to 64,000 closer to the city Other complexities include whether lunch is included or not, whether the fish provided is dry or fresh, and whether there are coffees and cigarettes.

[c]Male agricultural wages also range quite widely – with and without snacks, and between places.

[d]This figure is an average of the 2019 minimum wages for the two districts (kabupaten) where fieldwork was conducted (Ciamis and Tasik Malaya). Accessed 4 February 2021. https://www.antaranews.com/berita/770328/berikut-daftar-umk-di-jawa-barat-2019#:~:text=Gubernur%20Jawa%20Barat%20Ridwan%20Kamil,%2FM%20Agung%20Rajasa%2Fkye.

[10]In contrast, homework was just starting in Kampung 2. A handful of women had started to pack crisps in August 2019 shortly before we began interviews.

[11]There is a long history of this type of work in Indonesia and beyond. See, for example, Hartiningsih (2000) and Wolf (1990).

G*orengan* and *cilok*[12] made in the kampung mostly found their way to school gates and the urban periphery. This both lengthened the working day of pluri-active labouring class households in the kampung and trimmed the overall reproductive labour time of the city in ways that are differentiated by both gender and class. The less well-off were more likely to prepare food for others, while the better-off were more likely to buy food. The transfer of surplus labour time is by now hard to unravel between reproductive labour and the labour process, but amongst the jumble of 'reproductive' and 'productive' labour time, there is a transfer of reproductive labour from the working class to the middle class, as well as from women to men.[13]

Homework wages were the lowest wages in Kampung 1 and subject to an estimated 20% cut by two intermediaries (one inside the kampung, herself a packer, and the delivery man). The disparity with the wages of men who worked in the krupuk factories (that supplied the krupuk for the women to pack) was much greater than the disparity in agricultural wages. In part, this was because homework is relatively invisible – most of those involved were identified as housewives in our survey (see Mies 1982), and also highly individualised. But perhaps more than anything the low wages were due to the way that homework slipped seamlessly in with women's reproductive work.

Most of those involved in homework – whether as krupuk-packers or street-food makers – get up around 3.30 am. Novi gets up at 2 am because the reproductive labour burden of caring for an infant is even greater than caring for a husband and older children, but also because a significant part of her husband's wage is lost through helping his mother make interest payments to the moneylender she has been in debt to perpetually for nine years. Novi squeezes ten hours of tedious wage-work into her 16-hour working day, sealing 2000 plastic bags with the flame of an oil-lamp, at the rate of one every 20 seconds. Her daily wage brings her an income of $1.45 (20,000 IDR). And within her other six hours of work she washes her husband's clothes and prepares the meals that propel him through a 14-hour working day in the factory.

Then there is Eli. She does two types of homework – krupuk-packing and balloon toy-making. Her husband has a morning job collecting rubbish from the market on the edge of town. Afterwards, he spends three hours looking after goats obtained by looking after others' goats (a kind of goat 'sharecropping'). They also breed a handful of chickens and marmots, selling eggs and meat. In addition, the two of them cultivate 1/14th of a hectare of *tanah bengkok* exclusively with their own labour, which provides half their annual rice needs.

Eli gets up at 3.30 am and fits nine hours of balloon work into her day, as well as some krupuk-packing. On the days when she does both, she subcontracts parts of the process out to neighbours. She earns 48,000 ($3.49) for nine hours of toy-making, and 15,000 ($1.09) for five hours spent sealing 1000 small krupuk packets. Interestingly she admits that she does not need to work as much as she does – she and her husband make 100,000 ($7.27) per day on average – more than is required for everyday needs. She says that she is 'used to working'. It seems that the ease with which homeworking fits into a day of housework and childcare normalises long working days in ways that would not be the case for those who work outside of their homes. Eli never seems to stop – neither when she is talking to the authors nor on the many occasions, we pass

[12]Deep-fried vegetables and cassava dumplings.
[13]Wolf (1990, 98) makes a similar point.

her house. Homework disciplines the working body in a particular way, conditioning it to work during idle moments.

Aldora does over seven hours of wage-work, and over 4 hours of petty commodity production and trade every day as well as all of the housework tasks. Her husband's contribution to household costs is limited, and Aldora has become accustomed to long working hours, in part due to supporting her daughter's higher education. She prepares three different types of street-food in the hours before dawn, during the afternoon and in the evening before she sleeps. After praying and preparing breakfast she packs krupuk until midday prayers. In the afternoon she does two and a half hours working at a creche reading the Koran to children. A series of moves between krupuk-packing, housework and street-food preparation follow before the working day ends at 10 pm. Five hours of krupuk-packing are squeezed in overall, and, like Eli, she sub-contracts crisp packing to neighbours on days when reproductive labour burdens are higher. On these days, surplus labour time spills out into cracks and crevices of potential surplus labour time elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Those one step further down the chain receive a lower income and the main packer keeps up with her usual quota.

These are some of the ways in which the multiple moves between reproductive labour and the labour process stitch wage-labour and petty commodity production into the rhythms of reproductive labour to maximise surplus labour time. Returning to the article's starting point of exploitation, surplus value is extracted from the labour process and distributed along commodity chains and across society. Reproductive labour not only underpins this by providing workers for the labour process, but is interwoven into the labour process and the dynamics of surplus value distribution. The initial positioning of reproductive labour in a linear formulation (reproductive labour→ labour process→surplus value extraction and distribution) is re-worked to become a much more messy dynamic where reproductive labour seeps into the chain of surplus value extraction and distribution, altering the dynamic as it works its way through social life. The linear relationship between reproductive and productive labour has been lost, and while reproductive labour and productive labour maintain their analytical distinction, they are no longer discrete.

Beyond homework

Besides homework, migrant street-vending is the most rapidly growing form of wage-labour in the fieldwork villages. It is not always distinguishable from street-vending PCP or petty capitalism. Most street-vendors who sold locally were petty commodity producers because they produced what they sold. Most migrant street-vendors, on the other hand, worked for petty capitalist producers and earned a piece-rate daily wage (see Wolf 1990, 53; Pattenden and Wastuti forthcoming).

Food factory work has long been a prominent form of wage-labour for those commuting within their local area. These are small factories producing krupuk in most cases, but also cakes, sweets and cheese-sticks. Cake-making was mostly done by women who did not yet have children, sweets were made mostly by teenage boys and girls, and cheese-sticks and krupuk mostly by men in their late teens and twenties. Wages of between 80,000 and 100,000 required working days of up to 14 hours. Cake-making factories paid slightly higher wages – perhaps because cake-making was less competitive than krupuk-making and profit margins were higher for what was a luxury item. Of the

almost 90% of households in the two kampungs that belonged to classes of labour, only 10% accessed higher-waged work that surpassed the minimum wage and provided noticeably higher living standards (e.g. better furnished or slightly larger houses) and allowed households to pursue fewer jobs and work shorter days.

Disguised wage-labour in the fields: sharecroppers, labour gangs and absentee landowners

In predominantly agrarian Kampung 2, iniquitous sharecropping was the primary mechanism of exploitation. It was above all through this that absentee landowners extracted surplus value, traders appropriated it, and inequality and poverty were (re)produced. Over three-quarters of the kampung's *sawah* is cultivated on a sharecropping basis and sharecroppers from the kampung (known locally as *panyawahs*) cultivate almost as much again in surrounding kampungs. Transplantation and weeding is mostly done by female labour gangs, which are criss-crossed with kinship connections. The mostly male sharecroppers hoe, harrow, fix bunds, manage ploughing, make the transplantation lines, spread fertilisers, and maintain water levels. Men and women harvest and thresh together, and women dry the paddy.

Capital-labour relations

With the exception of one or two better-off sharecroppers who do not play a significant role in the labour process, sharecroppers are for all intents and purposes disguised wage-labourers. They shoulder the strains of management, wait four months to be paid, and are in effect tied to particular *kotaks* (fields or 'squares' of land) for the duration of each paddy season. Most sharecroppers work with agricultural labourers from their household, and many work as agricultural labourers for others as well as doing the 'male agricultural tasks' on the land they sharecrop.

Most work the same fields for many years, and in many cases 'inherit' them from parents. Some families had been cultivating the same *kotaks* since at least the 1960s. Sharecropping provides stable access to wage-labour at rates of around 45,000 per day (see Table 4) for around 108 days per year for a sharecropper of around 0.42 hectares but spread over more than double the number of days given the repetitive part-time nature of much of the work. The wage rate was lower than the usual casual wage rate for male agricultural labourers.

On a day-to-day basis, sharecroppers' responsibility for managing labour sharpens the focus on intra-labour relations and obscures those between labour and capital. Landowners off-load the stresses and strains of paddy cultivation and sub-contract out the intensification and extension of the working day to the exploited classes themselves in the form of the sharecropper. If the crop fails, the sharecropper faces greater losses – of both time and money. And by holding down the sharecropper's share, the owner pushes down agricultural wages as a whole, even providing advantages for other capitalists who feed their labour process into the gaps in the working day that remain, and into the deficit in simple reproduction that leaves labouring class households stretched across multiple forms of wage-labour and petty commodity production (see above).

It was noted earlier that more remote Kampung 2's steeper socio-political hierarchies were manifested in lower agricultural wages and the appropriation of a greater share of

the crop by landowners.[14] The latter was around 45% in Kampung 1, but close to 50% or 60% in Kampung 2 depending on whether the sharecropping arrangement was *nengah* (halves) or *merlima* (fifths).[15] Merlima, which has slightly higher levels of surplus labour appropriation (see Table 5), was more likely to be imposed on slightly worse-off sharecroppers. No reference has been found to merlima in other studies, but nengah (also referred to as *parohan*) has been widely reported elsewhere (Ambarwati et al. 2016, 281; Blackwood 2008, 26; Pincus 1996, 153). Some respondents linked the emergence of merlima, which reduces the sharecropper's share to 40%, to landowners increasing their share of the crop to offset the costs of clearing land after nearby Galunggung volcano erupted in 1983.

Labour relations at harvest time were also different across the Kampungs. The distribution of paddy was more opaque in Kampung 2, and there were more harvesters, which increased the pressure to accelerate (intensify) the process. The longer periods spent weeding in Kampung 1 may also indicate less intensive working patterns. In addition, the constant supply of canal-water in Kampung 2 led to a more staggered harvest, which increased the availability of labour and decreased its bargaining power. Where many fields are harvested in the same week, fewer labourers are available and landowners' bargaining power decreases.

An overview of the estimated distribution of value within the paddy chain helps to frame the ensuing discussion of mechanisms of surplus-value extraction from sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and, to a lesser extent, PCPs. If land is sharecropped on a *merlima* basis, as most is, the owner gets close to three times as much paddy as the sharecropper, or over double in the case of *nengah* (see Table 5). To lay bare the inequalities involved, for a day spent procuring inputs and overseeing the distribution of the harvest on 0.28 hectares of land, absentee landowners receive 85 times more than a female agricultural worker's daily wage. Their profit from one hectare is around $2000 per year (see Table 5). For one of the larger absentee landowners with landholdings reputed to be around 10 hectares, this amounts to close to $20,000 per year ($40,000 for the one reputed to hold 20 hectares), although the average is closer to $10,000 in Kampung 2 and $5000 in Kampung 1 where absentees' landholdings tended to be smaller. Kampung 1 was closer to the city and there were more prospective buyers in nearby kampungs.

The sharecropper's costs vary depending on how much work he does, whether or not pesticides or herbicides are needed, whether or not he can manage without hiring male labourers, how many times weeding gangs need to be hired, how much bunding work there is, and how much work is done by family members who are less likely to be paid with cash and instead receive paddy for the family pot at harvest time. Most, but not all, sharecroppers buy inputs on credit (Table 5 assumes that they do), which increases costs, and, last but not least, harvest wages vary depending on the size of the bowl, and the relative size of bowls (kobak) and buckets (ember). Grain is collected in ember, and the embers are then sub-divided by the sharecropper into a certain number of

[14]The difference between the kampungs is not as high as it first seems as there is somewhat more harvest work in Kampung 1. Here the bulk of paddy is carried to homes and dried and the relatively small share of paddy that is sold is sold dry. In Kampung 2 most of the paddy is sold as wet paddy directly from the fields. Most of what is not sold are labourers' in-kind wages.

[15]2–2.4 tonnes per hectare. Rents for Kampung 1 were lower than the norm in the early 1980s, while rents in Kampung 2 were higher (White and Wiradi 1989, 279). *Mertelu/morotelu* (see Ambarwati et al. 2016, 281; Hart 1986, 179; Hüsken 1989, 324) had predominated earlier.

bowls for each labourer/labouring couple. In Kampung 2 some labourers said they got 1/12 of the harvest and others said 1/15 (the table uses a figure of 1/14th).

Our figures for the shares of value appropriated by traders are based on what farmers and sharecroppers received from the village paddy traders, what a large trader/miller in

Table 5. Distribution of Value in the Paddy/Rice Commodity Chain: Estimated Distribution of Value from 0.5 Hectares (357 Bata)100 Bata Paddy Per 4 month Season in US Dollars.[a]

			% of Value	Daily Wage (where appropriate)
	Value of median yield of 2.32 tonnes wet paddy as dry rice in consumer markets (using ratio of 70% dry=100% wet)	1167	100	
Petty Capitalist/ Capitalist Trader	Approximate Value to Village Paddy Trader including drying and transport costs	$117	c. 10	
Capitalist Trader/ Miller	Value to Miller in Tasik	$117	c. 10%	
Capitalist Trader	Value to Wholesaler	$117	c. 10%	
	Approximate share of value spent as trader/ miller costs – transport, machinery, labour to dry, mill and load paddy		5%	
Petty Capitalist/ PCP Market Trader	Value to Market Trader in Tasik	$117	10%	
Capitalist Landowner	Value to owner on Merlima basis (60% share)	$342[b]	29.3[c]	
	Value to owner on Nengah basis (50% share)	$308	26.4	
Labourer Sharecropper	Value to Sharecropper on Merlima basis: 40%	$120[d]	10.3[e]	$2.94 per day (40,434 IDR), rising to $3.32 (45652) is wife's wage is unpaid).
	Value to Sharecropper on Nengah basis: 50%–)	$146	12.5	$3.57 per day (49,130 IDR), rising to $3.95 (54,347 if wife's wages are unpaid).
Labourer[f]	Value to *all* labourers on either merlima or nengah basis	**$128**	11	$2.25 per labourers per day (31,000 IDR).
PCP/Labourer	Value to Owner-cultivator	**$480[g]**	41.1	$11.70 per day (160,869 IDR).

Notes: [a]Assuming 6 quintals per 100 *bata* sold at 420, 000 per quintal of wet paddy (Nov 2019 price), and with 1/14th subtracted for harvest labour.

[b]The cost of land and related transactions are not included here as land prices appreciate over time, further expanding the discrepancy between landowners and labourers.

[c]This is an approximate figure based on multiple interviews. The exact arrangement varies between different sharecroppers and landowners. Sometimes with nengah, the costs of seed and fertiliser are equally split between them, sometimes the owner pays for the seeds and the sharecropper for the fertilisers. And with merlima sometimes the fertiliser costs are split equally, but sometimes they are split on a 40:60 basis – the same proportions as the division of the wet paddy. This figure of 29.3 is based on an estimate of expenditure of 678, 300 IDR for inputs and 53, 550 land tax per half hectare. The figure of 26.4 in the next row is based on estimate of expenditure of 249, 900 for inputs and 53, 550 land tax per half hectare.

[d]Based on an estimate of 11.5 days per 100 bata per season based on 0.5 days for managing ploughing, 0.5 days for spreading fertiliser twice, 1 day doing lines for transplantation, 3 days of bunding, levelling and hoeing, 2 days harvesting, and 2 hours+ per week managing water levels for 16 weeks (4.5 days). When added to around 88 hours of female labour, the total labour time is similar to figures calculated by White and Wiradi (1989, 285) for several Javanese villages.

[e]Figure of 10.3 based on estimate of 161,000 IDR spent on inputs on credit and 240,000 IDR for transplantation and 1 time weeding + 150,000 for ploughing. Figure of 12.5 in the next row based on estimate of expenditure of 315,000 on inputs on credit + 240,000 for transplantation and 1 time weeding + 150,000 for ploughing. Input costs were of course not uniform. Some sharecroppers spent an additional 30,000 IDR on pesticides and herbicides ('obat ali'). Seed and ploughing costs also varied. Fertiliser costs also vary significantly depending on whether you buy with a Kartu Petani (Farmer's Card) or not. The cost with a card is 65% of the open market price. For farmers applying fertiliser twice this is as much as 4% of the harvest. In Kampung 2, some farmers had cards, but in Kampung 1 it seemed that there was systematic corruption going on. Those pressing for cards were being paid off with cash. The former lurah, the kampung's leading figure during much of the New Order regime, seemed to be the lynchpin of this operation.

[f]Gang of four women working one day on transplantation, one day on weeding, and two days on harvest – one day cutting and one threshing, paid with wet paddy, which labourers dry at home.

[g]Assuming he does all male labour (11.5 days) and buys inputs on credit.

Tasik who sourced paddy from the area around Kampung 2 told us he paid to those same traders, and then what he sold on to wholesalers for, and what consumers pay in the market. The bottom line is that all of the labourers and the sharecropper combined received around 22%, the four traders in the chain around 40%, and the landowner a shade under 30%, with the rest going on the labour and machinery costs of traders, millers and tractor/plough owners.

The distribution of value between landowner and sharecropper are estimates as almost no two owner-sharecropper relations were exactly the same. The only rule is that landowners' spending on inputs is slightly more with merlima and the distribution of value less fair. Sharecroppers are always responsible for ploughing and all labour costs, so the variations centre on who pays for fertilisers and seeds.

As well as being more likely to cultivate on a merlima basis, poorer sharecroppers are also more likely to buy inputs on credit (usually from the paddy trader but sometimes from the landowner), and lose a greater share of income to interest payments. This amounts to as much as 10% of their income (at an interest rate of 112% per annum). Squeezed by the input trader on one side and by the landowner on the other, some sharecroppers get caught in long-term debt. For one such sharecropper, the mental pressures of managing both production and his own debts were worse than the physical pressure. Meanwhile, land sales were an increasing source of revenue for the area's landowners, with prices rising rapidly in 2019. Sharecroppers in Kampung 2 informed absentee landowners about pieces of land coming up for sale.

Both forms of sharecropping run contrary to the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law and Law 2/1960, which sets out shares of costs and outputs and prohibits absentee landownership, and the 1959 Share Tenancy Regulations Act, which stipulates that production costs should be shared in the same proportions as the sharing of the crop (Ambarwati et al. 2016, 266; White and Wiradi 1989, 282). The still high proportion of land cultivated on a merlima basis in Kampung 2 related to landowners' greater bargaining power in a place where landlessness was high and urban labour markets relatively inaccessible.

Intra-labourer relations

The squeezed sharecropper squeezes others in his turn. In his capacity as a mini labour contractor, he may push the labour gang to complete weeding more rapidly and he might delay wage payments to reduce the need for cash outlays. This is most easily done by maximising the share of planting and weeding work done by female household members whose wages can be withheld until harvest time. After labourers receive their wet paddy at harvest time, women dry it at home, which takes at least two days during which time they have to keep a careful watch. If they don't then gusts of wind can blow away part of their wages, and chickens can literally peck them away at them. Though not arduous, drying paddy is stressful.

In this 'poverty chain', then, the sharecropper, and especially the poorer and more socio-politically disadvantaged among them, claw back some of what has been lost to capitalist exploitation by pooling the wages of those with even less socio-political power – above all those of his own female family members. Intra-household dynamics and varying degrees of dependence and control between sharecroppers and landowners all play a role in the details of labourers' conditions. But while relations between

sharecroppers and daily wage-labourers take centre stage, the fundamental contradiction between capital and labour is obscured.

Sharecroppers can also easily squeeze labourers' share of the harvest because their bucket (ember) and the labourer's pot (kobak) vary in size, obfuscating the distribution. One female labourer claimed that the sharecropper with the biggest ember distributed paddy with the smallest kobak.[16] This particular sharecropper, one of the best-off in the kampung with no siblings and three sons working in a Yamaha factory, did little work in the fields herself, which was unusual among sharecroppers.

An older labourer whose advancing years and slowing work-rate restricted her work-days only received enough paddy to last her two weeks, meaning that she had to buy rice for 14 weeks per season. Other agricultural labourers hardly had to buy rice at all between harvests, indicating that they worked around 180 days per year including in nearby kampungs. Rather than indicating relative wealth, their higher incomes often indicated greater poverty and difficult intra-household relations. Epong, a woman in her fifties who had been an agricultural labourer from the age of 12 and whose son-in-law and daughter were severely underemployed, worked through increasing joint pains in part to feed a neglected grandchild. She underlined how every day she waited for the *muezzin* to call time on the day's exertions by signalling the start of midday prayers. It is Epong's evocation of the everyday grind of exploitation – the effects of which are physically intensified as the morning advances and the years of agricultural and reproductive labour progress – which gave rise to this article's title.

Nevertheless, underemployment was widespread. A middle-aged woman in Kampung 2 whose ability to work was restricted by health problems commented that 'work is hard, but no work is worse'. And on this, it is notable that the amount of more labour-intensive vegetable farming had declined. Profits are up to 10 times higher than paddy farming but more erratic due to price volatility and pest-vulnerability. Poorer households are excluded by the high start-up costs, and most others can't ride out the bad seasons even if they maximise family labour and delay wage payments.[17]

The rice harvest, as the agricultural labourer's single largest wage-payment, reflects not only the social relations of production within the kampung but also broader relations in the area, region and country. Rice harvests channel more local dynamics of political economy (see Stoler 1977; White 2000), with the harvest shares received by agricultural labourers ebbing and flowing over the decades, as well as varying within the same village at a particular point in time – by as much as ten-fold (White 2000). And Hart (1986a, 290) has persuasively argued that growing levels of exclusionary harvest arrangements in the late 1960s related to the brutal suppression of progressive agrarian movements in the 1960s, which shifted socio-political dynamics in landowners' favour.

The erosion of wages through usurious moneylending

Usurious moneylending took a variety of forms. In Kampung 2, it was mostly concealed behind socially acceptable activities such as paddy and input trading, duck egg trading

[16]White and Wiradi (1989, 286, 289) have also noted the existence of different harvest shares in the same village. See also Hart (1986); Pincus (1996, 100–126); Wolf (1990, Chapter 2). But above all, see White (2000) where in a wide-ranging review of literature shares as disparate as 1/5 and 1/36 are referred to.

[17]Up to 38.6 million IDR per year on 0.14 hectare.

and sales of consumer goods. Here, further from the city, intrusions by outside moneylenders were more conspicuous, and so moneylending was largely internal to the village – an important reminder that there were still elements of exploitation *within* the village, even though surplus value was more mostly appropriated from the kampung by outside capitalists.

Several forms of moneylending were identified, mostly involving forms of *ijon* (tied sales) that allowed the village's petty capitalists to chip away at the incomes of labourers and petty commodity-producing farmers. Most farmers and sharecroppers in Kampung 2 borrow from the paddy trader for inputs with the amount being deducted on the day of the harvest in a system known locally as 'yarnen' – an abbreviaton of '*dibayar panen*' or 'paid at harvest'. The appropriation of interest is partly concealed by a price 'adjustment'. Some landowners lent to sharecroppers for the same purpose, claiming it back with interest, like the paddy trader, at harvest time – a moment when trader, owner, sharecropper and labourers assemble in the fields to divide the spoils. One landowner, a former road contractor and sometime paddy trader, was said to be particularly willing to lend money for inputs, with one of his sharecroppers losing around 10% of his income to the resulting hidden interest payments.[18]

Input traders located close to Kampung 1 also advanced agricultural inputs on credit. One elderly construction worker now struggling to make ends meet had borrowed the inputs to produce kale, which can be harvested seven times in a season. The input trader took the first two harvests as repayment and interest, and turned his nose up at the third, citing a glut, prompting the farmer to give the kale to his neighbours to feed their goats.

The second form of moneylending in Kampung 2 involved two women selling consumer goods to poorer families on credit at twice the going rate. Both were closely related to one of the kampung's handful of capitalists and were part of what had been one of the village's two wealthiest families in the 1980s. The third form of moneylending identified were loans made through duck egg trading. A moneylender from a neighbouring kampung began by providing ducks, which debtors paid for (with interest) by collecting eggs. Further loans were paid for the same way – the moneylender concealing the interest rate by paying for the eggs at a rate 25% below the market rate. Reputed to have 50 egg suppliers, the duck egg trader could be estimated to be making around 2 million rupiah ($145) a week in interest payments hidden, quite literally, in egg baskets.

One of the poorest sharecroppers, ensnared in long-term debt to the duck egg trader, said that he divided his money between 'the duck man' and his family. His working day had been further extended as he now slept in the *sawah* every other night to guard his ducks and their eggs. As a sharecropper who receives harvest payments every four months he is considered credit-worthy – unlike the poorest agricultural labourers in the village who struggle to meet basic needs, but who are still targeted by those selling consumer goods on credit. We never found clear-cut evidence of what we suspect was a fourth form of moneylending: loans of rice made against future labour by better-off sharecroppers and some petty commodity producing farmers – in effect advance wages in kind that can nudge down production costs by lowering wages.

[18]And of course this emerges from long-term personalised forms of patronage and control between sharecropper and landowner (e.g. Blackwood 2008, 27–30).

Classic high-interest informal moneylending through *Kosipas* (short for Koprasi Simpan Pinjam)[19] declined in prominence during the fieldwork period due to a microcredit operation that had set up three groups in Kampung 2 in 2019 and 2020, with over 40 members, and one group in Kampung 1 in 2020 with 20 members. Women were loaned around $150 over a year at an interest rate of a little over 20%. Nevertheless, a few of the poorest households in Kampung 1 still owed money to *kosipas* at interest rates that spanned from 180% to over 400% depending on the duration of the loan – anything from daily repayment to eight weeks. Different agents touted the different types of loans on different days of the week in what seemed to be organised incursions. Those caught in debt were losing somewhere between five and ten percent of their incomes to interest payments.[20]

We received information indicating that up to 10% of the poorest households in Kampung 1 had been in debt to *kosipas* until recently. PKH cards,[21] which entitle poor households to a range of government social payments, were taken as security, jeopardising their quarterly government payment.[22] One of the moneylenders' agents' tactics was to visit small kiosks and offer to help the owners expand and modernise their stock. A shopkeeper who had been in debt for nine years had earlier been used by a moneylender to draw other people into debt. Her tiny back-street shop could not keep up with the interest payments, so she regularly drew on the wages of two of her sons, taking around a quarter of what they earned. Perhaps it was a conscious move on the part of agents to seek out those with wage-earning children as potential long-term debtors. In this case, as well as transferring part of her sons' wages to the moneylenders, she also involved most family members in krupuk-packing, extending their working days in a bid to keep up with payments.

Three other forms of moneylending were identified in Kampung 1, all of which related to agriculture. First, there was *gadai*, which is when a loan is made in exchange for the use of a piece of land until the loan is repaid (a mortgage). The second is called *tutung* and was identified in Kampung 1 through the widowed sister of men who had migrated to East Java to set up a kiridit business. She was a petty capitalist by proxy who also leased in land cultivated exclusively with hired labour. *Tutung* involves a relatively large loan set against a number of future harvests – typically 10.[23] The loan is usually repaid after three harvests, meaning that seven harvests acts as interest at a rate of over 50% per annum.[24]

[19]Koprasi Simpan Pinjam roughly translates as Savings and Borrowing Group. They were encouraged by Indonesia's first President Sukarno, but over time became increasingly controlled by individuals and came to resemble informal moneylending operations.

[20]This is a rough estimate – the upper figure assumes half a week of male agricultural labour and a full-time krupuk-packing income, and the lower figure assumes a combination of street-vending and krupuk-packing incomes. Interest rates also varied, and so the estimate is based on an average of the shortest-term 24 day loan, which had the highest rate of interest (50,000 per week), and the longest term 10 week loan with the lowest rate of interest (25,000 per week).

[21]Short for Program Keluarga Harapan or Family Hope Programme. Ironically the PKH system includes measures to facilitate access to credit.

[22]PKH facilitates free access to education up the age of 18, to some amount of healthcare, to a monthly payment of 110,000 for buying rice (enough for 11 kilos), and to small payments for the elderly and those with disabilities.

[23]In the case we identified, the loan was 10 million for an area of 0.14 hectares. Other informants indicated smaller loans for smaller pieces of land, indicating that interest rates increased as the amount advanced declined – as was the case for moneylending by outside actors.

[24]See Hart (1986b, 687) for discussion of a similar arrangement in central Java whereby two-thirds of the crop is yielded for a specified number of seasons.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to analyse socio-political dynamics and material conditions in contemporary Indonesia by comparing the specific forms through which 'unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers' in a predominantly agrarian and a predominantly non-agrarian village. It has focused on two central dynamics of exploitation: (i) the extraction of surplus labour from labourers through sharecropping and agricultural wage-labour and (ii) the expansion of surplus labour time, lowering of labour costs and transfer of reproductive labour time through female homework and, more generally, pluri-activity, which involves the extension of working days across multiple precarious forms of wage-labour and petty commodity production. These, it has been argued, are central to broader dynamics of accumulation in Indonesia and beyond. Globally over 60% of labourers work informally (ILO 2018) and pluri-active labouring class households, including small farmers, make up the majority of the population in the Global South (Pattenden 2016).

Reducing surplus labour time and increasing wages requires analysis of capitalist (re)production in general, and the ways in which larger capital appropriates surplus value *through* smaller-scale capitalism, as well as transfers in reproductive labour from pluri-active classes of labour, and above all the women among them. It also requires analysis of the particular forms of patriarchy in contemporary Indonesia. This is less intense than in countries where residence is usually patrilocal and inheritance patrilineal, and perhaps less obvious in ideological terms than was the case when the New Order regime (1965–1998) pumped out crude hymns of 'housewifeization' (Blackwood 2008, 32–3; Robinson 2009, 5), but still central to contemporary capitalism's systematic underpayment of wages to women and to the longer hours of surplus labour extracted from labouring class women in the spheres of production and reproduction (Pattenden forthcoming).

As noted at the outset, usurious moneylending and the exploitation of wage-labour and sharecroppers have been widely documented in Java (Hart 1986; White and Wiradi 1989), as has female homework, both in Indonesia and beyond (Hartiningsih 2000; Mies 1982; Wolf 1990). This article has assessed these dynamics at the turn of the 2020s in villages where landlessness, pluri-activity and non-agrarian forms of reproduction, have become even more pronounced.

The means through which unpaid surplus labour is being 'pumped out of the direct producers' in the predominantly non-agrarian village no longer primarily take place through agriculture, but in the more agriculture-oriented village labour exploitation is channelled above all through sharecropping and often linked to concealed forms of moneylending embedded in personalised relations. The oppressiveness of the forms of exploitation on display, and their clear material consequences, remind us how far removed Geertz (1963) was from 'the actual *relations* of production' (emphasis added) and their 'specific political form' (White 2000).

Gillian Hart (1986a) located her fine-grained analysis of labour relations in the Javanese countryside in Indonesia's broader political economy. The rise of more oppressive forms of labour relations in the late 1960s reflected broader realignments of the distribution of power after the United States-backed government-led massacres of between half a million and a million people (some leftists, many not) in 1965–1966.

Over half a century later, Indonesia has still not shrugged off this legacy, and the ripples of activism that fanned out over the decade after Suharto's demise have largely been calmed.

Given that exploitation is primarily external to rural villages, and the internal social structure is relatively flat with nearly 90% of households in this article's fieldwork villages belonging to of classes of labour, there is clearly vast latent potential, in spite of the world-historical pressures of Indonesia's evolving position in the global economy, to challenge the mechanisms of exploitation identified in this article. And although it has been pointed out above that the impacts of increasing implementation of existing legislation might be contradictory, an intensified focus on sharecropping and the wages paid to pluri-active classes of labour could provide a basis for organising in rural Java, and might disrupt the existing dynamics of accumulation and exploitation.

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