



# **RESISTING EXPLOITATION BY ALGORITHMS**

Drivers' Contestation of App-based Transport in Indonesia

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# Methodology

Field research in October-December 2019 and January-May 2020



## GO-JEK & GRAB

Focus on two major app-based transport companies



## SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW & FGD

(1) Indigenous drivers; (2) app-based drivers; (3) app-based driver communities, associations, and unions; (4) representatives from trade unions; and (5) researchers and activists.



## LOCATION

- Jakarta, Bekasi, Cikarang, Depok, Bogor, Serang, Bandung
- Represent over 50 percent of total app-based drivers in Indonesia



## ANALYSIS

Power resources approach (PRA): (1) Associational power; (2) structural power; (3) institutional power; (4) societal power.



## CASE STUDY

The Aerospace and Transportation Workers division of the Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers' Union (SPDT-FSPMI)

# Context and technological change

1. The rapid growth of motorbike taxi (ojek) in the past decades
2. The development of smartphone
3. The increasing number of precariat





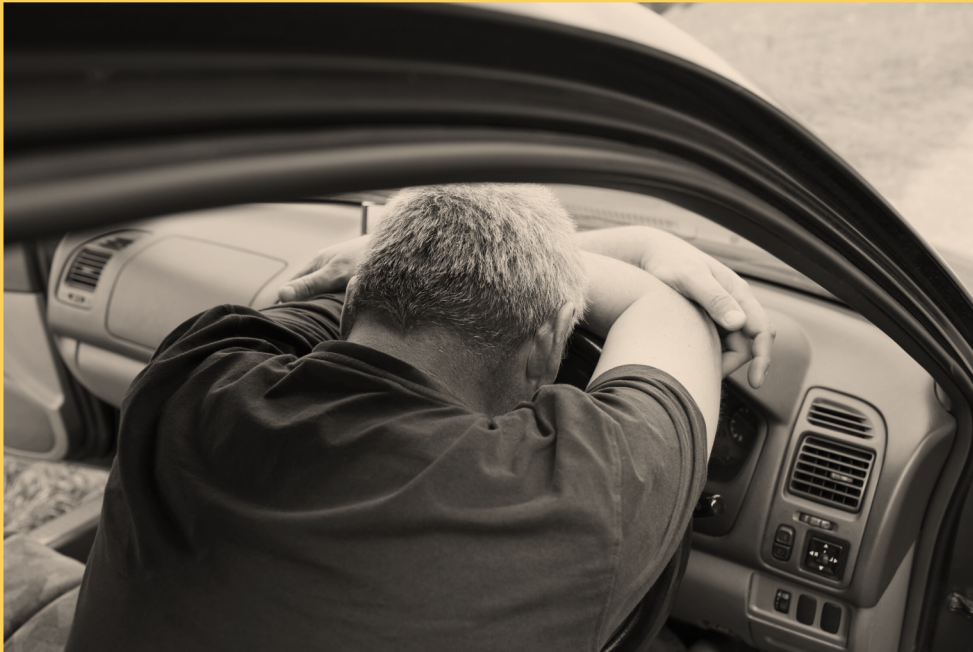


# The emergence of app-based transportation and discontent

- Go-Jek, Grab, and their expansion
- Horizontal conflict between indigenous transport and app-based drivers
- Legal controversies and power relations



# ARE APP-BASED DRIVERS MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS OR PRECARIAT 4.0?



**APP-BASED  
TRANSPORT FIRMS  
CLAIM:**

*“Drivers are micro-entrepreneurs; they work for themselves... they’re free to take orders whenever they want, or not”*



# Impact of the rise of app-based transportation

- **Domination by app-based transport companies**
- **Imbalance in bargaining power**
- **Algorithmic labour control**
- **Occupational safety and health problems**



# Drivers' organising strategies

And ways of building associational power



Community



Association



Unions

# RESISTANCE

1. → REPERTOIRE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION AND DRIVER MOBILISATION
2. → ALGORITHMIC RESISTANCE
3. → NETWORK AND ALLIANCE BUILDING



# IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- IMPACT ON DRIVERS

- INSUFFICIENT  
RESPONSE BY THE  
GOVERNMENT AND  
THE COMPANIES

- DRIVERS' INITIATIVES

# FEMALE GIG WORKERS

- ONLY SMALL NUMBER OF APP-BASED DRIVERS ARE FEMALE, MOSTLY WIDOW OR SINGLE-PARENT (BREAD WINNER IN FAMILY).
- FEMALE GIG WORKERS ARE PREDOMINANTLY IN OTHER SERVICES SUCH AS HOME-MASSAGE, CLEANING SERVICE.
- VULNERABLE TO SEXUAL ABUSE BY CUSTOMERS.



# HOW COULD GIG WORKERS ACHIEVE MORE BARGAINING POWER?



- RECOGNITION OF APP-BASED DRIVERS AS WORKERS WHO ENTITLED TO LABOUR RIGHTS;
- A SPACE OF NEGOTIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

# CONCLUSION

## TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND THE RISE OF APP-BASED TRANSPORT

→ Emanates predominantly from business interests rather than societal necessity.

## STRUCTURAL POWER AND DISRUPTIVE POWER

→ Drivers' organisations are aware that they occupy a strategic point in the production of app-based transport

## SOLIDARITY-BUILDING AND MUTUAL AID AMONG DRIVERS

→ This demonstrates drivers' great potential through their significant associational power resources





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**THANK YOU**

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