

# The Strategy of Survival Family Poor Migrant in Surabaya: A Preliminary Study

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## Abstract

Surabaya as a metropolitan city becomes the main attraction in the surrounding rural population. Its seen by large number of newcomers to the city of Surabaya. One of the problems faced by the city is amount of poor migrants. Poor migrants usually work in the informal sector which is not fixed, they do not have permanent residence and their income are erratic. The welfare programs initiated by city government don't reach them for not having Surabaya identity cards. But apparently they're already having a feeling of home and desire to always come back to Surabaya. For that conducted a qualitative study of five poor migrant families in Surabaya for a month in mid-July to August 2012. As a result of study is that they work in the informal sector with an erratic income and they have to give aways part of their income for families in the village. Therefore the strategy of survive living in Surabaya in Surabaya is a) to reduce spending on food, clothes, health and housing, b) to establish social relationships with friends and etc, c) usually to have long working hours.

**Keywords:** strategy, survival, poor migrants, metropolis, Surabaya.

## Introduction

Surabaya as a metropolitan city in Indonesia would be an attraction in the vicinity for the poor because it seems to provide hope and opportunities for better employment opportunities by getting better wages than in their homeland. No doubt a big city with a diverse infrastructure with an office building, magnificent building houses, modern shopping center definitely need enough manpower to serve a variety of needs. For example, for the maintenance of buildings, infrastructure (office buildings, hospitality, etc.), domestic service and serve other needs.

However, unlike what is imagined seekers who are not armed with a special skills are not easy to get employment opportunities in the city without anyone to guarantee trust. For example, as construction workers need specialist skills and confidence assurance of a particular person. That is because many of the cases in large cities such as theft and other crimes are committed by stranger. Therefore, migrants from outside the region is not easy to get a job even though there are job opportunities. The cost of living in the city of Surabaya is quite higher than in their homeland. It was certainly a matter of the poor immigrants on how to survive living in the big city.

Another problem faced by poor migrants in big cities is that they do not have any identity card so that they citizens generally are not reached by the Surabaya social service programs (education, health) as if they were a resident of the city of Surabaya. Even for a place to stay they generally build a non-permanent houses on vacant land owned by another person that can be evicted by the owner anytime. Or they live in with friends, family or boarding house with by low rents so they have to move from one place to another.

Therefore in this paper will be described "How to survive poor migrant survive living in the city of Surabaya". This paper is a literature review and the results of qualitative research conducted on poor migrant families living in Surabaya by taking the case of the five families of the working poor as a vegetable vendor or melijo, scavengers, and concurrently guard labor, traditional masseuse and vending coffee drinks, instan noodle, etc.

## Poverty in urban areas

One issue that anthropologist is the problem of poverty in urban areas. Although the city has adequate infrastructure to fulfill the needs of its citizens but there are certain groups that have not worth living life for human being. Oscar Lewis observed daily lives of five families in slums areaa in Mexico City and his findings then formulated in "the culture of poverty". According to Oscar Lewis (1966), the culture of poverty characteristic are: a) a high mortality rate and low life expectancy, b) low levels of education, c) low participation in social organizations such as trade unions, politic and others; d) do not or rarely take part in medical care and other welfare programs, e) little use of city facilities such as shops, museums, banks f) low wages and low job security; g) the level of work skills low; h) does not have a savings or credit; i) does not have supply of food in the house for tomorrow; j) of life without privacy; k) often do violence such as beating children; l) marriage is often based on consensus so divorce and child abandonment often happens; m) rests on the mother's family, n) authoritarian family life, o) submission to fate or fatalism, p) amount of complex hypermasculinity among men and marty complex among the mothers.

The number of poor in the city is still quite large. According to data from the Central Bureau of

Statistics (2010) in Indonesia, the poverty rate in the city is less than the poverty rate in rural areas. Here is the poverty rate in urban areas from 1996 to 2010:

Number and Percentage of Poor People in Urban Area (1996-2010)

No	Tahun	Number of Poor People (in millions)	Number of Poor People (%)
1	1996	9.42	13,39
2	1998	17.60	21.92
3	1999	15.64	19,41
4	2000	12.30	14.60
5	2001	8.60	9.76
6	2002	13.30	14.46
7	2003	12.20	13.57
8	2004	11.40	12.13
9	2005	12.40	11.68
10	2006	14.49	13.47
11	2007	13.56	12.52
12	2008	12.77	11.65
13	2009	11.91	10.72
14	2010	11.10	9.87

Source: Statistics Indonesia, 2010.

According to data above, the percentage of the urban poor in Indonesia in 2010 has decreased. However, qualitatively the poor in large cities still alarming. Just like in Surabaya, although the city has conducted programs to reduce poverty, but there's still qualitatively poor people whose condition is very alarming. For example, some cases of malnutrition and certain diseases common among the poor, street children and beggars who were still at crossroads, and the lack of a decent place to live in a slum like vacant land with poor conditions. Similarly, poor migrants of who live with a simple home built on made vacant lands owned by others or occupy empty housing left by the owners.

Poverty is divided into two types absolute and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is condition of a person's or a family's income is not enough to fulfill basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education and health (Thee Kian Wie, 1981). According to the World Bank based on a study of 20,000 people from 23 countries poor, that the poor people identified by several issues, such as: a) life and livelihoods, b) the location or place of residence; c) physical limitations, d) gender e) the social relationship, f) lack of security; g) hardness of power; h) powerlessness institutions; i) weak community organizations, j) the weak ability.

The problems faced by the poor result in a) a low level of health, malnutrition due to lack of food and unhealthy eating patterns that are susceptible to disease with low immunity, b) low intelligence and low levels of education. c) ill-equipped residence in the area of health as settlements with inadequate infrastructure, d) often happened violence and human trafficking. Based on data from the Agency for Community Empowerment (Bapemas) and Family Planning in Surabaya, in 2011 the number of poor families (GAKIN) in Surabaya in 2011 reached 112,465 families or 449,860 people (<http://www.vistapulsa.com>).

### The Strategy of Living Survival

The Strategy of Survival is a series of measures, measures in order to survive living. In this case, how the efforts, actions of urban poor to survive living and to fulfill in meeting the needs of life in the big city. According to Malinowski (in Ihromi, 2006) the basic human needs such as food, reproduction, feeling well (bodily comfort), security, relaxation, movement and growth. Just like urban domestic households money for the necessities of life bought with money. Just like the need for decent living in Surabaya Rp 1.257.000,00 (<http://apakah.net/umk-di-jawa-timur-tahun-2012/>). Therefore the minimum wage adjusted to Surabaya decent living (compass-com). But many city residents who receive lower wages even poor migrants generally earn low and erratic. They generally work in the informal sector.

The informal sector is a term used in economic development with basic Characteristic low-wage employment, small scale, easily accessible by anyone, no stability employee and employer relationship, do not get attention from the authorities (see Todaro, 1969; Banerjee, 1983). For example, newspaper hawkers, shoeshine, small businesses and others. According to the ILO (1976) the characteristics of the informal sector are a) easily accessible by any one, b) reliance on local resources, c) family ownership, d) operation on a small scale; e) labor intensive, using adapted technology, f) skills acquired outside the formal school emergency, and g) unregulated and competitive.

Many poor in large cities are entering employment in the informal sector with an erratic income. According Mitullah Winnie (1991), that in Nairobi survival strategy for the poor in the city are working in the

informal sector by working as hawkers or street vendors who are mostly women who assisted her children. The food vendors with small-scale activities and limited capital. Living costs averaging around U.S. \$ 14 per month and the income is uncertain. The traders allocate very low proportion of its profits to improve their businesses and savings. Mostly allocated for subsistence need or the need of food everyday. In running business most of them do not have any special skills. More than half of the vendors started their business without the skills so that they learn while working. For example, in Zimbabwe as poverty increases, the number of women working as prostitutes in order to survive and fulfil daily needs (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/afric>).

In this paper, informal sector activities are easily entered by economic activity does not require any special requirements such as education; income is erratic, not touched by the formal rules of government and erratic working hours. Informal sector activities carried out by taking the case of poor migrant families guard who doubles as a laborer, a traditional masseur, scavengers, vegetables vendor or *melijo*, and vending coffee drinks, instant noodle, etc.

## Results and Discussion

This study took five cases of poor migrant families in Surabaya. Five families even though sometimes there who earn above the minimum wage in Surabaya over Rp 1257.000,00 but still have poverty of cultural identity. They come from villages with low education only elementary school graduate and some have never been to school, do not have special skills, stay at home which is not worth for human being as passengers in an empty house, build a simple shelter in vacant lots, ride in a warehouse salvage collectors, and rent place of boarding at a bargain price. The five poor migrant families consist of traditional itinerant masseur, vegetables vendor or *melijo*, scavengers and the security guard who doubles as a manual laborer and vending coffee drinks, instant noodle, etc. Problem faced by among others are, income that is uncertain, the demands of life in the city which is quite high, they "re required to set aside money to send to his village. Here is a table of average income and housing poor migrant in Surabaya:

**Table 2. Characteristic Informants**

No	The job categories of informant	The average income per day (in Rp)	Dwelling in Surabaya
1	Scavengers or <i>pemulung</i>	20.000	Warehouse ride in the junk collectors.
2	Guards and unskilled laborers, housemaids	50.000	The empty house which was left by the owner.
3	Traditional masseur or <i>Tukang pijat tradisionil</i>	30.000 - 100.000	The empty house which was left by the owner.
4	Vegetable vendors or <i>Melijo</i>	50.000	Renting room Rp 125,000.00 / per month.
5	Vending coffee, tradisioni food, instant noodles and so on	50.000-75.000	Build simple shelter on land owned by others

Sources: Research, August 2012

As scavengers that scavenge the items in the trash who earn average income Rp 20.000,00 per day work approximately nine hours (5:00 to 15:00) Another case with a security guard who works for eight hours of work in accordance with the time schedule. In the free time, especially during the day he works as unskilled laborers. He works as a security guard at residence which earn regular income every month Rp 650.000.00 plus the uncertain work during leisure time. His wife as a housekeeper earn an income Rp 600.000,00 per month. Thus earning roughly Rp 1,250,000.00 to support four family members. Another a traditional masseur has higher more income, the average massage services once Rp 30.000,00 for three hours. Income could reach Rp 100,000.00 per day, especially at the beginning of the month because many people who use the services.

Although some of them earn high income but their lifestyle can be identified poor people because of the culture of poverty characteristics. For example, residing by moving empty damaged houses, build a shelter on empty less livable, only vegetables vendor or *melijo* who rents a simple room with a rent Rp 125,000.00 per month. Although the vegetables vendors earn erratic income sometimes even suffer losses if the commodities in the market suddenly increases while the buyers are not ready to face rising prices so that consumers typically reduce spending. Others with *Mbah Di*, a grandfather, 65-year-old widower who had been left by his wife who died about ten years ago. He lives with her son who works as a pedicab driver and resides in empty land covered with only plastic sheeting so that if there is wind, rain enter straight into the room. As a migrant from the village Sepoko, Magetan come to Surabaya with his wife in 1991 and come to Surabaya to sell food and beverage serving workers in the construction of residential buildings. His income now now is felt enough to spend for food and he can still send little of his earning to his family in the village. Sometimes there's a lot of debt and people who do not pay then just disappear. But now even there's only a little sales turnover by selling coffee, instant noodle, cigarette, and etc. He can earn revenue around Rp 50.000.00 to Rp 75.000.00 per day.

Issue of poor migrants who came to Surabaya is an uncertain income, highly depend on the physical

condition and they are required to set aside income for his family in the village. For that to survive in Surabaya they have a strategy for allocating income and social actions that support to survive living in the big city, and send some of their earnings to the village. Here's a survival strategy of migrant poor in Surabaya:

**First**, to minimize expenses for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and health care at the destination. Generally they are less thought of that environment, healthy diet can affect the health. Instance-paced lifestyle, practical and not thinking of social prestige. Like scavenger who earn income Rp 20.000,00 per day, for everyday needs of food feeling enough with eating vegetables and side dishes purchased for Rp 3000.00 per day. Cooked their own groceries simply by boiling vegetables and frying side dishes. This was done in order to save costs, they can saving and send money to relatives in the village. As said Maria, a woman who has been scavenger for five years, we usually cook daily meals everyday, spend 300 grams of rice per day, most vegetable side dishes with sauce or *sambal*, *tempe*, or salted fish, ride in warehouse thrift who invites collectors to Surabaya”.

However, different food consumption patterns to a security guard who lives with his family in an empty house uninhabitable work, as a security guard use his spare time to work as laborers, such as painting and menial job. The job. While his wife work as a housekeeper at the nearby estate. As said Kanto: "To eat everyday if ever there is enough money to buy a good meal at a coffee shop at the same time, but if there is no money we eat what my wife what his wife cooked at home. For grocery shopping we spend Rp 10.000.00 to Rp 20000.00 for needs of eating four members of his family ". However Atun as vegetables vendors or *melijo*, for she usually cooks the rest of the vegetables and side dishes which not sold that day.

Conditions of living place with less worthy does not matter as it does need to pay or has cheap rent. Therefore sometimes they have to move from one place to another, especially those who live in the empty houses which were damaged and left by its owner, build shelter in empty land, and rent room. Conditions of living place are unsuitable for many having mosquitoes, and flies which can carry certain diseases. But they never feel sick or just feeling of and tired dizziness. To treat the disease usually they buy medicines at drug store or ask a friend of one profession. Even a traditional masseur aged 73 years and serve at least three people everyday say, she”s never feel sick. During her 15 years stay in Surabaya, he usually took drugs from village she usually took drugs from her village because her son in the village who works as a registered nurse. To fulfil the needs of clothing they usually do not need to buy because given by the people around housing.

**Second**, to establish social relationships with both the profession and fellow residents in the vicinity. Poor migrants establish social relationships with friends with same profession.. It is important to help each other when need helps. As one security guard said: "I must have a good friendship with a friend or fellow migrants profession in order to help each other when sick or need other helps. For example, when the security guard’s leg got hurt because heavy iron fell on his leg, the one that took him to alternative medicine, doctor was garbage collector who knew him well. Similarly, a scavenger from Jember said, if she”s ill she will ask a same profession friend who stayed together with her. Social relations are also conducted with employers, the people living in housing where they conduct their activities. From these people they will usually get sympathy so that assigned a job, clothes, food, gifts during the holidays and so on. As said Surip, traditional masseuse: "I was coming home from Jember bringing souvenirs such as *terasi*, crackers for my customers. I usually put a souvenir at their gate. Usually customers immediately contact me asking for a massage. "Similarly thing done by the vegetables vendor or *melijo* :” I already have lots of customers on this estate, they usually call me to order the goods.”. To maintain good relations with her customers, she sells the good stuff at a reasonable price so that customers do not need to bargain the price. The kindness of the customers shows by sometimes giving food things to her.

**Third**, working with unlimited time and usually long working hours The poor migrants usually work long hours to fulfil daily need. For example, amid the busyness as a security guard he worked as construction workers or other jobs. Sometimes its finished the at afternoon or evening. Similarly, women vegetables vendor or *melijo*, usually at 24.00 leave her house to the Keputran market to buy merchandises and it takes f approximately 15 kilometers to get there. Although she already has customers, she must be careful to buy cheap merchandise in order to make a profit. At 05.00 a.m., she is out of the market towards its customers to peddle merchandise until 12.00 noon and get home at 13:00. *Melijo* activity takes more than 12 hours. Similarly to scavengers a women, she starts activities at 05.00 a.m and then walk around the estate to scavenge garbage which were able to be sold. The distance, she usually travels day can reach 30 kilometers or even more, and she takes break at noon only one hour for lunch and rest. At 15.00 pm, she arrives in barn collectors then sort goods, she has collected until before sunset.

## Conclusion

General it”s not easy to stay alive for the people in Surabaya if they don”t have enoug income. They usually have small and uncertain income, although there are also people who are earning more than minimum wage in Surabaya. But they have a culture of poverty characteristics as said by Oscar Lewis. The problem is, they are required to give part their their income to their families in the village. Based on in-depth study conducted on five

poor migrant families working in the informal sector in Surabaya. The strategies to survive living include: a) to save or minimize costs of the needs of daily meals, clothing, health and housing, b) to establish social relationships with same profession friends of the profession and residents surrounding as place to conduct activities; c) usually have long working hours.

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