

The Meaning of Home after Internal Migration for a Local-Based Community in Jakarta

Aris Masruri Harahap

Akademi Komunitas Presiden, Indonesia

Jl. Ki Hajar Dewantara, Karangasih, Kec. Cikarang Utara, Kabupaten Bekasi, Jawa Barat 17530

Email: aris.harahap@gmail.com

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***Abstract.** In the context of urbanization in Indonesia, home for migrants is often associated with a place where they will return after leaving. This idea becomes even clearer on Lebaran Day. At that time, many of those who left their homes will do their biggest effort to come home and meet their loved ones at home. It is not to mention people from Lampung who join a local-based community called Komunitas Anak Lampung Selatan (Community of People from South Lampung) or KALS. These people left their hometown for Jakarta in the spirit of accumulating economic capital. This essay discusses the meaning of home for migrants by using KALS as a study case in the context of urbanization in Indonesia. As the analysis shows, the home for KALS is not unified as it involves different places. Since KALS came to Jakarta to gamble their fate, the successful or unsuccessful effort in economic capital accumulation in Jakarta also plays an important role in the meaning construction of homes for KALS. Those who are satisfied with accumulating economic capital tend to see Jakarta as their current and future home. At the same time, they see Lampung as a home to which they will return on special occasions like Lebaran Day which means it is only temporary. However, those who are not satisfied with accumulating the capital tend to see Lampung as a home where they will return permanently in the future and see Jakarta as merely a temporary home.*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the tradition of coming home is almost inseparable from those who had left their hometowns. It is because home is often associated with a place where people will return after leaving. Coming home has become a tradition for people, especially during a moment of long break like Lebaran Day. Homecoming on Lebaran Day, for example, has become an annual phenomenon in Indonesia which is often referred to as *mudik* flow in which millions of people move simultaneously from big cities like Jakarta to rural villages like in

Central Java or East Java. At that moment, those people are on their way home by using any kind of means of transportation ranging from mass transportation like buses, trains, and airplanes to private transportation like cars and motorcycles.

In a couple of days before and after Lebaran Day, the landscape of big cities like Jakarta instantly changes. In those days, cars that have been occupying the streets of Jakarta suddenly they are gone. They are used by the owners to return to their hometowns. Furthermore, the cars with plate licenses of B (Jakarta and its satellite cities: Depok, Bekasi, and

Tangerang) parked in front of a house seemed to indicate that the person who left the house to work in Jakarta has become a 'successful person. In line with this, Yulianto (2011) even argues that the practice of homecoming on Lebaran has been used by the migrants as a moment to show off. The possession of a car, for example, reflects a certain lifestyle and symbolizes one's wealth and modernity therefore it can boost one's social prestige and status. Surprisingly, renting a car for homecoming is a consequence of this. For some people, it has become common practice so they can achieve the recognition of being successful when they return to their hometown.

As the center of economic activity in Indonesia, it is no wonder that Jakarta has become a priority for the state government. As a result, Jakarta has much more excellence than other regions in Indonesia. In this case, Jakarta has been seen as the most favorite destination in the process of urbanization in Indonesia (Romdiati dan Noveria, 2006). Apart from the city bias in national development policies, Rustiadi and Panuju (1999) explained that there is also another factor which is rural poverty which then triggers the migration to Jakarta (2). Therefore, it is also no wonder that Jakarta is seen as a promising land to change many people's fates. The change of fate here is all about the accumulation of, borrowing Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) term, the economic capital. To say the least, economic capital is anything from what people have that can be converted into exchange value or money (47). In the process of accumulating economic capital in Jakarta, a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood may

arise from people who come from the same region. To give an illustration, a local-based community named Komunitas Anak Lampung Selatan (Community of People from South Lampung), or KALS for short has been established to unite those from Lampung Selatan (South Lampung), Lampung Province in the land of hope, Jakarta. KALS was established in 2010 by a man from Lampung Selatan named Deddy Iskandar. By the year it was established, KALS can be considered a newborn community. However, the idea of uniting the people has been long in Deddy's mind and some informal gatherings have been done by him and his friend years before KALS even exists. The name of Komunitas Anak Lampung Selatan (KALS) was firstly used and went public through social media, Facebook, in 2010. Now, it has more than 42.000 members on Facebook and around 250 members in real life.

Besides the sense of brotherhood or sisterhood that emerges like in what happened to people from Lampung above, another significant thing also happens. It is about the meaning of home for the home that is left behind in Lampung and also the home in the new space, Jakarta. Furthermore, in the process of capital accumulation, these people gradually make a new home in Jakarta. This act subsequently influences the meaning of home in Lampung. However, the meaning of home for KALS is not only affected by the movement from Lampung to Jakarta. KALS itself is a group of Diaspora and most of them are descendants of people from Java Island who migrated to Lampung following the

transmigration program run by the Indonesian government.

The state of the diaspora in any person or group of people can become more complex if another movement or migration takes place. The more they move, the more complex the state of diaspora. Besides that, migration can also influence the meaning of home as it can become ambiguous and uncertain resulting in various types of home (Cangbai and Siu-lun, 2007). It is not to mention KALS. Using a case study that is taken from KALS, this paper discusses the meaning of home after migration for KALS. The focus of the discussion here is to unpack the complexity of the concept of home in the light of diaspora, migration, and capital accumulation.

METHODOLOGY

This is qualitative research that uses an ethnography approach to get data related to the topic under discussion here. The techniques used are direct interview, deep interview, non-directive interview, and direct observation done by a researcher (participant observation). The period of collecting the data started from September 2016 until May 2017. There are four informants from KALS who help me in collecting data. They are Deddy (33 years old), the founder of KALS; Endi (27 years old), the current chairman; Tomy (38 years old), member; and Huda (25 years old), member. To begin this research, I collected information about KALS from Huda. We went to the same university when we were pursuing our undergraduate degrees. He mentioned some names that are important figures in KALS; they are Deddy, Endi, and Tomy.

Therefore, in the next stages of this research, I will use four of them as my informants. I was aware that there are hundreds of members in KALS but I hope that the four informants could represent what is in KALS. In addition, Huda also introduced me to KALS' Facebook page which later I asked to join it. Through Facebook, I approached Deddy, Endi, and Tommy personally, and then we chatted via Facebook. Moreover, it was via chat on Facebook the first time I explained that I wanted to know more about KALS for academic research.

In our first meetings, I introduced myself and also what I was doing. I explained to each informant that our interview was being recorded. Even so, I put my recorder near them. I stated clearly what I was going to do. The intention of all these was that I wanted to get trust from them and that I had nothing to hide. In so doing, each of them was aware of all information, stories, experiences, and hopes that they shared with me. When I was sure that they trusted me, I could start asking them. In conducting my interviews, I used the way Ann Gray (2003) conducted her interviews with her informants in her research about women and VCR technology. In this regard, she considered the use of stories as very important and can help us understand 'the process of culture and meaning in society (107). Hence, the purpose of our interviews is that I want to get life stories from all of my informants. However, I did not want any stories. Since the objective of this research is to uncover the meaning of home, I was eager to dig information about the home from them.

From the beginning, I felt a little bit worried that my informants could not follow where I was going. So, at the beginning of our interviews, instead of asking them questions like 'what is home for you?', 'what are the criteria?', 'what makes you feel at home?', etc. which directly point out the objective of this research, I brought the issue of home by telling stories about myself regarding the meaning of home. I told them about where my family lives now, my education, my work, my hopes, where I live now, how can I get to Jakarta and its stories, and others. I was open to them. In other words, I was hoping that they could be open to me while hoping that they could join in the conversation, and then they would tell their stories. Indeed, I had some questions in mind prepared before I met my informants. However, since they were likely to open up to me after I explained the purpose of this research and tell them my stories, each informant was very supportive. They knew where I was going and they told me lots of stories about their childhood stories, love stories, family story, the history of KALS, their aspiration for the future, and even stories about crimes, conflict, and communal violence in Lampung, and others. The point is that the life stories of my informants are very important in the analysis of this research. The focus of the life stories in this research is on each informant's experience and aspiration regarding their life before and after they left their hometown in Lampung.

In defining the use of 'experience' in ethnography research, Ann Gray stated that experience is an important epistemological category that can be used

to know both ourselves and others (25). To say the least, when people tell their experiences of something in the past, we can get lots of information about them. To understand one's experience extensively and to make a 'good research' based on it, Gray suggested that we need to theorize experience. In other words, we need to see the experience as an articulation by the people in which their identities and subjectivities can be theorized from it. Besides trying to get information from informants' experiences, I also tried to get information from what my informants plan for their future. This is relevant because planning the future is muchly related to the hope or dream that the migrants had in mind when they decided to leave their home in Lampung. Furthermore, the current life condition of the migrants in the new space also takes part in constructing the meaning of home for these people. Therefore, by collecting information about the past, the present, and the future, the notion of home, hopefully, can be understood more extensively.

In processing the data, the first thing I did was listen to the recordings and then make a transcript from the interview. Atkinson (1993) said that in analyzing the data we need to divide the transcripts into fragments and then regroup them by themes (in Gray, 2003: 148). In this regard, I divided the stories into three categories: (1) stories about their past including the reasons behind their decision to leave Lampung, (2) stories about their current life including the process of capital accumulation, and (3) their aspiration towards the future. Then, the data entered the interpretation

process. The interpretation itself is a theoretical reflection process in which we try to understand the data regarding the themes that emerged related to the topic under discussion (147).

DISCUSSION: The Meaning of Home for KALS

In the era of globalization, people's movement from one place to another place or some places is a very common situation. The research conducted by Melani Budianta (2015) showed that people's movement or migration is possible due to the 'migration of capital' from one place to another place even if the place is in another country (4). In other words, the people are eager to follow where the capital goes. The movement of people from one place to other place(s) will eventually create a state of diaspora for the people.

In the context of Budianta's research, one of the two groups studied is a group of a mixed family consisting of Indonesians and Filipinos who now reside and work in Singapore. A rather similar situation like the mixed family happened to KALS. In the context of KALS, their parents migrated from several regions in Java Island to Lampung in a spirit to better themselves following the transmigration program run by the Indonesian government. Phillip Fearnside (1997) showed that since the era of Soekarno's leadership, the transmigration program in Indonesia has been seen as an important project. In different forms, it has been seen as a centerpiece of the development program for Indonesians (554). As the Indonesian government promised, the transmigrants would have

got some land to manage. These people saw this as an opportunity to better themselves. In the spirit of capital accumulation, they –who later became parents of sons and daughters who join in KALS – were willing to leave their homes in Java. The homes that are under discussion here are related to the 'roots' of the people. All of them are related to where they came from and also their parents. In other words, it is all about the past.

The state of diaspora is getting more complex when we see KALS as a community that emerged in Jakarta following the urbanization trend in Indonesia. If the parents were allured by the Indonesian government's promise of land to manage, the kids were allured by the glittering Jakarta in the spirit of urbanization. In the context of urbanization in Indonesia, Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia has become one of the main destinations for people all over the country to 'gamble the fate'. In this regard, Jakarta is often considered a city full of hope by many Indonesians and it is also seen as a space that seems to be able to change the people's fate. Furthermore, as the Jakarta Government reported, each year there are about 45.000-50.000 people from other regions come to Jakarta to gamble their fate (Kompas, 2016). This number convinces us more that Jakarta is seen as a city full of hope or a city full of dreams and these people are pursuing their 'Jakarta dream'.

The interesting thing from the situation mentioned above is that people are willing to leave their homes, in the case of the parents of people in KALS in homes on Java Island and for people in

KALS in homes in Lampung, to change their fates in the belief that economic capital is worth to pursue.

1. Jakarta Dream: Changing the Fate

The spirit of changing fate has created internal migration of people from Java Island to Sumatra Island, especially Lampung, following the transmigration program run by the Indonesian government. Among them are parents or grandparents of KALS. However, not all of them were successful enough in changing their fate. This has created another internal migration within Indonesia's region. Although it has similarities with the previous one, this one is not a migration that is accommodated by the government. This one is a migration that is more voluntary as the people in movement use their own expense and without any promises from the government. Following the movement of capital, KALS decided to leave their villages for the biggest urban space in Indonesia, Jakarta; still, in the spirit to better themselves just like what their ancestors did.

In one of our interviews, I happened to ask Deddy about his decision to leave his village in Lampung to go to Jakarta in the first place. When telling the story, Deddy showed me his smile a few times and also laughed. It seemed to indicate that it is a funny or, maybe, a silly story. No matter what it is, he still remembers the details of his coming to Jakarta which is about fifteen years ago. The moment was very memorable for him. According to his admittance, the main reason he went to Jakarta was that his love was rejected by the girl he liked. The rejection is because he is not the son

of a wealthy family. After the rejection, he then asked his mother's blessing to permit him to come to Jakarta. He wanted to show the girl that he could change his fate.

Changing the fate is the subject of interest among other informants when they decided to leave Lampung for Jakarta. Tommy, on another occasion, told me that he decided to come to Jakarta to get a job. When he first came to Jakarta, he was still very young. He did not even finish his education at the Junior High School level. He tried to be independent since he was very young. His story illustrates how he was so reluctant to ask for money from his parents. He preferred to work to get money to fulfill his own needs including his education. However, his view of education gradually changed as he got older. He later thought that education did not help his family much as he could not help his parents' economic situation. At that moment, he decided to come to Jakarta to get a job. A rather similar situation happened to Endi. Although his family's financial situation is much better than Tommy's, as Endi managed to finish his education at the Senior High School level, he thought that by coming and then working in Jakarta he could be a 'successful' person. Perhaps, compared to the previous three, Huda has a much better story. He has an older brother in Jakarta who has a company run in the culinary sector. His brother has become an inspiration to him and hence he wanted to stay with his brother and work for him. He wanted to be like his brother, a successful person.

2. Jakarta vs Lampung: The Past, the Present, and the Future

As studies suggest, home is much related to the past and also to the present (Somerville, 1992; Sarup, 1996; Rapport and Dawson, 1998). The home is understood as 'roots' for people and also associated with pleasant 'memories' while the present is understood as associated with a home as 'shelter' which is a physical structure that gives protection to oneself and also as 'abode' which is anywhere where one happens to stay. These all mean that the past and the present of people play important roles in the study of home. The past tells lots of information about the people's history of life while the present tells lots of information about the current life of the people.

Life in the present day has an influence on people in KALS regarding home. In this case, the home has a different meaning for each informant. Those who seemed already satisfied with their current life in Jakarta tend to see Jakarta as both a current home and a future home. At the same time, they tend to see Lampung as a 'romantic home' and a 'place of nostalgia' where the stories and memories of the past linger in their mind and where the loved ones are left behind. In this case, we can take Deddy and Tommy as an example. This kind of attitude is determined by the fact, that compared to the other informants, each of them already has got a decent job and already owned a house in Jakarta. These two factors determine the meaning of home in this new space. I thought I could understand their position. Since they left their homes in Lampung to gamble their

fates in the spirit of capital accumulation, why would they leave what they already achieved in Jakarta while putting their future at risk? Consequently, the feeling and the sense of belonging toward what they might call home can be related to different places (Leung 2007: 210).

Eventually, the economic condition that Deddy and Tommy have in the present days made them see Lampung as a home differently compared to Huda and Endi. In practicing homecoming, both parties have a different attitude. The houses that both Deddy and Tommy have created another home for them. When the issue of the future is raised, both of them tend to see Jakarta as their future. Although they do not forget Lampung as one of their roots, they prefer to live in Jakarta to live in Lampung permanently. In this regard, making a community using Lampung as its bond and joining in the community are some of many ways of articulating their roots as Lampungese or, perhaps precisely, their root as people born in Lampung land. For both Deddy and Tommy, homecoming practice in the future can still be done in events like Lebaran Day which means it is only temporary. As a place of nostalgia, they will meet their parents, other relatives, and friends in Lampung. It has become a tradition that when people go back to Lampung, they will hold meetings with family and friends to have a moment of nostalgia.

Huda and Endi also have the view that Lampung is a romantic home and a place for nostalgia. However, when the issue of the future is raised, homecoming practice to Lampung in the future is rather permanent. On one occasion, Huda said

that "I already started some business for me and my future family in Lampung ... One day, I will get married in Lampung and then stay there. The business is for my future." The condition that Huda has in a way makes him reluctant to own housing in Jakarta as he is preparing for his future in Lampung. The meaning of home for Huda has one similar feature to what Budianta illustrates in her article about female migrant domestic workers in Asian cosmopolitan cities like Singapore. For most of them, Budianta said, the spaces would be best described as temporary homes outside the home in Indonesia (9). This condition is similar to Huda who sees Jakarta as a temporary home that he will leave someday. For Huda, Jakarta is just a temporary home where he can prepare for his future. This view is also owned by Endi.

In the present day, Endi sadly gave up Jakarta and decided to go back to Lampung before he could even change his fate. His contract as a security guard in one company had expired. For months, he could not get another job while his rent house in Jakarta needed to be paid and his saving was almost emptied. Compared to Endi, Huda is in a better situation. Although he is like Endi who does not own a house in Jakarta, he does not need to pay a penny for it as he lives in his brother's house. Besides that, he has three jobs in Jakarta. One, he works in a company that runs as an event organizer. Two, he works as a private teacher. The last, he works in his brother's company where Deddy and Tommy also work at. However, he considers the last job, not a real job since he does not get certain money for what he does. According to his

admittance, "I only help my big brother running his business". However, the job in his brother's business is full of uncertainty for Huda as important positions are already filled by other people some of them are relatives and friends; Deddy and Tommy are examples who already filled the important positions. Furthermore, somehow, Huda considers his jobs as a private teacher and the job in the event organizer company are not worthy for the future as according to him the total payments from the two are not sufficient to have a decent life in Jakarta. Therefore, he is planning something better for his future outside Jakarta.

CONCLUSION

As the discussion above shows, it can be concluded that home is a complex concept. Through the study of ethnography, it is understood that the meaning of home for KALS is not unified. In line with this, Maggie Leung (2007) said that home is not simply a well-defined place. Since it involves different places, the feeling and the sense of belonging towards what they might call home are related to different places as well. Hence, it can create various types of homes (Cangbai and Siu-lun, 2007).

Since KALS came to Jakarta to gamble their fate, the successful or unsuccessful effort in economic capital accumulation in Jakarta also plays an important role in the meaning construction of the home for KALS. As the discussion above also shows, there are two factors in which the effort of accumulating economic capital could be seen as successful; and they are (1) having a job that pays well to have a decent living

in Jakarta and (2) having permanent housing in Jakarta. Deddy and Tommy, each of them have a decent job and a permanent house in Jakarta, they tend to see Jakarta as their current home and it is likely to be their future home for them. At the same time, they also see Lampung as their home although it is seen differently compared to Jakarta. For both of them, Lampung is seen as a home where they will return temporarily on special occasions like Lebaran Day. Lampung is seen as a place of nostalgia where they can meet the loved ones left in Lampung on breaks like Lebaran. Huda and Endi have different attitudes toward the places. For them, Jakarta is seen as only a temporary home to live in. While so, Lampung is seen as a rather permanent for the future compared to Deddy and Tommy.

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