Ups and downs in rural Javanese industry: the dynamics of work and life of small-scale garment manufacturers and their families
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Chapter Five

The Juragan, the Buruh, and the Dynamics of Production Relations

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed the emergence and expansion of the garment industry in Kalitengah village. This discussion has enabled us to define the structure of garment industry in this village and to discern how that structure changes from one period to another, by observing the process of the emergence of the confection enterprise, the division of labour, the production process, and marketing strategy.

Now that the structure of the garment industry in Kalitengah has been laid bare, in this chapter, I would like to discuss the dynamic of the production relations in this industry; that is how the people inside the garment industry interact with each other. The main objectives of this chapter are as follows: (1) To describe the working relationships between the juragan and the buruh under the so-called informal working arrangements; (2) To put into context the dynamics of that working relationships under various business circumstances, for instance peak season and slack season; (3) To understand how the culture, norms, and values prevailing where the garment industry is situated affect the working relationships between the juragan and the buruh.

In the preceding chapter we learned that garment industry in Kalitengah village was initially a cottage or household industry. In the span of several generations, this industry has grown and is now differentiated into small-scale and medium-size industries. Although several of these industries have expanded to become medium- or large-scale industries which hired scores to hundreds of labourers and use more modern machinery, the majority of garment industries in this village still fall into the category of cottage and small-scale industries. As small-scale industry, therefore, the characteristics of the garment industry in Kalitengah are also similar to those of other small-scale industries in general as discussed in Chapter Two. They are home-based, operated under subcontracting and putting-out systems, suffer from seasonal fluctuations, and are characterised by informal practices (see, e.g., ILO, 1972).
Turning our attention to the production relations, we can discern four important characteristics of the garment industry in Kalitengah which in the end will be very influential in shaping the kind of the production relations in this industry. These characteristics are: first, the lack of complexity in the production process. Second, the modality of payment is based on piece-work rather than time-rate. Third, workers perform their tasks in their respective homes under a subcontract or under the putting-out system. Lastly, employment is based on a verbal contract (Breman, 1999: 410-411). The working relationship between the employers (juragan) and employees (buruh) in the garment industry is controlled by so-called informality arrangements in lieu of any single company policy to regulate wage levels, mode of payment, working hours, holidays, social welfare provision, let alone directives to protect workers' health during the production process (Breman, 1999: 411). See also, e.g., Castells and Portes (1989: 13), Portes (1983: 116), Portes (1985: 57).

Since laws and regulations are non-existent, this situation will eventually create opportunities for a certain incidence of exploitation in the relationship between the juragan and the buruh. In this case, juragan, who have greater power and stronger bargaining position than their buruh, will have plenty of opportunities to exploit their buruh. Many earlier studies on informal sector and small-scale industries, so far also support this postulation (see, e.g., Breman, 1996; 1999; Breman, Das, and Agarwal, 2000; Yanz et al, 1999; Susilastuti, 1991; 1996; Boris 1996; Prugl, 1996, and among others).

However, alongside the mainstream opinion above, as it has been discussed in Chapter Two, World Bank experts and the proponents of the so-called social capital theory have expressed a different opinion about the working relationship in the informal sector. This group of scholars argues that although an informal working relationship is not protected by any particular laws or regulations, that relationship is not necessarily always exploitative because in many cases this relationship is usually found in a particular context where norms, local values, cultures and other germane factors can become important source of protection for the workers (Cunnison, 1966; Bell, 1982; Weix, 1990; World Bank, 1995; Moore, 1978). The discussions on this issue in Chapter Two indicate that the characteristics of small-scale industry and the socio-cultural setting in which the industry is located will be very influential in shaping the kind of the relationship between employers and employees in that industry. At a more personal level, the characteristics of the people who are involved in this industry will also determine the type of the relationship between the employers and the employees. Cogently, Cunnison (1966: 6-7) mentions that skill is very important in less mechanised industry because she argues that the quality of work in this kind of industry depends on the exercise of skill rather than on mechanical and administrative controls. In a nutshell, skill is specific to an industry where a specific job only can be done by specific workers. In the end, Cunnison concludes that the link between the skill and the industry means that the supply of labour as a whole cannot suddenly increase sharply during busy periods. Skill is therefore very important, and allows the workers to build up a bargaining position with their employers, although the reverse is true in the slack season.
Following Cunison's arguments, therefore, the characteristics of sewing workers in Kalitengah also will affect the type of the relationship between employers and employees. It stands to reason that a different type of employer-employee relationship will be experienced by skilled sewing workers (buruh jahit alusan or fine sewing workers) and unskilled sewing workers (buruh jahit kasar or coarse sewing workers). This is the simple outcome of the fact the number of skilled sewing workers in Kalitengah is very limited and the demand for this type of worker will inexorably increase during the peak season when garment producers need more skilled sewing workers to boost their production. Under these circumstances juragan always do their utmost to keep their skilled sewing workers during the slack season by providing them with a job in order to be sure of securing skilled sewing workers during the peak season. Under such circumstances, skilled sewing workers in Kalitengah enjoy a better position in relation to their employers—either in peak or in slack seasons—than do the unskilled sewing workers.

Taking account of these various propositions, to achieve the stated objectives of this chapter, the rest of the discussion will be structured as follows: Section two describes the industrial setting, that is the characteristics of garment industry in Kalitengah prevailing at the moment. Section three discusses the stratification and differentiation among the people who are involved in the industry, particularly garment producers and sewing workers. Section four is devoted to various factors that bind the juragan and the buruh into the so-called community. Section five discusses the dynamic of the working relationship between the juragan and the buruh. The last section is the conclusion.

2. The Industrial Setting

The garment industry in Kalitengah is composed of large number of cottage and small-scale enterprises, offset by a very few large ones. Drawing on author's household survey, in 1999, there were about 298 confection enterprises in that village which employed around 412 sewing workers from inside this village and almost the same number came from nearby villages in the vicinity of Kalitengah. At this juncture it is important to note that given the characteristics of garment industry in Kalitengah, the number of the enterprises and the workers are constantly subject to fluctuation (cf. Barliantari, 1987; Suhartoyo, 1987; Sugiaroto, 1987; Susilastuti and Handoyo, 1990; Susilastuti, 1991). The number of the enterprises and workers just mentioned is strongly affected by the demand for their products in the market. Almost invariably during the slack season, the number of confection enterprises will decrease significantly as many small garment producers prefer to stop their production and seek other jobs outside garment industry. During peak season the number will rise again as many seasonal garment producers re-enter this industry to try their luck.

To obtain a clearer picture of those enterprises, in 2002 the author carried out a survey on the profile of confection enterprises in five hamlets in Kalitengah namely Dalangan, Klumutan, Kenteng, Trimasan, and Garuman where most of the garment industry activities
take place (see map of Kalitengah in Chapter Three). This survey provides the basis for a
calculation (see Table 5.1) elucidating the fact that the majority of garment industries in
Kalitengah are cottage industries (twenty-two enterprises out of seventy-one or 31 per cent),
which employ fewer than four workers, and small-scale industries (thirty-nine enterprises or
54.9 per cent), which hire fewer than nineteen employees. The rest of them (ten enterprises or
14.1 percent) can be classified as medium and big industries, which hire more than twenty
employees.

Table 5.1 Number of Employees by Category of Enterprise in Kalitengah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Industry</th>
<th>Total Employees/Enterprise</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cottage and household Industry</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale Industry</td>
<td>5-19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Industry</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Industry</td>
<td>&gt;29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author's survey 2002.

As cottage and small-scale industries, the majority of garment industries in Kalitengah are
also characterised by the small amount of initial and working capital which is needed to start
and to operate these businesses (cf. Sugianto, 1987:112-114). The author’s survey found that
forty-eight enterprises (67 per cent) were established with initial capital of less than Rp.
500,000, six enterprises (8.4 per cent) with initial capital of in between Rp. 500,000-1
million, and seventeen enterprises (23.9 per cent) with initial capital more than Rp. 1 million.
The majority of these enterprises (thirty-nine out of seventy-one or 55 per cent) also operated
with a daily working capital less than Rp. 500,000, fifteen enterprises (21 per cent) in
between Rp. 500,000- Rp.1 million, and seventeen enterprises (23 per cent) in between Rp. 1
million-Rp. 2 million. With such small amounts of initial and working capital, these garment
producers in Kalitengah can also only produce a relatively small number of garment products
(see Table 5.2). Usually only after a few years --when they have been able to accumulate
bigger amounts of capital-- these producers will have the capability to increase their
production.

1 Except for nine garment producers who produce garments more than 500 pieces/day, based on Table 5.2. We
can calculate that the garment producers surveyed in Kalitengah --on average-- can produce 173 pieces
garments/day. If one bolt of cloth can be used to produce around thirty items of clothing, on average, garment
producers in that village consume around five bolts of cloth/day. If one garment producer produces batik shirts,
one set (satu serii) of batik shirts usually consists of five bolts of batik cloth with the same motifs but in five
different colours, it means that during peak season garment producers in Kalitengah on average can only
produce one set of batik shirts/day.
The opportunity available to the garment producers in Kalitengah to start their businesses with only small amounts of initial capital is ineluctably linked to the fact that the majority of them do not need to make big investments such as building a workshop and buying machinery, particularly sewing machines, since under the putting-out system arrangement sewing workers should work in their respective home and are expected to equip themselves with a sewing machine. Unfortunately, since the majority of garment producers in this village rely too much on the (old) sewing machines at the disposal of their sewing workers, there tends to be stagnation in any significant innovation in machinery undertaken by these garment producers.\(^2\) The drawback is that this situation eventually hinders any possibility these garment producers may have to produce good quality garment products, in other words to replace *baju kodian* (cheap and low quality garments), now the trademark of Kalitengah products. Therefore, although nowadays there is quite a significant variety in the garment products of Kalitengah, including such items as long-sleeved batik shirts, school uniforms, long-and short-sleeved striped shirts, shirts with special motifs, children's batik shirts and blouses, *batik/motif* informal wear, skirts, trousers, shorts, Bermuda shorts, farmer's garb, martial arts costumes (*baju pencak silat dan karate*), \(^{2}\) T-shirt and items of sportswear, jackets, pyjamas, Muslim dress (*baju koko*) and a host of other items, the majority of those products is still categorised as low quality clothing.

Any innovation in technology and in the production system, so far, has been essayed by a small group of big garment producers in the village. These garment producers, whose ambition is to produce better quality garment products, have made various innovations, such as setting up actual workshops, buying new machinery, and hiring permanent in-sewing workers. By keeping pace with modernisation they hope that they can obtain a “licence” to become a garment supplier for bigger clothing shops or for shopping malls like the Matahari Shopping Mall in the district capital of Klaten. Their efforts are not always rewarded since the market segment for fine garment products is dominated by big garment factories. Indeed,

\(^2\) The same phenomenon in fact also happens in the other sector, the foundry industrial cluster in Batur, not far from Kalitengah village (cf. Kuntowidjojo, 1971; Weber and Asy’arie 1993; M. Rutten, 1997).
there are only very few garment producers in Kalitengah such as the proprietors of “Sony”, “Mentari”, and “Peni” Confections who have succeeded in becoming fine garment producers. The majority of them, unfortunately, have slipped back to become cheap garment producers once again having failed to get a grip on the market segment producing fine garments.

Another characteristic of the garment industry in Kalitengah is a low degree of complexity in the production process. Although, as mentioned in Chapter Four, there has been a tendency to increase the division of labour in the garment industry in Kalitengah, --as Table 5.3 shows-- not every garment producer in the village follows this pattern or implements it only to a limited extent. They may hire buttonhole-makers and people to sew on buttons but not pattern-cutters, hem-makers, and packers. Usually only big garment producers, who produce large quantities of garment products, assiduously apply the whole principle of the division of labour, hiring a whole gamut of different workers, even drivers (see, e.g., Sugianto, 1987; Barliantari, 1987).

Table 5.3 The Adoption of Labour Division in the Garment Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of labour based on their division of labour</th>
<th>Number of enterprise N=71</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pattern cutter</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hem maker</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttonholing and stitching button maker</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other helpers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey 2002

This finding does indeed tally with the fact that the majority of garment industries in Kalitengah are cottage and small-scale industries, which hire fewer than five labourers. With so few labourers, it is difficult --indeed unnecessary-- for those small garment producers to apply a strict division of labour in the production process. In these cottage and small-scale garment industries, it is quite common to see garment producers themselves and their family members performing various basic tasks such as cutting the pattern, doing the hemming, and packing the products (cf. Sugianto 1987; Barliantari, 1987). Quite apart from this, sewing workers who work for small garment producers usually also carry out almost the whole process of the making of garment products, except cutting the pattern. This fact proves that the ‘deskilling’ process --described by Braverman (1974)-- is not invariably experienced in small-scale industry. This is why, if an opportunity presents itself, sewing workers in Kalitengah have a chance to experience vertical mobility and become garment producers themselves.

The garment industry in Kalitengah is also characterised by the domination of female sewing workers. The author’s household survey found that in 1999 there were about 412
sewing workers in Kalitengah village alone. Pertinently, since from time to time many sewing workers inside Kalitengah raise themselves to the ranks of *juragan*, nowadays, from the around 800 sewing workers who work in the garment industry (during the peak season) more than 50 per cent of them come from nearby villages. In the total number of sewing workers—from inside as well as outside Kalitengah—female sewing workers predominated compared to their male counterparts (from the seventy-one confection enterprises surveyed, it was found that the ratio between male and female sewing workers is 1:3), although in the total number of sewing workers inside Kalitengah alone the ratio between male and female sewing workers was quite balanced. This finding supports the previous studies carried out by such scholars as Green (1997), Saptari (1995), Susilastuti (1991), Susilastuti and Partini (1988), Joseph (1987), Brenner (1992), and Chotim (1994) who also all mention that the majority of home-based garment industry workers were female.

3. The *Juragan* and the *Buruh Jahit*: The Stratification and Differentiation

3.1. Big *Juragan*

To differentiate between big and small *juragan*, people in Kalitengah use a simple indicator, namely car ownership. In their estimation a big *juragan* is *juragan* who has a car, while a small *juragan* does not. Using this classification, based on author’s household survey, there are about twenty-five *juragan* who can be classified as big *juragan* out of the around 298 *juragan* in Kalitengah village. From these twenty-five *juragan*, in fact only three can considered really big *juragan* according to Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistic, namely employers who hire more than twenty-nine sewing workers (see Table 5.1).

Leaving aside car ownership, the socio-economic characteristics of big garment producers can also delineated using various other indicators. Cogently, viewed from the teachings of Javanese philosophy, the socio-economic characteristics of big *juragan* in Kalitengah approximate the characteristics of what Javanese people call *wong kang kinormatan* (the most respectable people). According to the tenets of this philosophy, a person is classified as a most respectable person if he/she possesses six indispensable things, namely: *karyo* (a job); *garwo* (wife/spouse); *wismo* (house); *curigo* (kris as symbol of education); *turonggo* (horse); and *kukilo* (turtle dove). Bringing it more up-to-date, this philosophy can be reinterpreted to say a highly respectable person is one who possesses the following things: a (lucrative) job; a spouse; a (big and beautiful) house; a higher education or a good knowledge of the wider world; a car or some other means of transportation; recreational appliances such as radio/tape recorder, TV set, VCD Player and so on. In short, these traditional indicators corroborate the more modern indicators of social stratification discussed in section seven of Chapter Three, namely occupation, income, education, consumption, and standard of living.

Accepting these various indicators, the socio-economic characteristics of *juragan* in Kalitengah can be described as follows:
Making a lucrative living from the garment industry
Since the majority of big juragan (mostly husband-wife teams) operate large-scale garment industries, they can earn a high income from their business. As an illustration, the average net income of big garment producer in Kalitengah is between Rp. 2-3 million/month. This income will increase more than fivefold during the peak season (the three months prior to the Lebaran celebration and in the run-up to the commencement of new school year) when garment products, particularly batik shirts and school uniforms, are in high demand. This is one explanation of why after the Lebaran celebration, many big juragan are in a position to buy new house, car, motorbike, extra gold and so on. Several juragan also told me that in the past (in the 1970s), when the competition among garment producers was not as tough as it is now, the profit they reaped from these two peak seasons was more than enough to enjoy a comfortable life-style for one year. Nowadays, this still holds true for several really big juragan who enjoy a much higher income than the average net income of other big juragan.

To give an illustration, Ib u Yatno --the owner of Rapi Confection, the biggest school uniform producer in Kalitengah-- told me that her turn-over from selling school uniforms is around Rp. 150 million/month during the normal season. Her turn-over will rise to almost ten times that amount to around Rp. 1.2 billion/month during the peak season. So, if she says that she can make a profit of between 10-20 per cent from this turn-over. Consequently, her net income is between Rp. 15-30 million/month during the normal season and Rp. 120-240 million/month during the peak season.

Living in big house with modern furnishings and electronic equipment
Possessing a big, modern house is one important symbol of being a successful juragan in Kalitengah. Therefore, the first thing a successful juragan will do is to build a new house or renovate his/her old one. As the number of big juragan increases at various periods of time, big houses with a distinctive appearance, such as a large front yard, in a modern architectural style, surrounded by a beautiful garden, and built of expensive materials continue to appear and become part of the common scene in Kalitengah. Hundreds of millions of rupiahs are usually spent on building these houses. Once, for instance, I was asked by one big juragan, Pak Jali, to help him to calculate the cost of buying the materials which were needed to renovate his house. At that time he spent more than Rp. 70 million just to build a big sitting room, a bedroom, garage, and to established a beautiful garden.

3 The discussion on this issue will be pursued in the next chapter.
4 In the past the size and the style of a house was also a symbol of prestige and class. Koentjaraningrat (1985: 135) mentions that there are four different styles of Javanese house, determined by the shape of the roof, which are associated with the socio-economic position of the owner the house. The average villager has a house with srotong or trojan roof. While houses with a limasan roof are restricted to families who consider themselves descendants of the original inhabitants, a sort of village nobility. The house of the village head and village officials has a joglo or at least a limasan roof.
5 In Laweyan Solo, a successful batik producer built a big house which was called gedong. Because this juragan lives in a rumah gedong he/she is called a wong gedongan to differentiate them from the common people (wong cilik) who live in smaller house (Brenner, 1992: 29). More discussion on this issue see, e.g. Guinness (1986) and Sullivan (1992).
To have access to better public services in the cities, including education, health, distinctive life-style and the like, various juragan also build new houses in the district capital of Klaten, or in Solo or Yogyakarta. Pak Harno, a big juragan of Dalangan hamlet and the owner of “Sony” Confection, has a big house-cum-boutik where he sells exclusive Muslim dress in the heart of Klaten city. Ibu Topo, another big juragan of Dalangan hamlet, has as many as five houses, two in Kalitengah, one in Klaten, one in Solo, and another one in Yogyakarta. Besides being big, the houses of big juragan are usually furnished in a modern style and furnished with the latest electronic equipment. Referring to the author’s household survey, the majority of the houses of big juragan have the following items: expensive carved furniture; radio/tape recorder; TV set; VCD; refrigerator; washing machine; modern cooking equipment such as gas stove, rice-cooker, magic jar, fixed-line phone, mobile phone, and a computer.

Owning a car
As has already been mentioned in passing, car ownership is considered by people in Kalitengah one very important indicator by which to classify juragan in Kalitengah as either big or small. This is a logical assumption because the price of a new car is quite expensive in Indonesia, where a Toyota Kijang, the most popular car among the juragan in Kalitengah, costs around Rp. 60 million. Obviously, only big juragan can afford this luxurious means of transportation. To demonstrate their economic superiority, therefore, it is not surprising many big juragan in Kalitengah own more than one car. Pak Yatno’s house virtually resembles a car show-room with at least seven famous brand name cars, Toyota, Suzuki, Mercedes and the like lined up in his garage.

Pursuing a distinctive life-style
Blessed with material possessions, big juragan find themselves in a position to enjoy a distinctive life-style setting them apart from the common people in Kalitengah. They enjoy a comfortable life with their family in their big houses, travel where they please in their private cars, revel in their leisure time by visiting tourist destinations in the surrounding towns with their family or just shopping in various malls in Yogyakarta or Solo, playing tennis with their friends twice a week and so on. At a practical level, to make their life more comfortable, it is also common that those big juragan employ pembantu (domestic servants) in their houses. These domestic servants help them to do household chores and take care of their children. This is a life-style comparable to that of cigarette producers in Kudus (Weix, 1990; 2003) and among the iron founders in Batur, Klaten (M. Rutten, 2003).

Acquiring the title of Haji or Hajah
Since the majority of big juragan are Muslim, to express their gratitude (rasa syukur) to God for their success (good fortune or rejeki), those big juragan desire to perform the haj, making pilgrimage to Mecca. Besides pursuing their commitment to Islamic syariah, performing the haj
is, to some extent, also the way by which big juragan publicly express their economic superiority since only a privileged few can afford to go to Mecca. At the time of the fieldwork (2000), to be able to go to Mecca it was necessary to pay Ongkos Naik Haji (ONH, Travelling Costs for Haj which officially set up by the Government) to the tune up of Rp. 21 million. If a juragan couple were to perform the haj would mean they would have to spend more than Rp. 42 million, not to mention other additional costs, such as various ceremonies before the departure (for more detail on the ritual of the Javanese who want to make the pilgrimage to Mecca see Danarto [1989]). For juragan performing the haj is also means creating a class identity (or symbolic capital in the words of Bourdieu, 1985; 2000) as a santri or pious Muslims. Geertz (1976), Castles (1967), and Hefner (1985) all say this is a status associated with successful entrepreneurs. Indeed, the conduct of successful juragan in Kalitengah does not deviate greatly from the behaviour of other Asian entrepreneurs in general as Upadya and Rutten (1997:23) note that a typical aspect of the behaviour of successful entrepreneurs (newly rich classes) across Asia is a tendency to use their wealth to acquire prestige and power through investment in various cultural activities.

_Become a patron of their community_

Another characteristic of big juragan is their position as patrons of their community. Jackson (1974:14) has stated that patron-client relationships in Indonesia are referred to as _bapak-anak buah_ relationships. _Bapak_ (the father) is the head of an extended family who has authority to give commands to his _anak buah_ (followers). This is a reciprocal relationship, in return the father has to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the spiritual, material, and social needs of his followers (see also Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Scott, 1972). Supported by their economic as well as religious achievements (sukses dunia dan akhirat), big juragan quite easily gain legitimisation as a patron of their followers. As a matter of fact, big juragan are patrons of the people in Kalitengah in almost in every aspect of their livelihood. They function as job providers, funds donors for religious and social activities, leaders of the neighbourhood (ketua RT/RW), leaders of the pengajian (Islamic lessons) and a host of other such position requiring leadership.

### 3.2. Small Juragan

In contrast to big juragan, the socio-economic characteristics of small juragan are no different from the common people in Kalitengah. They do not have distinctive material possessions, let alone have gained themselves the title of haji, the symbol of pious and successful Muslims. The majority of small juragan can be characterised as having permanent but modest houses, a motorbike, Honda or Suzuki, which is used to go to the market, and modest life-style as well. Small juragan in Kalitengah are composed of young garment producers or garment producers who have just launched their own garment businesses (mbabar sendiri) and old garment producers who are on the verge of retirement. Subject to various limitations, both of these categories of small juragan usually run modest confection enterprises hiring fewer than five sewing workers, producing a limited number of garment products, roughly around 100
pieces/day, and selling their products in small markets, at district or sub-district marketplaces. Subsequently, the daily turn-over of these juragan also small if it is compared to the turn-over of big juragan. Several small juragan told me that their turnover is in between Rp. 100,000-500,000/day during the normal season and in between Rp. 500,000-2.5 million during the peak season. So, if they get 10 per cent profit from this turn-over, the net income of small juragan is in between Rp.300,000-1.5 million/month during the normal season and in between Rp. 1.5-7.5 million/month during the peak season.

Young garment producers usually have to struggle with limited capital and a lack of the capacity to create a marketing network, which makes it rather difficult for them to produce a large amount of garment products by hiring many sewing workers. To quote just one of the indicators of their lack of capital and instability of their domestic economic situation, several small garment producers, even today are still working for their original employers (big juragan) while they producing their own garments before taking the final plunge and becoming independent garment producers.

At the other end of the scale, older garment producers are usually hampered by their lack of ability to update their knowledge of fashion and their lack of motivation to develop their businesses because they no longer have dependent children (ora ragat anak). Because of these impediments, older garment producers usually resort to producing old-fashioned garments to be sold to their loyal poorer consumers. Some old garment producers even prefer to buy (kulakkan) garment products in Klewer Market, Solo, or Beringharjo, Yogyakarta, rather than produce garment products themselves.

Take the case of Pak Tarno, an older garment producer in Kenteng hamlet. Pak Tarno told me that in the past (when he still had dependent children), he worked really hard to develop his garment business. At that time he hired around twelve sewing workers. After all his children had graduated from university he decided to stop producing garment products himself and preferred to buy garment products in Klewer Market to supply his retail clothes traders in Purworejo market. This decision was taken because he no longer wanted to feel kemrungsung (under pressure), having to provide a job for his sewing workers every day. Yet, to stop producing garments is not always an easy decision for such people as several of them told me that they would feel sorry (kasihan) for their loyal sewing workers who have worked for them for many years if they closed down their businesses. For that reason, they still continue to provide jobs for their workers although in many cases the job provided is not as stable as it once was. In some instances they may supply pre-cut cloth only twice a week.

3.3. Fine Sewing Workers

On the basis of the division of labour (see the discussion on this issue in Chapter Four), garment workers can be classified into at least six different groups namely: (1) tukang potong (pattern-cutters); (2) tukang jahit (sewing workers); (3) tukang itik (buttonhole-makers); (4) tukang pasang benik (button-fixers); (5) tukang obras (hem-makers); and (6) tukang lempit
(packers). For the sake of simplicity, these workers can be classified into only two different categories from the point of view of their expertise: (1) *tukang jahit alusan* (the fine sewing workers) who make better quality garment products and (2) *buruh jahit kasar* (the coarse sewing workers) who make low quality and cheap garment products (*baju kodians*, *kodies*). Fine sewing workers have acquired a specific skill in performing their task of making “good” quality garment products. The quality of their job is usually measured by the *kerengketan* (the strength) and *kerapian* (the tidiness) of the results. The sewing skill of the fine sewing workers usually approaches that of professional tailors. Like the latter, they know how to make a pattern, to cut the cloth, to assembly the pre-cut cloth, how to make button-holes and adding other finishing touches. Since a very limited number of sewers in Kalitengah has learned their skills in formal sewing courses (*sekolah menjahit* or *modiste*), the fine sewers are usually recruited among the rather small number of sewers who have a natural talent which allows them to develop their sewing skills through a very quick apprenticeship, learning as they go. In Kalitengah, the majority of them are men. I would argue that this can be traced to the bigger opportunities open to men sewing workers to learn how to cut the pattern and handle various machines compared to their female fellow workers.⁶ Fine sewers in Kalitengah are usually employed by big *juragan* who produce “good quality” of garment products such as batik *prodo* shirts (batik with the motifs outlined in gold leaf), batik *sutra kecewa* shirts (batik shirts made from imitation silk cloth), suits, trousers, double-breasted jackets, and university alma mater tops among other items. It stands to reason that, since they make better quality garment products, the fine sewers also will be paid higher wages than the coarse sewers. As an illustration, for making a jacket the fine sewers will be paid between Rp. 4,500-5,000/piece, but the coarse sewers only will received between Rp. 300-500 for every shirt they make.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.4 Piece Rate Wage Received by Garment Workers (Men and Women)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of garment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double-breasted jacket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University jacket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMU school uniform trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batik <em>sutra kecewa</em> shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batik <em>prodo</em> shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School uniform shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Celana kolor</em> (underpants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author Own Field Work

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⁶ Interestingly, the same also happens in India, see Unni and Bali (2001:23). According to them, men garment workers in India were engaged in supervision work, allocating the work, cutting, and sewing valuable garments at higher piece-rate wages compared to the women garment workers.
Besides higher wages as can be seen in Table 5.4 above, the fine sewers also possess other characteristics which make it easier for them to cope with the crisis than it is for the coarse sewers. First of all, because of their rounded skills they can undertake various jobs, ranging from pattern-cutter to putting on the buttons. Of course, they can also make cheaper garment if need be. Benefiting from this flexibility fine sewers can undertake any job which comes their way. This means that they are less vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations. Another advantage is that because their number is limited, the fine sewing workers can usually work for several juragan simultaneously. This in turn means that they have far more possibilities to obtain stable job orders during the peak as well as during the slack season. Fine sewers also have better working network than do to coarse sewers, which they use to distribute jobs to other workmates or the other way around. Fortunate in these characteristics, the majority of fine sewing workers in Kalitengah can expect quite stable job orders, which can guarantee them an adequate income over the years. This in turn means that they usually have no problem fulfilling the basic needs of their families. These fine sewing workers can be categorised as cukup makan (have enough wages to buy rice or food for their families), having a (modest) permanent house, a simple motorbike, and such equipments as radios, TV sets and so on. Further details about the livelihood of the fine sewers can be gleaned from the case of Mas Maryanto below.

Case of Mas Maryanto, a fine sewer

Mas Maryanto (34) is a fine sewer. Although he is not a native of Kalitengah, he was already a skilled worker long before he married his wife, a Kalitengah woman. He told me that he learned how to sew from his uncle. Latter, he took an apprenticeship in juragan Hartini’s business in Klaten for a few years. In 1985 he became a sewer at Sony Confection in Dalangan hamlet, where he met his wife. Not satisfied with his juragan, in 1990 he quit Sony Confection and moved to Yogyakarta. In this city he worked for several tailors. Later, he moved to Jakarta when there were not enough jobs in Yogyakarta. However, complying with the request of his wife, finally he returned to Kalitengah in 1995.

After settling down in Kalitengah again, Mas Maryanto has continued to pursue his profession as a sewer. The only difference is that since his return has not been tied to one permanent juragan as he was before. He said that now he prefers to be open to job orders from any juragan rather than rely on just one. Even though he does not have permanent juragan, he said that he has no time to relax. Besides job orders from many juragan in Kalitengah, he said that he also receives endless job orders from his ex-bosses and ex-workmates in Yogyakarta and Jakarta. He mentioned that sometimes during the peak season he feels very sorry when he has to decline a job order which may come from Kalitengah or from Yogyakarta. "Ngantos kulo kedah nutup pintu yen njahit.Soalle ajenggo kulo mboten purun tesih katah mawon sing nawani" ("During the peak season I often need to close the door when I am sewing the orders. Because, although I have told them that I cannot accept their offers, there are still many juragan who offer me job orders"). So, when there are too many job orders, Mas Maryanto usually distributes them to his workmates in Kalitengah. By doing this, he benefits as a calo (broker), by deducting a wages allocation of around Rp. 1,000-1,500 for every item of garment which he “subcontracts out” to his workmates. Being a skilled sewer with a good work network, and supported by his wife who also works as sewing worker, it is by no means surprising that Mas Maryanto claimed that he can earn a “lumayan” (adequate) income from working as fine sewer. Below is the record of his income and consumption in one month (during the peak season) as fine sewer.
Income
a. Income from fees as calo (broker) by subcontracting out job orders from several juragan from Yogyakarta and Solo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of order</th>
<th>Amount of order</th>
<th>Fee obtained from subcontracting out (Rp. 1,500/piece)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dec. 2000</td>
<td>Sanex Jacket</td>
<td>58 pieces x Rp. 6,000</td>
<td>Rp. 82,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Dec. 2000</td>
<td>Valentine Jacket</td>
<td>25 pieces x Rp. 5,000</td>
<td>Rp. 37,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Dec. 2000</td>
<td>UGM Jacket</td>
<td>47 pieces x Rp. 6,000</td>
<td>Rp. 70,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Dec. 2000</td>
<td>Alma mater Jacket</td>
<td>116 pieces x Rp. 5,000</td>
<td>Rp. 174,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Dec 2000</td>
<td>TPA shirt</td>
<td>30 pieces x Rp. 15,000</td>
<td>Rp. 300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rp. 664,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Income as fine sewer
1. Sewing private order trousers 14 pieces x Rp. 15,000 = Rp. 210,000
2. Sewing batik shirts 5 pieces x Rp. 17,500 = Rp. 87,000
3. Total = Rp. 297,500

Total income in December = Rp. 664,500+ Rp. 297,500 = Rp. 962,000

Consumption
a. Food
1. Vegetables and side dishes Rp. 10,000 x 30 days = Rp. 300,000
2. Pocket money for his son Rp. 2,000 x 30 days = Rp. 60,000
3. Rice Rp. 2,000 x 30 days = Rp. 60,000

b. Non-food
1. Electricity and fuel = Rp. 30,000
2. Toiletries = Rp. 15,000
3. School fees = Rp. 5,000
4. Nyumbang (giving donations) = Rp. 20,000
5. Total consumption = Rp. 490,000

On the basis of this calculation, on average, Mas Maryanto can make a saving of around Rp. 472,000 per month (not including the income of his wife). He said that a sewing worker could make a good living from the job orders. During the peak season, he claims that he can save some money to buy various things such as a hemming machine, a sewing machine, a TV set and so forth, but if there are no job orders during the slack season he will sell these again to have enough to live on. He told me of when the krismon hit Kalitengah in 1998, he had to sell his hemming machine for Rp. 400,000. Now the krismon is over, he can breathe easily again. He told me that he had just renovated his small house and bought another hemming machine several months ago. He also said that if he has enough money, he would like to trade in his old-fashioned motorbike for a new one. However, when I asked when he would start to make his own garments (mbabar sendiri), he said that: “Kulo tesih remen tailoran. Yen nja hit niku mboten kokehan pikiran, ning yen pun mbabar kiyambak pikiranne dados awrat soalle kedah mikir dospundi carane angsal untung. Sanese meniko, usaha konfeksi niku nggih jodan,sinaosa gadah modal katal lan kepinteran ning yen mboten jodo nggih mboten berkembang. Sinaosa modal alit yen jodo nggih saget berkembang” (So far, I still enjoy being a sewer. Being a sewer is not a drain on my energy. If I were to produce my own garments I would begin to suffer headaches because I would have to think about how to make a profit. Besides this, you need good luck to become a successful juragan. Although we might have skill and large amount of capital, there is no guarantee that we will be successful in running this business, unless we have good luck. Although with only small amount of capital, as long as you have good luck, your business will take off willy-nilly).
The Dynamics of Production Relations

With their skills and their networks, the fine sewers will usually have a great opportunity to experience upward mobility by becoming garment producers when the time comes to mbabar sendiri (to produce their own garment products). Below are several instances of fine sewers (both men and women) who have experienced upward mobility after they took the plunge and began to produce their own garment products.

Ibu Yanti, 50-year-old juragan, motivated to increase her income
Ibu Yanti told me that she started to mbabar sendiri in 1994. She said that she decided to part company with her juragan, Haji Muhdi, after she had accumulated enough capital from her husband’s savings. This money was used to buy cloth to produce ready-made clothing. Initially, this couple produced their garment products themselves. Sometimes they called upon the help of their family members. Her husband took the responsibility for cutting the patterns, while she stitched the pre-cut cloth into garments. When they felt that they had enough dagangan (merchandise or garment products), Ibu Yanti took her dagangan to the marketplace, while her husband continued to produce garments in their home. The money she earned at the market was used to buy more cloth. This process has been repeated year by year right up to the present. Now, they hire three sewers to help them to produce more garments.

Pak Gito, 52-year-old juragan, motivated by his workmates
Pak Gito was a skilful sewing worker. He said that he had more than fifteen years experience as a sewer for several juragan before he finally decided to quit his last juragan, Pak Yatno, in 1995 after he had received endless suggestions from his workmates to mbabar sendiri. He said: “Kulo diojok-ojokki konco-konco, wong duwe pawitan koq ora mbabar dewe, mbok mbabar dewe, metu kono”. (“I was spurred on by my workmates, you have enough capital why you do not start to produce your own garments, make your own garments, launch onto the market”). He discussed this matter with his wife. Finally they decided to make their own garments. There was one hitch. Since Pak Gito was still working for juragan Yatno at that time, he and his wife could only produce their garment at a slow tempo after they had finished their jobs from Juragan Yatno. After they had enough garment products, two months prior to Lebaran in 1995, Pak Gito quit Juragan Yatno to sell his own garments in Semin Market, Gunung Kidul. Now, Pak Gito and his wife hire nine sewers.

Wartomo, 33-year-old juragan, made a great leap forward!
Wartomo and his wife had worked in Haji Marsono’s Enggal Mekar Confection for several years before they got married. In 1995, this couple parted company with their juragan, and started mbabar sendiri with an initial capital of Rp. 250,000. As a follower of the LDII (Haji Marsono is the chairman of LDII), they got the full support of their former juragan, like cheap credit and marketing. Wartomo and his wife sold their garments in the Malioboro and in Beringharjo Market, Yogyakarta. Only three years after they started their venture, this couple could afford kiosk in Yogyakarta and bought a car the following year. After that they also built a two-storey house in Dalangan hamlet. People in Kalitengah said that Wartomo and his wife were fortunate (wong bejo) because not everybody could become a successful juragan. This newly rich juragan couple now hire twenty-five sewers to produce their garment products.

3.4. Coarse Sewing Workers

Coarse sewers are by definition less skilful. The majority of these sewers are women and old men. They usually work for small juragan who produce baju kodian (low quality garment products). Since they produce only baju kodian, their wages are commensurately lower. The
data in Table 5.4 shows that the piece-rate wages that will be paid by coarse sewers range from between Rp. 175-500. Therefore, if one coarse sewer can produce -- on average—around twenty-five garments/day, he/she will have an income of between Rp.113,750-325,000/month (during the peak season with around twenty-six working days). If the income of coarse sewers is relatively low during the peak season, this amount will shrink even more during the slack season since these sewers are in a much weaker position to compete for orders than are the fine sewers. During the slack season a coarse sewer will receive fewer than twenty-five pieces of pre-cut material on only three working days/week. This means that during the slack season the income of coarse sewer is around Rp. 175-500 x 25 pieces x 3 working days x 4 weeks= Rp. 52,500-150,000/month.

With this average amount of income, coarse sewers are among the members of community who occupy the lowest social stratum in Kalitengah village. More details about the livelihood of coarse sewers can be gleaned from the case of Ibu Surani below.

Case of Ibu Surani, a coarse sewer

Ibu Surani, aged 36 years, is a coarse sewer. She has lived alone for over twelve years since her husband abandoned her with one child to marry again. Today she lives in very small house with her child, her widowed mother and her last-born brother called Suparjo. She had tried her hand at sewing work in 1986 before she had to contend with her broken marriage. Before taking up sewing, she worked in the rice-fields with her mother. Since learning how to sew, she embraced sewing as an occupation because it was an easier option to slaving in the fields under the fierce sun until every bone in her body ached.

Since she started sewing, she has changed employers twice. The first employer’s business closed after her husband was involved in a affair. For the past four years she has worked for another employer by the name of Pak Mulyono. Every morning she is supplied with forty, sometimes sixty pieces. For every piece she is paid for Rp. 175 (every year she gets a wage rise of around Rp.25-50 per piece. She said that before the crisis she was paid Rp. 100 and this was raised to Rp. 150 in 1999. As such she earns Rp. 7,000 daily. The net wage per month after deducting the cost of thread, Rp. 550 daily, is around Rp. 169,000. When asked why she does not find job order offering higher wages she says that she prefers to sew cheap clothes at a low wage but with a steady supply of work than to sew fine clothes for higher wages but with the prospect of facing the risk of fluctuating jobs. Besides this reason, she also mentions her inability to catch up with the dynamics of the job orders given by big juragan (big confection enterprises). “Yen njahit ten konfeksi kedah saget njahit macem-macem kados jaket, rompi, celana panjang. Yen ken ngikuti kados ngoten kulo mboten saget” (“If [I] work in confection, [I] should be able to sew various types of clothing, such as jackets, vests, trousers and the like. I just don’t have the know-how to tackle this sort of work”).

About her earnings, she confessed that she was operating at a deficit as regards daily consumption. Every day her earnings dwindle in the face of the rising price of basic commodities. “To buy something today of which the value is seemingly low, one has to spend so much money,” she observed. She went on to explain how during the morning of the material day she was forced to spend well over Rp. 8,200 on daily necessities. The shopping she meant is as follows:
Daily Shopping:
Rice
Vegetables
Side dishes
Spices
Palm sugar
Child's school packed lunch
Total

Rp. 2,100
Rp. 2,000
Rp. 1,000
Rp. 1,000
Rp. 1,500
Rp. 1,500
Rp. 8,200

This expenditure does not include other expenses like buying Rinso washing powder, toilet soap, and paying the electricity bill among other costs which total well over Rp. 15,000, not forgetting weekly Church donation of Rp. 4,000. Hence, her total monthly expenditure is approximately Rp. 271,000. Note that her total monthly earnings are only Rp. 169,000. Her mother used to be responsible for the rice consumed every day. Her mother's effort (from derep/ rice harvesting) was usually worth 1-2 kg of rice per day. However since she suffered mild stroke two years ago, she has no longer been able to do nderep. The deficit in her income yawns even more widely if she has to give a donation (nyumbang) when neighbours or relatives hold ceremonies (ewuh or selamatan) or she has to buy school equipment for her son, Karno. She mentioned that during the krismon she was given a 10 kg package of rice from the Social Safety Net Program via Pak RT (the neighbourhood head), but only twice. That is all the government aid which she has seen so far. Now the responsibility for closing the deficit will fall on Suparjo's shoulders. He works as sewer like she does.

Since her income is small, she said that she does not have high expectations. She will be quite happy if she can make ends meet, though she does not have TV set, a motorbike or other luxury goods. A small, old-fashioned transistor radio is her only form of entertainment on it she always listens to the campur sari (Javanes remixed traditional songs) while she is working which she often does to deep in the night.

4. Factors that Bind the Juragan and the Buruh

Despite their economic and social differences, juragan and buruh in Kalitengah, in fact, share many of the same livelihood aspects such as residence, kinship, religion, ethnicity, culture, values, and tradition and these bind them together to become the so-called community. From the residential point of view, both the juragan and the buruh live in the same village, even in the same neighbourhood. Considering this residential factor, therefore, the relationship between juragan and buruh is not just that of employer-employee, but will also be influenced by their relationship as neighbours. As neighbours, juragan will inevitably treat their neighbour employees differently to non-neighbour employees. It is the same in other aspects of livelihood. The majority of juragan and buruh have kinship ties. The greater part of them share the same religion as Muslims. Above all, all of them are Javanese so they not only speak the same language, they also observe the same culture, traditions and partake of the same values as well.

Moreover, the relationship between juragan and buruh also becomes closer through membership of various associations, participation in the life-cycle ceremonies and cultural events that occur in the neighbourhood, through taking part in religious activities, or extended family meetings (pertemuan trah, the meeting among extended family members). The
neighbourhoods in Kalitengah team with a host of activities such as *rapat* RT/RW (neighbourhood meeting), *kelompok ronda* (night-watch group), *kerja bakti* (community working bees), and many kinds of *arisan* (rotating savings and credit associations) of which *juragan* and *buruh* are both members or participate in the same events. In these associations the relationship between *juragan* and *buruh* is usually more relaxed. It is usual for *juragan* and *buruh* to make jokes or play cards together when they perform their duties as the night-watch. The same relaxed atmosphere prevails in religious meeting such as *pengajian* (Islamic religious lessons) and *Yasinan* (an Islamic religious meeting in which the main activity is to recite the Yassin verse together). Through those various activities *juragan* and *buruh* have plenty of opportunities to meet and to talk each other and even become close friends.

All these factors eventually affect the relationship between *juragan* and *buruh*. A natural outcome of the fact their relationship is not bound solely to the production sphere --which is dominated by economic interests-- but also extends to the social sphere as well where the relationship is characterised more by moral altruism.\(^7\) This indeed emerges as an important factor in controlling the *juragan*, restraining any high handed tendencies they might adopt towards their *buruh*, which could otherwise have lurked in a working relationship based purely on informal agreements. This phenomenon has also been identified by other researchers carrying out studies in small-scale industry including Smyth (1993), Hardjono and Masiyati (1990), Van Velzen (1990, 1994), Chotim (1994). Bell (1986: 221-222) has this to say about her findings:

"By contrast [to the big firms], in smaller firms the decision-making process is likely to be less formal, with many aspects of employer-employee relationships handled in personal, nonuniform ways. Conceivably, this kind of relationship sometimes permits a flexibility that could benefit workers with distinctive circumstances (e.g., particular scheduling difficulties caused by family responsibilities). By the same token, however, any accommodations to individual circumstances can be revoked at the discretion of the employer. Indeed, the employer would generally seem to have the greater power to exploit the employee-employer relationship. For employees the, the gains which may be provided by flexibility of small organization may be offset by the loss of guaranteed rights".

"However, compared to executives at large units, the owner-managers of small firms seem more likely to live in the same community with workers, to be subject to similar sources of information and pressure, and to know employees as individuals. Such personal ties may induce a broad (though perhaps paternalistic) concern for the welfare of employees, including their family lives".

The residential ties are certainly a significant differentiating variable in the character of the employer-employee relationship in this study compared to those studied in the context of larger factories (see, Saptari, 1995; Wolf, 1992; Susetiarwan, 2000) or in the construction sector (see, e.g., Van der Erve, 1983). In a small-scale industry like the garment industry in

\(^7\) This factor, in my opinion, that differentiates the informal working relationships from formal working relationships. The former is characterised by personal relationship based on locality, kinship, religion, culture and the like, while the second is dominated more by formalities such as laws, regulations, and impersonal relationships.
Kalitengah, because employers and labourers share many similarities, indications of class differentiation and class identity between the employers and employees are not strongly defined. I am convinced that these factors can and do prevent (or reduce) conflict between juragan and buruh in the garment industry in Kalitengah. In larger factories conflicts are much more likely to erupt because of clear-cut class differentiations and class identities between employers and employees. Susetiawan (2000: 221-250) reveals that in the two textile enterprises in Yogyakarta where he did his research, class differentiation and class identity between employers and employees are both very distinctly defined. Employers (management) are characterised by the labourers as wealthy urban people, Chinese, and Christian, while employees identified themselves as poor rural people, Javanese, and Muslim. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that, in contrast to small-scale garment industry in Kalitengah where almost every labourer can become a garment producer him/herself, in these larger-scale industries the labourers' chances to experience upward mobility and become employers (share holders) themselves are virtually nil.

5. Production Relations

5.1. Informal Working Arrangements

The informal characteristics of the production relations in the garment industry in Kalitengah can be seen most palpably in the recruitment of the garment workers who are employed in this industry. For many decades now, there have been no formal procedures to recruit the workers. In the past, as discussed in Chapter Four, the most common practice for recruiting workers was through the apprenticeship system, perhaps in the juragan's house, with kinsfolk, friends, or neighbours who were already sewing workers. For the more experienced sewers, the process of finding a job is less complicated. Basically there are two ways they can go about this. First, asking the juragan directly using a more 'formal' (serious application) or an 'informal' approach (during various social events), and the second is via friends, neighbours, kin, or ex-workmates.

Of these two methods, the latter is the more common practice in small-scale industries (see, e.g., Bell and College, 1982; Smyth, 1993; Hardjono and Maspypiati, 1990; Van Velzen, 1990,1994; Chotim, 1994). Indeed many big industries in Indonesia also prefer to use this system because it offers them such definite advantages (see, e.g., Saptari, 1995; Weix, 1990; Susetiawan, 2000). For the juragan in Kalitengah, the benefits of using this informal recruitment are: It reduces recruitment costs; does not invite undue attention from the higher echelons of the administration (the Tax Office or Department of Manpower); it guarantees good workers from the head-hunter (the person who recommends them); it is easy to manage the workers because they come from the same place or neighbourhood.

Besides the informal recruitment system, another informal characteristic of the production relations in the garment industry in Kalitengah is revealed in a set of unwritten working "agreements" which govern the relationship between the juragan and the buruh.
These unwritten agreements are basically founded purely on custom, which is inherited and Honoured from one generation to another. It is assumed to be understood and followed by both the juragan and the buruh. Those informal rules are as follows:

The Putting-Out System
Sewing workers operate under the putting-out system, which enables them to work in their respective homes. There are no strict working hours, but sewers are expected to finish their job within twenty-four hours. They collect pre-cut material from their juragan’s house at around 8-9 o’clock in the morning and they should return the finished products the following day at the same time. Up to the present, the majority of juragan in Kalitengah still observe these rules quite strictly; there are several young juragan are no longer so overtly strict in implementing these rules. Representing the “old school”, Pak Wito, told me that he will not allow his sewers to collect pre-cut material if they come late (later than 10 o’clock in the morning) because he believes that both juragan and buruh need to be disciplined to respect “the working agreements” that they have made. He said that, as his part of the bargain he always gets up very early in the morning to cut the patterns in order to keep his promise that his sewers can collect pre-cut material between 8-9 o’clock in the morning. If he does not do so, they will have to waste time waiting around for him to finish his task if he happens to get up late. In contrast, Pak Jali, a young juragan, told me that he had more flexible rules. He said that his sewers could collect the pre-cut material whenever it suited them. He is also not too strict about asking his sewers to return the finished products within twenty-four hours. Because several of his sewers come from distant villages, he allows them to collect more pre-cut material to be returned within two to three days.

Working Equipment
Sewing workers have to use their own sewing machines. My household survey shows that almost all sewing workers in Kalitengah possess a sewing machine. There are only one or two who do not. These sewers who do not have a sewing machine will usually be lent one by their juragan, particularly if they are close neighbours or kin. However, providing a sewing machine is not an obligation. If the juragan has no more sewing machines to lend, sewers have to borrow or rent a sewing machine from their neighbours. Sewers also have to buy the dynamo themselves if they want to change their sewing machine from a pedal-powered to an electric model. The price of a dynamo in Kalitengah is about Rp 35,000-60,000 (one week’s income of a coarse sewer). Juragan usually only help their sewers by providing credit if they want to buy the dynamo. The working machines that are provided by juragan are usually hemming machines and cloth-cutting machines. This is because the price of these two machines is quite expensive: Rp 2.5 million for a hemming machine and Rp. 1 million for a cloth-cutting machine. Since these machines are quite expensive and they are located in the juragan’ house, the garment workers who man them usually work in the house of the juragan.
Not only do sewers have to equip themselves with a sewing machine, they also have to buy the thread as daily working capital (mbolahi). In the past, the juragan were obliged to provide thread for their sewers. However, since it has become more difficult for juragan to control the honesty of their sewers who might be tempted to use sub-standard thread or to do work for other juragan, some juragan have stopped providing their sewers with thread, instead they have increased their piece-rate wage as compensation. To date many juragan prefer this arrangement, but some still prefer the old arrangement and continue to provide their sewers with thread. The latter group said that they felt kasihan (sorry) if their sewers had to buy thread first before they started to work. Pak Nardi told me his reasons for providing his sewers with thread. "Yen ndadak tumbas benang riyan mesakke, nggih yen gadaah arto yen mboten rak repot ndadak golek utangan nope. Yen tukang Jahit kulo biasane pun kulo sukani benang pindah dados wangsul langsung saget kerjo" ("I feel sorry if my sewers have to buy the thread first before they start work. It is no problem if they have money, if not they have to borrow some money from neighbours to buy the thread. I usually provide my sewers with thread so they can start work as soon as they go back home [after collecting the pre-cut material]").

Wages
The amount of the piece-rate wage is not usually mentioned in advance by juragan when they hire their buruh. Only a few juragan were quite open about stating the amount of the wage that will be paid to their buruh. Buruh themselves usually feel sungkan (reluctant) to ask the amount of their piece-rate wage beforehand. Mostly, they consider that it is taboo to discuss money matters in advance before the job has been performed. Only after bayaran (the due day of the payment of their wage, which is given at the weekend on Saturday morning) do sewers know the piece-rate wage, which has been set by his/her juragan. The week before the first payment is made, therefore, is a trial period for sewers before they decide to continue or to stop working with their juragan. If they are satisfied with the piece-rate payment given by their juragan they will continue to collect the pre-cut material, if not they will stop working after giving their juragan some reason for their decision. In Javanese fashion, they may make an excuse to their juragan not to continue working, perhaps by saying the job is too difficult for them or they will say that they have to attend ceremonies, but refrain from mentioning the amount of the wage as the main reason.

The problem of reading the juragan's mind about the amount of the piece-rate wage was described by Ibu Tuginah, a buttonhole-maker. She said that one month prior to Lebaran (during Ramadan), Haji Marno came to her home and gave her a job making buttonholes. She accepted that job without asking what she would be paid. She thought that Haji Marno would give her Rp. 100/piece as the other juragan did. Anxious about finishing the job, she

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8 More discussion on this issue see, e.g. Brenner (1992).
asked her husband to help her to carry out her task with the promise that she would buy him a pair of new shoes to celebrate Lebaran. A few days before Lebaran, Ibu Tuginah asked Haji Marno about her wage. She was very surprised when she received Rp. 60,000 from her boss, which meant that she was being paid only Rp. 35/piece. Whatever her true feelings, she could not complain because she thought that it was her own mistake for not asking about the amount of her piece-rate wage at the beginning. She said that she felt reluctant to ask about wages. Pertinently, since that time she has always refused to accept jobs from Haji Marno.

Juragan themselves --including Pak Widodo, an educated juragan who holds a business degree-- could usually never explain to us when they were asked about what were the yardsticks taken to determine the piece-rate wage for their buruh were. These juragan generally said that they only ungak-ungak (look and do what the other juragan do) in determining the piece-rate wage for their buruh. So, most of the time, the piece-rate wage paid to sewers who perform the same task scarcely differs from one juragan to another. The initiative to increase the piece-rate wage can come either from the juragan or from the buruh. Wise juragan will usually increase the piece-rate wage for their buruh when they discover that the other juragan have already increased the piece-rate wage for the same products. “Stingier” juragan will not increase the piece-rate wage until their buruh ask them to do so. In this case, the buruh will usually nyindir (intimate indirectly) to their juragan to ask for an increase in their wages saying: “Ngene juragan A niko sakniki yen njahit hem batik opahe pun Rp. 750 Iho juraganne” (“Juragan A now pays his sewers Rp. 750 for every batik shirt they make Sir/Ma’am”). Every juragan in Kalitengah is familiar with this insinuation. The very next day he will usually increase the piece-rate wage for his sewers. Another way to send a signal to their juragan that they want a higher wage is to delay the return of finished products. Pak Jali told me of his experiences: “Kulo pun apal kalih tukang jahit kulo. Angger rame ajeng njaluk undak-udakkan bayaran mesti le mbalekke ditelat-telatke. Yen ngoten kulo njur ngundakke bayarre” (I know the habits of my sewers very well. If there are plenty of jobs in the peak season and they want ask for a higher wage, they will usually delay returning the finished products. If this happens, I will increase their piece-rate wage). To delay returning the finished products, in fact, is only one among many forms of buruh resistance to their bosses, which also include stealing, feigned ignorance, slander, malicious gossiping and so forth which Scott (1985) calls the “weapons of the weak”.

Quality Control
To guarantee the quality of the products made by their sewers, juragan always do their best to hire competent sewers and evaluate the performance of their sewers during the first week after they have been hired. Besides this, there are some juragan also supervise the performance of their sewers on a daily basis. Every morning when the sewers return the finished products, the juragan will check the quality of the garments. If defective garments are found, sewers have to redo these without extra payment. In some cases --when defective garment is past saving--sewers or pattern-cutters have to replace these defective garments using new materials. Referring
to the alleged "cruelty" of some juragan in applying this rule, various garment workers told me the following stories:

The Unfortunate Pattern-Cutter
Pak Siswadi told me that at that time he was at his wits' end about how to find Rp. 480,000 to repay his boss after he inadvertently damaged two bolts of cloth. He said that he made a mistake when he cut the cloth differently to the way he had been told by his juragan. He admitted that it was his mistake. He had just had a quarrel with his wife the night before that bad day dawned. He said that he was still preoccupied with that problem which sapped his concentration while he was performing his task; then he made the mistake. Unfortunately his juragan would not forgive him. She gave those two bolts damaged cloth to Pak Siswadi and asked him to replace them with new ones. He said that he had no choice but to acquiesce in her demand.

The Arrogant Juragan
Pak Parno told me that his former juragan was very arrogant and perhaps the stingiest of all the juragan in Kalitengah. He said that his former juragan was very demanding; ironically, he paid a smaller piece-rate wage than to the other juragan. According to Pak Parno, every morning his former juragan invariably checked the quality of the garments made by his sewers. He did this contemptuously, not using his hands but his foot. If he found any small defects in these garments, without hesitation, he would tell his sewers to redo the work.

The Unfair Juragan
Pak Tentrem had a different story. He said that once he was given a job sewing jackets by his former juragan. Unfortunately, his former juragan made a mistake in interpreting his customer's request. After his customer complained, he asked Pak Tentrem to redo the work. Pak Tentrem tried to act professionally and obey his juragan's demand, although it was not his mistake since he had only followed his juragan's orders. However, he was very upset when his juragan said that he would not be paid unless he also redid other unsuitable jackets that had been done by other sewers. Pak Tentrem refused to obey his juragan's orders. From that time on, he never asked for a single job from him again. He said that up to that time his juragan still owed him Rp. 25,000.

Sewers in general see the "punishment" meted out by their juragan as their "professional" risk. Of course, these costly mistakes do not happen every day. The most common problem the sewers face is that the garments they make are dirtied by coming into contact with the oil of their sewing machines. If that happens, they have to spend extra time washing the garments before returning them to their juragan. The greatest problem is if the dirtied garments like school uniforms are white, sometimes it is difficult to clean them perfectly. In this case sewers have to replace them with new ones in order not to ruin their reputation with their juragan. To protect their good name, sewers will tell their juragan that "someone" has bought one of the school uniforms they have made, and then they pay the price of that garment out of their own pocket instead of telling the truth and admitting that they have ruined that garment.

Hiring and Firing
It is common knowledge among the sewers in Kalitengah that there is no guarantee from their juragan that jobs will be supplied every day. Sewers are very well aware that the
number of their jobs will increase in the peak season and decline during the slack season. They cannot complain, but can only accept a rule that seems “natural” for them. If juragan cannot supply them with a job during the slack season, sewers just accept this as a “normal condition” because they can understand that at this time only very few customers are buying clothes; forcing their juragan to cut production. The procedure for stopping the production is very simple. Juragan just say: “Dino iki ora ono jahitan ki, leren disik yo sesuk yen ono ben disusul.” (“Today there is no job to be done, so you may go home. If a job is available, I will let you know”). Sewers will usually acquiesce in this announcement. During the waiting period there is no single commitment owed by the juragan to their buruh in the way of providing a living allowance or other social provision, so sewers are free to find a new job if there is one available.

5.2. From a Cultural to Economic Explanations: The Practice of Informal Working Arrangements In Javanese Culture

Looking closely at this description, it is very clear that sewers and garment workers in general are in a very weak position in their relationship with their juragan. All the set “rules” in the unwritten agreements seem to regulate only the employees’ duties but not their rights, except for the right to a wage. Not only do garment workers have to equip themselves with sewing machines and daily working capital such as thread and electricity, they are also expected to shoulder many kinds of risks without a single form of working guarantee against ruining the products unintentionally, mistakes in cutting, costs for repairing their sewing machines, falling ill as a result of an healthy working environment and so on.

For decades these informal arrangements have operated almost without a hiccup burdening the implementation of the system. Open protest from the workers is virtually unheard of in the village. It seems that every actor involved in the garment business accepts their role and its consequences. The big question is what are the factors that guide the implementation of the informal arrangements, which are clearly biased towards the juragan, without inciting any open protest from workers?

5.2.1. From the Ideology of Rukun to Social Capital: The Cultural Explanations of the Existence of the Unbalanced Working Relationship

From the cultural perspective, the factor which seems to offer the best explanation of this phenomenon (the unbalanced relationship between juragan and buruh) is the Javanese ideology of rukun (harmony). Jay (1969:66) says that rukun “is a term both for a state of being and mode of action”. He calls it the state of being in “social harmony”. A state in which “all parties are at least overtly at social peace with one another”. As a mode of action he says, rukun “requires the individual to subordinate, perhaps even sacrifice, his personal interests”. In fact, there are many more definitions of rukun (see, e.g. Guinness, 1986; C.Geertz, 1976; H. Geertz, 1961). However, as Sullivan (1992) argues, although rukun has various
definitions such as “social harmony”, “communal calm”, and “absence of overt conflict”, these are all consistent with Javanese views.

Following Jay’s opinion above, to achieve (and maintain) social harmony or at least reduce overt conflict, all community members should be aware of the rules of conduct (adat istiadat) and etiquette (tata kromo), which consist of cultural elements, values and traditions and guidelines for how people should behave properly in the community (beradat or to act in accordance with the unwritten law). There are several important lessons, rules of conduct, etiquette, values, and traditions which it is stressed in Javanese culture should be obeyed in order to maintain social harmony. These norms are, to mention only some of them: to respect elders and people of higher social rank (ngajeni); to feel ashamed of bad conduct or wrongdoing (isin); to be patient or to be able to maintain self-control (sabar); to accept one’s fate consciously and not envy other’s success (nrimo); not to be selfish (sepuring pamrih rameing gawe); to be flexible and know the limits of what things are allowed and what are not (ngono yo ngono wing ojo ngono) (Mulder, 1975: 38-71; Guinness, 1986: 131-66); to accept everyone as the same, except for differences in rank and status (podo-podo); and to put yourself in the other’s place (tepo seliro) (Sullivan, 1992: 71-2). Someone who understands the rules of conduct and etiquette and behaves accordingly will be acknowledged as “a truly civilized person (a Javanese person-tiang Jawi)”; that is a person who has “the ability to discern subtle status differentials and affirm them with a nice adjustment in speech and demeanour” (Sullivan, 1992: 73).

Rukun is guaranteed if every community member is aware of his/her hak dan kewajiban (rights and duties) based on his/her social and economic position. This idea is very much influenced by “peasant culture” as described by Popkin (1979:11), summarising Wolf and Scott’s arguments in the following paragraph.

“Thus, in his relations with fellow villagers, the focus of the peasant is on adherence to norm and roles. In corporate villages, there is a “need to keep social relationships in equilibrium in order to maintain the steady state”, and this need is “internalized in the individual as strong conscious efforts to adhere to the traditional roles, roles which were successful in maintaining the steady state in the past”. In this view, a peasant’s starting point is “needs which are defined by his culture”, and the economic goal of a household is a sufficient “level of resources to discharge its necessary ceremonial and social obligations”.

The relationship between community members of various social classes for the creation of social harmony is formed by a pattern of dyadic mutual obligations, which tie one individual to another. The best illustration of this idea can be seen in the patron-client relationship where patrons and clients have their own rights (privileges) and duties (obligations), which have to be honoured in order to maintain social harmony (cf. Jackson, 1974; Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Scott, 1972).

A more recent concept to explain the reciprocal relationships (network) among the community members from various social classes is social capital. As was discussed in Chapter Two, norms, values, and cultures are important sources as an instrument (informal
law) to guarantee (enforce) that mutual obligations will be performed by each community member, on the basis of his/her social position. In this case, the dutifulness of each community member in performing his/her obligations can be motivated by both instrumental and by consumption motives (or consummatory motives as Portes calls them (cf. Portes, 1988).

Since the working relationships between juragan and buruh in Kalitengah takes place in a rural setting where Javanese cultural elements, values, and traditions are still important sources of guidance as to how people should behave and how people will be judged on the basis of their behaviour, these factors will affect the operationalisation of the informal working arrangements in the garment industry in that village. As part of the community, juragan and buruh, too, have an obligation to maintain social harmony by behaving properly according to their social position. Delineated by the social stratification, each of them has their rights and duties which are supposed to be respected and carried out.

If sewers are expected to be loyal clients, juragan who have a higher social and economic position are expected to be good patrons to their workers. As a good patron, a juragan should protect the livelihood of his/her workers. Therefore, although there is no written working agreement between juragan and buruh, in the context of Javanese values a juragan cannot behave semena-mena (with a heavy hand) towards his/her workers, unless he/she is willing to bring down the ire of his/her community on his/her head and be labelled "kikir 'stingy', sombong, egois 'conceited', kejam 'hard-hearted', kasar 'crude'[...] sugih anyar 'new rich' [...] sombong 'snob'" (Guinness, 1986: 162-163). To avoid those labels, juragan should show generosity to their workers. The generosity and kindness of juragan can be demonstrated in a number of ways.

*Still Giving Job Orders During the Slack Season*

Although hiring and firing present no problems to the juragan, many juragan prefer to keep their sewers by trying as hard as they can to provide work during the slack season, particularly if their employees are kin, friends, or close neighbours. When they were asked about what kind of innovations they had made in terms of their relationship with their workers, 36.6 per cent of the seventy-one juragan surveyed said that they still provided jobs for their workers during the slack season. Some juragan also mentioned that they felt obliged to supply their workers with a steady stream of work because they knew that the latter relied on them (dijagakke) to sustain their livelihood.

In fact, keeping good sewers not only benefits the workers, it also does the juragan no harm. If they do not make the effort, juragan will have difficulty in finding qualified sewers when the peak season comes. The reality is that although there are many sewers in Kalitengah and surrounding villages, finding good sewers is difficult and even more difficult during the peak season when every juragan needs to expand his workforce (see Cunnison, 1966 at the beginning of this chapter).
Leaving aside such material considerations, juragan and their sewers have usually built up a bond of mutual trust over the years, so when they already cocok (suit) each other, they would regret (eman-eman) discontinuing their cooperation. Pak Nardi, a 54-year-old coarse sewer, told me that although he received only a low piece-rate wage, he did not want to move to any other juragan. He believed in his juragan’s wisdom in determining the amount of his wage. He said that he could actually find a new juragan and be paid a higher wage if he wanted, and it would be easy for him as at that time it was peak season. However, he did not want to take this step. He told me that he had just declined the request from his nephew and his cousin who asked him to work for them. He said that he would feel bad (mboten penak) if he left his juragan simply to earn a higher wage. The exception would be were he make a mistake the case would be different. He did not want to be called a disloyal sewer (penjahit lecekan). In fact, he was quite happy that he had a juragan who could understand the importance of mutual understanding (mong kinemong), a patient juragan (juragan yang sabar). He did not want to work for a juragan who was very strict and authoritarian, handing out a job in the morning and asking them to return it in the evening. He opined that workers would feel resentful if they were pressured by their juragan. There are many sewers who share Pak Nardi’s opinion. They told me that they preferred to work for juragan who could ngajeki (provide continuous work) even at a lower wage than for juragan who paid a higher wage but put them in a precarious situation because of the fluctuating nature of the work. Indeed, a good juragan is much preferable to a juragan who is willing to pay a higher wage but is cruel and arrogant.

Several juragan themselves were also very critical of the conduct of other juragan who treat their workers unfairly (semena-mena). Pak Jali for one felt very annoyed with the attitude of Kalitengah juragan as he said “Kulo mesakke kaih buruh jahit niku yen pas rame wae dirayu-rayu, ning yen sepi ora dikeki gawe an” (“I pity the fate of sewers. During the peak season they are flattered (by these juragan), but when the slack season comes they are not given any work”). This is the reason, he said that he always provides the same amount of work for his sewers, regardless of whether it is peak or slack season. Several other juragan have also adopted the same “policy” as Pak Jali. Bu Topo even prefers to stock garments during the slack season to avoid competition with other juragan to find good sewers.

Increasing the Piece-Rate Wage Before Their Workers Ask Them To Do So
Determining the piece-rate wage is the prerogative of the juragan. The workers can accept it or, if they do not agree, they can leave it and let other workers take the job. The latter choice is not always easy for garment workers to make, particularly during the slack season, since it is not easy to find a job then. The absence of any opportunity to negotiate in setting the amount of their wage implies that the “prosperity” of the workers depends on the kindness of the juragan. If the juragan is empathetic enough to the workers, it follows that their wages

9 Lecekan from lecek (Javanese word) means loose.
will attract a higher standard too. Conversely it might be said a miserly juragan could be paid back with his own coin.

Increasing the wage is the juragan's prerogative. Most juragan will not raise their workers' wages unless they are asked to do so, either directly or indirectly, by judicious application of a sindiran (an insinuation). It is easier said than done for workers to ask their boss to raise their wage, since most of them usually feel sungkan (reluctant) for many reasons. There may be kinship ties, or they may be indebted to their boss, or maybe afraid of a negative response and so on. Below is an example of what Pak Giarto, a sewer, had to say about his dilemma between an inadequate wage and his reluctance to ask for an increase.

“Pripun malih Mas, bade nyuwwun undakan ait kulo mboten tekan, raos kulo mboten tekan. Bade ngomong niku ait kulo mboten dumugi. Sakjanne yen matur mbok aku diundaki nggeh diundaki, ning raos kulo mboten tekan...dados opahe nggih sak awehe, kadang kulo diparingi duwit kagem mundut rokok”. (“What can you do, brother, I would like to ask for a raise, but I do not have the heart and can't pluck up the courage. I would like to say something [to his boss], but again I can't see my way clear to do this. If I did tell [to his boss] to raise my wages actually he would like to do so, but it just doesn't feel right...so the amount of the wage depends on his wisdom, sometimes I am given some pocket money to buy cigarettes”).

Reluctance is the constant companion of sewers who have had bad experiences. More often than not, they will become more reluctant to ask again in the future. Bu Sugiyem told me although they were among the low paid sewers, they did not dare to ask for a wage increase since they had bad experience to do with this when their boss rejected their demands. “Nedi undakan diuneke kalian Pak Sarono, kok njaluk undakan terus”. (“[We] asked for an increase in our wages, but Pak Sarono [their boss] replied ‘Why do you nag for an increase all the time’”). Since then, Bu Sugiyem decided to quit and work for her elder brother, Pak Gito. In contrast to the stingy juragan, the wise juragan prefer to raise wages before their workers ask them to do so. These are usually the juragan who have had a background as a sewer before they became garment producers. Bu Yanti (former fine sewer who became a juragan mentioned in subsection 3.3) is one example. She told me that she gave a wage increase before her workers asked her to do so. Upon realising that the price of thread had increased, she said that the following day she raised the wages of her workers too. Pak Nardi used a different indicator for raising his workers' wages. He said that if he knew that the price of basic necessities had gone up, he increased the wages of his workers immediately. “Rego baksobaksobakso mawon sakniki semangkok sewu, mulane njahit opahe nggih dipanteske” (Even now the price of one bowl of meat-ball soup is one thousand rupiahs, so the wage of sewers should be set up properly”), he commented. Other more pious Muslim juragan used Qur'anic verses to justify their wisdom in increasing the wages of their buruh before they were asked to do so. Bu Topo said that according to the Qur’an, employers should pay their workers before their Sweat had dried. Trying to be a good Muslim, she said that she always increased the wage of her workers if she knew that the price of other things had already gone up.
Not Asking Workers To Replace Inadvertently Damaged Products

As was described another part of this chapter, most juragan are quite unyielding (kejam) towards their sewers, asking for replacement when the latter inadvertently damage the garment products. As the exceptions who prove the rule, there are also several compassionate juragan who never penalise sewers who damage the products unintentionally. Pak Mul told me that he had been a sewer for many years, so he knows how bitter the life of a sewer can be. Because of his own experience, he never asks his sewers to replace ruined products. He said that he felt kasihan (pity) if the consequences of the damaged product had to be shouldered by his sewers. It was not a big deal for him to replace the damaged products perhaps, but it was different for his sewers.

Providing Sewing Machines For Workers Who Do Not Have A Machine

There is an unwritten working agreement between juragan and garment workers by which it is understood that the latter should equip themselves with a sewing machine. By various efforts such as buying with cash or on credit, borrowing from a neighbour or kin or renting, almost all sewers in Kalitengah have their own sewing machine.

However for various reasons there are some sewers who do not have a sewing machine, because they have had to sell it to make ends meet during the slack season or the krismon (economic crisis). Should this be the case, some juragan are willing to lend their sewing machines to their sewers, although the loan is sometimes hedged in by strict “rules”. Pak Slamet complained to me about this. He said that juragan never lend their sewing machines for free or without making stipulations. Those juragan usually only allow their machine to be used to sew their own products. If this is transgressed they ask for their sewing machine to be returned. When he spoke, Pak Slamet had just returned his sewing machine to his juragan after he failed to satisfy his juragan’s prerequisites as stipulated before she lent him the machine.

Not all juragan are so inflexible, and even allow their workers to take the more expensive machines such as hemming machine, cloth-cutter, T-shirt processing machine and others home. Pak Uti is one of these exceptional juragan. He told me that he allowed one of his workers to take home his hemming machine. His motivation for taking such a decision was because he felt sorry if sometimes he could not give his workers a job during the slack season. By doing so, he gave his workers a wider opportunity to accept other jobs from the other juragan. For his own protection, before he let his workers take his machines home he made an agreement that his workers would give priority to finishing the jobs from Pak Uti as recompense for his kindness.

Reimbursement For Medical Costs If Workers Are ill

Some juragan show their kindness by giving their workers money to buy medicine or to go to the doctor if they fall sick. Mbak Yani, a pattern-cutter, told me that her juragan was very kind. Once when she fell ill her juragan gave her Rp. 100,000 to buy medicine. Pak Pono, a hem-maker, also told me the same story. When one of his sons was hospitalised, his two
juragan gave him Rp. 100,000 each to help him to pay the medical costs. Mbak Yani and Pak Pono are given special treatment by their juragan because they have close ties with their them. Mbak Yani’s juragan is her “foster parent”, while Pak Pono’s juragan lives next door to him so she knows everything that happens in Pak Pono’s home. Kindness of this sort is usually shown by juragan to their workers who have a close relationship with them, being close neighbours, kin, or tried and tested workers.

Advancing Loans To Workers In Cases Of Pressing Need
This kind of “generosity” is that most often practised by juragan in Kalitengah. Almost all the sewers whom I interviewed said that they had had the experience of asking for an advance loan for various reasons, like to pay school fees, to make contributions and other such obligations. Pak Suhep, a buttonhole-maker, told me that he borrowed Rp. 100,000 from his juragan when he held the wedding ceremony for his daughter. While Ibu Waniyem, a coarse sewer, told me that she asked for an advance of Rp. 45,000 on her wage payment when she did not have a job for a fortnight during the slack season. Although every sewer can borrow money from his/her juragan, the system of repayment differs from one juragan to another. The so-called “good” or compassionate juragan will make more flexible arrangements for their workers to pay off their loans. They may allow their workers repay their debt mencicil (paying in instalments), while stricter juragan will usually deduct an amount equal to their debt from the wages of their sewers (nyowok) at the first opportunity which arises.

Lending a Helping Hand When Needed
Besides loans, there are also a few cases where juragan are willing to lend a hand to help their Workers who may be in some sort of strife. This situation usually arises when juragan and workers have close ties or emotional relationships based on residence, kinship, religion or the like. Pak Pono and his wife, a hem-maker couple, told me that their juragan is very kind to their family. Since they live close to each other, their juragan is very well aware of what the living condition of Pak Pono and his family are like. They said that their juragan very often helped them by taking care of their children’s needs by giving school uniforms, lending a bicycle, giving pocket money, snacks, not to forget also giving a bonus when she make a good profit.

Providing Loans and Assistance For Workers Who Want To Mbabar Sendiri (Produce Their Own Garments).
Although very few, there are some juragan who are willing to help their workers to strike out on their own. The most common forms of aid given by juragan to such workers include:

10 Several garment workers had already worked for their juragan for years, sometimes from a very young age as domestic servants, for instance. In this case, a garment worker will be treated decently by his/her juragan. Therefore he/she often says that his/her juragan is very good just like his/her foster parent. In Weix’s (1990) case, the kindness of one juragan is compared to that of parents-in-law (seperti mertua). Juragan saya sangat baik seperti Ibu mertua. (“My juragan is very nice, just like my mother-in-law”).
giving a soft loan in terms of money or cloth; helping to sell their products; supplying the products at a basic price.

Actually there are plenty more examples of the kindness of juragan to be found in the daily life in Kalitengah since juragan and buruh have a great deal in common, sharing not only residential ties, but also ties of religion, kinship, membership of an association to name but few. Although various kindnesses of the juragan are most frequently enjoyed by the buruh who live in close proximity to their juragan, other buruh who come from different hamlets and different villages are not excluded from enjoying various acts of generosity from their juragan as well. Wortomo, whose case has been described in sub-section 3.3 of this chapter, is a good illustration. He is not Kalitengah by birth. His home village is Ngering, bordering on the western region of Kalitengah. However, when he joined the LDII (see Chapter Three for more details of this organisation) of which his juragan was the chairman, he enjoyed special treatment from his boss. Finally, with the help of his juragan when he began to mbabar sendiri, he became a big juragan himself emulating his boss.

Looked at from a moral perspective, the more juragan are willing to express their kindness to their workers, the more appreciation will be their reward, from their workers as well as from the members of the community in which they live. People will respect (ngajeni or ngormait) them and praise them as good juragan. People in Kalitengah usually refer to Haji Muhdi as the prototype of a good juragan. He is a successful juragan and also a pious Muslim who behaves as if his life is guided by the Qur'an and the Hadits. He treats his workers kindly and is always prepared to lend a hand to anybody who needs his help.

If juragan are expected to express their kindness, in reciprocation, to create mutual understanding and harmony, workers are expected to show their loyalty to their juragan. This loyalty can be shown in various ways, for instance by not making a fool of their juragan by moving from one juragan to another when they are offered a higher wage. If they do so, they will be labelled penjahit lecekan (disloyal sewers). Quite apart from this, it is hoped that workers will not be too demanding (particularly in asking for increased wages) because the assumption is that juragan know what is best for their workers.

From the paragraph above, we are justified in arguing that the kindness of juragan in fact is not a formality for the sake of virtue or for motives of consummatory (the ideology rukun) as such, an ambition to gain a personal reputation as good juragan. Pragmatically it is also a kind of investment in social capital (driven by instrumental motives) from which they hope that they can harvest the "profit" when they need it (cf. Purwanto, 1999b). In this case, norms (the ideology of rukun) are "only" the mechanism which "is built" by the community to create the conditions in which reciprocity founded on moral altruisn can be responded to by community members including the juragan and the buruh (see again the arguments of the proponents of social capital concept on this issue in Chapter Two). The going gets tough between juragan and buruh when one of these two parties breaks the prevailing code of reciprocity which signifies a break in the norms (the ideology of rukun or harmony). If this happens, the transgressor will be visited by the various sanctions mentioned in a little earlier.

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11 More discussion on this issue see i.e. Weix (1990) and Susetiawan (2000).
5.2.2. From Wage Maximiser To Effort Minimiser: Economic Explanations For the Unbalanced Relationship Between The Juragan and the Buruh

The willingness of juragan to show kindness to some extent has contributed to maintaining the ideology of rukun (harmony) in the relationship between the juragan and the buruh. However, the most important factor in maintaining this is the willingness of buruh to “sacrifice” themselves and accept an “unfair” working relationship arrangement which has been biased in favour of the juragan for decades. The question is why are buruh willing to do this? Is their subordination to juragan merely governed by culture, norms, and values as such or is there something else which might explain this phenomenon? The same questions were actually raised by Popkin (1979) when he criticised the proponents of the moral economy approach who believed that norms, village procedures, and patron-client exchange were fixed and culturally determined. Popkin (1979: 22) says “norms are malleable, renegotiable, and shifting in accord with considerations of power and strategic interaction among individuals”. His ineluctable conclusion is that everybody is rational in making economic transactions.

Inspired by the rationality approach suggested by Popkin, the analysis in this section will try to answer the following question: Do both parties involved in the garment industry in Kalitengah, whether juragan or buruh, behave (make their decisions) based merely on considerations of culture, norms, and values or are they also governed by their rationality? On the basis of the evidence gathered in the research, garment workers (buruh jahit), in fact, are rational actors. They have actually made calculations before taking the final decision to work as garment workers. Rationality, according to Popkin (1979: 31), is the decision-making process by which “individuals evaluate the possible outcomes associated with their choices in accordance with their preference and values. In doing this, they discount the evaluation of each outcome in accordance with their subjective estimate of the likelihood of the outcome. Finally they make the choice that they believe will maximise their expected utility”.

My in-depth interviews with many buruh jahit show that they are conscious of their working position as sewing workers compared to the other professions in the village. They are very well aware, not only the amount of their wages compared to the other professions, but far more pertinently they also know about the comparative advantages between one job and another in terms of the ratio between the labour (the effort) that has to be expended and the amount of wage (the reward) they will receive. Therefore the rationality of garment workers in accepting their work is based on two considerations. Their first endeavour is to maximise wages (or rewards), and their second is to minimise the effort (or labour).

Wage Maximiser
This kind of rational consideration is usually most clearly observable among younger (physically stronger) and more skilful garment workers. These workers, confident in their youth and skill, are usually more adventurous in looking for better job opportunities offering a higher wage, whether inside the garment industry (moving from one juragan to another) or
outside the garment industry, on the tobacco plantations or in construction.

Inside the garment industry, the possibility to maximise wages is the direct result of the shortage of fine sewing workers mentioned earlier. This opportunity is seized by some fine sewers to increase their bargaining power with their juragan. These fine sewers usually do not have permanent employers (see the case of Mas Maryanto), since they prefer to work for any employer as long as the latter is willing to pay them a high piece-rate wage. It goes without saying that the eagerness of these sewers to apply rational calculation challenges the harmony or rukan (the reciprocal altruism that should be shown by both juragan and buruh). This is why these sewers are labelled penjahit lecekan (disloyal sewers) by juragan in Kalitengah: sewers ---who in the eyes of juragan--- are selfish because they pay attention only to their own welfare.

Outside the garment industry the opportunity to maximise income is facilitated by the development of other economic sectors outside this industry. In the past, the garment industry was the leading sector in Kalitengah village, offering the best opportunity to earn a higher wage. Not only did the garment industry offer a wage more than five times higher than the wages in the other informal sectors in that village such as construction or agriculture during the golden era of that industry in the 1970s, the garment industry even offered a higher wage than that to be earned in the formal sectors such as school teaching, the civil service, or the armed forces. Now the winds of change are blowing and the garment industry is offering a less and less competitive wage compared to the other economic sectors in that village, particularly for the less skilled garment workers (coarse sewing workers). As an illustration, now, the wage of a coarse sewer is on average Rp. 6,000/day. This wage is the same as the wage of tobacco plantation labourers. Construction workers now even receive Rp. 11,000-15,000 per day, much higher than the earnings of the coarse sewers. Since there are many opportunities outside the garment industry which offer higher wages, many garment workers leave this industry to seize these opportunities; or at least only consider the job in this industry as a samben (a side-line job).

Pak Manteb (33), an ex-sewing worker, told me that he preferred to work as a construction worker not only because he was paid a higher wage than he had been as a sewer, but he also did not need to work extra time in the evening like as he had done in his former employment. Being a construction worker he said that he only worked from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., after that he was a free man. He could enjoy his evening with his family without the bother of thinking of his sewing task that had to be finished, sometimes needing extra work until late into night.

One of the impacts of wage degradation in the garment industry nowadays is that many juragan complain that large numbers of their sewers --mostly from the hamlets in the northern part of Kalitengah which are situated close to the tobacco plantation fields-- have quit working as sewers and prefer to work in the gadangan (tobacco plantation field). Although working in the tobacco plantation is much harder (because it is in the open fields), ex-sewers (or sewers who move back and forth between the garment industry and the tobacco
plantations) whom I interviewed said that they prefer to work on tobacco plantations because they earned the same wage as if they worked as garment workers, but with several advantages such as having more free time in the evening, not feeling pressured (kemrungsung) to carry out their sewing tasks so as to be finished on time, and not running the risk of damaging products. In addition, if they can find a good juragan—who is willing to apply more flexible arrangements in returning the finished products—these “ex-sewers” can still work as sewers during the evening.

**Effort Minimiser**

This strategy is adopted by elderly garment workers who are physically weak and whose skills are perhaps no longer what they used to be. For them, work as a sewer is a minus malum (the best of a bad thing) choice. Because of their less resilient physical condition, it is difficult for these types of garment workers to find better work either inside or outside the garment industry. These workers have only two choices, to work for a low wage or to be unemployed and even worse off. Therefore we can argue that it is rational for them to work as sewing workers even though their wages are quite low.

Pak Nardi is an example of a sewer who prefers to work as a low paid garment worker than to remain unemployed. He told me that as a coarse sewer he receives such a low wage that he can only live hand-to-mouth. He did it because it was one of the very few choices open to him. His sewing skills were very limited, so he could not compete with the younger sewers who are able to upgrade their expertises to keep pace with the demands of the customers (fashion). Pak Nardi also works for the older generation of juragan who produce cheap garment products (baju kodian) for customers with modest means, therefore his juragan cannot pay him a high wage. Since he works under those circumstances, he has little hope of better pay. Actually, he said that if it was possible he wanted to find another job, but physically he was not up to it. Furthermore, he explained to me the following:

“Cara iso nggolek kerjo liyane pilih kerjo liyane, ning ora iso. Tenogo kulo pun mbotenenjoh....sampun tuwo. Dados nggih pados pedamelan sing entheng mawon yen saget. Niki sakjane nggih pun entheng, ning asile mepet. Ajeng nyangkul pun mboten payu, tenagane nggih pun mboten enjoh” (“I'd prefer not to work as a sewer if I could find another job, but I cannot find one. I no longer have any physical strength...I have had my day. So I can only take on light jobs, if there are any. This work is light enough I reckon, but the wages are not enough to make a living. I want to work as an agricultural labourer but nobody is willing to hire me, my body is not strong enough”).

There are some other garment workers in the same situation as Pak Nardi. Most of them tell the same story. They told me that their income from working as a sewing worker is not enough to make a living. But, beggars cannot be choosers and it is all they have. They even feel that they are lucky because as an “elderly person” they are still able to find a job to do to earn some money. At least, they think that sewing is a light job, and does not require toiling in the heat, which is what they would have to do if they worked in the open fields. Mbok Yah, a widow aged 62, said that she felt happy that she could earn a little money by
helping Pak Wignyo to make buttonholes and sew on buttons. She could do this while she was watching television.

In the eyes of sewers like Pak Nardi and Mbok Yah, their decision to work as garment workers, even though they receive only a relatively low wage, is a rational choice since they cannot afford to become voluntarily unemployed which they could do if they lived in the (ideal) welfare state where people can choose to remain unemployed when they do not feel that wages in the existing equilibrium are high enough to justify them working under such circumstances. They (people like Pak Nardi and Mbok Yah) may prefer instead to receive benefit (www.bized.ac.uk/virtual/economy/library). Unfortunately, since there is no benefit provided by the state, working as a low paid garment workers or doing the drudgery (to borrow Chayanov’s [1966] conception) is better for them than becoming voluntarily unemployed.

My explanations also corroborate the findings of Susilastuti, who had previously carried out research in the same village. In her research conclusion she mentions that:

“Home-based work [as a garment worker] may be unsteady and to some extent exploitative. However, it serves as a fallback occupation for those who are underemployed or have irregular jobs. Without income from home-based employment, many families would face far more severe economic hardship. In many households, income from home-based employment provides basic household needs and acts as buffer against destitution (Susilastuti, 1996:139).

5.3. The Politics of Working Relationships During Peak and Slack Seasons: The Interplay Between Economic and Cultural Considerations

It is a difficult task for me to differentiate whether norms or economic calculations are more dominant in governing the informal working relationship between the juragan and the buruh in Kalitengah. Fukuyama (1999: 260) made the following statement when he was facing the same problem, trying to weigh up the interplay between moral altruism and economic calculations:

“[...] in practice the line between moral and self-interested behavior is not easy to draw. We often start out obeying a norm for self-interested reasons, but continue obeying it for what amount to moral considerations [...] And while it is important to maintain a distinction between moral behavior undertaken for its own sake and rational self-interest, it is difficult and often unreasonable to delink moral behavior entirely from self interest”.

In my opinion both of them (moral and economic considerations) are intertwined, and one aspect takes prominence over another under different circumstances. To understand the interplay between these two factors, I would like to describe the working relationships between buruh and juragan during the slack and peak seasons. The dynamic of these relationships will give a clearer picture of how cultural considerations on the one hand and economic calculations on the other will intertwine with each other to guide the informal working relationship in the industry.
As has been discussed in the chapter on theory, it is widely known that the garment industry is subject to seasonal fluctuations. These fluctuations are caused by various factors such as climate (factual seasons), fashion, and the economic "climate" (the demand for garment products which is influenced by the income of the consumers). Since the garment products of Kalitengah are mostly produced for medium- to low-level customers, this last is much more influential than either climate or fashion. Consequently only if the economic situation is good will the demand of the garment products rise. Otherwise, only if these consumers really need clothing for special occasions, such as Lebaran, will the demand for garments go up.

The majority of juragan in Kalitengah said that peak season (musim ramai) occurs twice a year. The first happens three months before Lebaran. The second takes place three months prior to the commencement of the new school year in July when pupils need new school uniforms. Several juragan also mentioned that during harvest time the demand for garment products will also go up quite significantly. Disposable income also has its effect. In places like Temanggung, Karanganyar, and Banjar Negara the demand for garment products will increase sharply when the people in these places have a good tobacco and clove harvest season. The slack season (musim sepi) falls in between these two peak seasons, in between Lebaran and the commencement of new school year, when the demand for garment products declines.

Much research has been done to explain the consequences of the seasonal fluctuations in the garment and the other similar industries for the livelihoods of the people who are involved in these industries. Unfortunately, so far, only limited information has come to light about the impact of these fluctuations on the informal working relationship between the juragan and the buruh. As was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, one of the characteristics of the informal relationship between the juragan and the buruh is that there is no written or permanent working contract between these two parties. Their working relationship depends on the dynamic bargaining position between these two parties. If, for instance, buruh should happen to obtain more power to increase their bargaining position, like that occasioned by the shortage of skilled labour during the peak season, on the basis of the economic or rational calculations as I already mentioned above, they (buruh) will try to achieve their goals which are beyond their reach during the slack season. In their turn, juragan also use the same strategy. They will impose their interests at the time when they are in a better position in relation to their buruh, for instance during the slack season when jobs are scarce.

It is, therefore, very interesting to discuss the political tarik-ulur (to pull and pay out) between juragan and buruh in response to the peak and slack seasons; particularly how the intertwining of cultural considerations and economic calculations affects juragan as well as buruh in making their decisions. Political tarik-ulur here means that one party (either juragan or buruh) should exercise their "power" cautiously. He/she should know about when it is an appropriate time to pressure the other party to achieve his/her own interests and when
it is time to make a concession, realising the other party's interests.

The politics of tarik-ulur run parallel with the Javanese teaching "Ngono yo ngono ning ojo ngono" (Be flexible and know the limits). It means that one person can put pressure on someone else in order to achieve their own economic interests, such as increasing wages for garment workers or cutting wages by juragan, but that person should also be aware of the limits which are allowed by the norm. Carelessness in this area will mean that person will not succeed in achieving his/her goals, and even worse than that he/she will harvest condemnation and be visited with social sanctions.

This is aptly illustrated by the case of Pak Jamto, a juragan who overstepped the limits. He finally ended up bankrupt after his workers quit and then boycotted him. Mas Martamto (one of Pak Jamto’s ex-workers) told me that before he went bankrupt Pak Jamto was a big juragan. He produced T-shirts, jackets, and other sportswear. Despite his success, Pak Jamto was an authoritarian and arrogant juragan. There was a time when his workers still tolerated his behaviour because they needed a job from him. Their patience finally ran out when he addressed his workers as “munyuk” (monkey) instead of by their name. His workers' feelings were badly hurt by his rudeness in using this pejorative. Subsequently, when he had just landed a big order to make T-shirts, many of his workers quit at one and the same time. After they left, these ex-workers intimidated other workers that they should not accept a job from Pak Jamto. They said they would beat anybody (diantemi) who dared to challenge them. This “boycott” made it difficult for him to meet the deadline set by his customers. As a consequence of his poor performance in meeting his commitment, his customers turned to other juragan. Hence, he lost a host of orders from his langganan (regular customers) which pushed him in bankruptcy. After he sold his kiosk, Pak Jamto went back to working for his mother as a pattern-cutter.

5.3.1. The Working Relationship Between Juragan and Buruh During the Peak Season

The peak season is marked by an increasing demand for garment products, such as batik shirts prior to Lebaran and school uniforms prior to the commencement of new school year. Many juragan told me that, if the economic situation was conducive, the garment stocks which they produced three to five months prior to Lebaran would be sold out during the peak season. Some juragan --whom I interviewed during the peak season-- even “complained” that they could not meet their customers’ demands (their clothing retail traders). Sometimes these juragan have no need to take their garment products to the marketplaces because, panting at the bit, their retail traders have already collected the products from their homes. Therefore, as a preparatory measure towards anticipating the increase in consumer demand during the peak season ---at least three months prior the D-day of the Lebaran or the new school year--- every juragan in Kalitengah starts to make plans.

Their preparations basically consist of two activities. The first step is to predict the type of clothing that is expected to sell well (that most wanted by the consumers), and the second
is to determine the amount of clothing that should be produced or stocked in that season.
Both of those activities are rather risky. To predict the taste of the consumers is not an easy
task since most juragan never carry out surveys to discover their consumers’ tastes. They
rely solely on their instincts in making their predictions. One or two juragan were sometimes
a little too creative in this. For example, a small number of juragan told me that they paid
attention to finding out what the popular type of batik shirt being worn by public figures on
the television was about that time. Having acquired this knowledge, they made their
predictions on the basis of what they had seen. To build up stock is also risky business for of
two reasons. First, if juragan overstock they will face the risk of losing profit, or even a loss
of capital if these products cannot be sold. The other side of the coin is that if juragan make
too little stock they also face the risk of losing profit if the demand for their products is high.

Below is an illustration of how difficult it is for juragan to make accurate estimates of
stock. In the Lebaran 1999, batik sutera kecewa (batik shirt made from imitation silk cloth)
was the most popular shirt bought by customers. Just about everywhere people wore that type
of shirt to celebrate Lebaran. Of course, juragan who had made an accurate prediction by
building up enough stock of that product reaped much benefit. Pak Jali, Bu Topo, and Bu Dar
all told me that they made “lumayan” (“just enough”) profit selling batik sutera kecewa at
Lebaran 1999. Although he only made a “lumayan” profit, Pak Jali told me that he could buy
a new car after that Lebaran. Conversely, the other juragan who had not make enough stock
could only bite their nails seeing their fellow juragan enjoying big profits. In the following
year, Lebaran 2000, many juragan such as Pak Marno, Bu Endar, and Mbak Tanti, and
others hoped that batik sutera kecewa would still be the popular shirt in which to celebrate
Lebaran. Many who had had to forego a big profit in the previous year tried to speculate and
produce a big stock of batik sutera kecewa. Unfortunately, although the garment market was
overflowing with batik sutera kecewa from all points of the compass such as cheap batik
sutera kecewa from Pekalongan, the demand for batik sutera kecewa in the Lebaran 2000
was far lower than it had been the previous Lebaran. Once again the juragan who had not
made accurate predictions had to delay their dream of reaping a big profit. Pak Jali, who had
made an accurate prediction by making batik prodo (batik with golden leaf motif), could
smile broadly, enjoying his big profit because consumers at that time preferred to buy batik
prodo rather than batik sutera kecewa for their Lebaran celebrations.

Since making accurate prediction is an art in itself, many juragan prefer to produce
small stocks of garment products and continue to produce or increase production during the
peak season after they know what type of clothes will be most in demand among consumers.
The upshot of the fact that most juragan in Kalitengah adopt this strategy is the increased
demand for garment workers, particularly sewers, during the peak season as every juragan in
that village needs more sewers to meet their customers’ demands.

Garment workers know that their juragan need them during the peak season as many
sewers said that: “Yen lagi musim rame yen mboten ketok sedino men pun di golekki
juraganne, ning yen sepi nggih ditekké mawon” (“In the peak season our juragan will look
for us if we do not show up even just for a day, but they do not give it a second thought if it happens in the slack season") or "Yen lagi rame diplothes gaweaa, yen sepi diitekke wae" ([We are] pressured with an unending stream of jobs in the peak season, but [we are] simply abandoned in the slack season). Since they know that they are needed by their juragan, the peak season is the right time for garment workers to ask for an increase in the piece-rate wage. During the peak season those workers will usually experience a piece-rate wage increase of between Rp. 25-75, depending on what type of garment they make. Fine sewers, who sew jackets and batik shirts, usually get more of an increase, in between Rp. 250-500. For the workers who work for less sensitive juragan, if they want a wage increase they need to go directly to their juragan and state their demand by telling the latter that their workmates who are employed by other juragan are already revelling in a higher wage. Garment workers who work for more sensitive juragan (lebih pengertian) will enjoy a new higher wage without needing to ask first.

The wage increase asked for by garment workers during the peak season will be much higher if the juragan who give them a job are not their permanent juragan. They call this kind of job pocokan (a temporary job), a job which needs to be finished quickly, to meet a deadline. For example, the normal piece-rate wage for sewing one jacket might be between Rp. 3,500-4,500, but if that job is pocokan, the sewers will ask to be paid at least Rp. 5,000/piece.

Besides asking for wage increases, the peak season is the time for some sewers to satisfy some of their demands, such as being bought a dynamo by their juragan. Pak Jali told me that his sewers were usually very spoiled during peak season. Should he ask them to finish their job a little bit faster, they might reply "Lha pripun saget cepet to Pak Jali wong mesin jahit te mesin jahitte men tesih dipancal, yen ken nyepette ngih mang tumbaske dinamo" ("How can we finish our job any faster than usual if we only use a pedal sewing machine. If you want us to work faster please buy us a dynamo"). Pak Jali said that finally he bought them several dynamos because he needed them to work faster. Several juragan told me that instead of giving a Lebaran bonus, they had bought dynamos for their sewers.

The tricks resorted to by garment workers to maximise their advantage in peak season sometimes trigger tensions and conflicts; not only between the juragan and the buruh, but also between one juragan and another.

The Problem of Mocok

Mocok (to be given a temporary job by other juragan) is one source of tension in the working relationship between juragan and buruh. This is because not every juragan allows his/her employees to take on another job from other juragan while they are still working for him/her. The strict juragan will usually feel offended if they discover that their sewers are accepting temporary jobs from other juragan. Naturally enough they are suspicious that their workers will delay finishing their jobs, but, at a more personal level, they also feel that they have been slighted and rated not capable enough to maintaining their credibility as juragan. In other
words, they think they are considered to be incapable of providing a permanent job or of not being in a position to pay their sewers an adequate piece-rate wage. This is why these juragan will pose their workers rhetorical questions when they discover that their workers are accepting pocokan (temporary jobs) in the nature of "Opo aku dianggep ora iso ngajekki piye?" ("Do you think that I can no longer give [you] permanent job?"), "Opo opahe kurang piye?" ("Do I not pay an adequate wage?") and the like. Several strict juragan, will refuse to allow their workers to be employed by them any longer after they have discovered that their workers have been "disloyal" and had accepting temporary jobs elsewhere. They will usually say such things to their workers as: "Yo wis yen kowe nandangi gawean liyo, sesuk ora usah njupukjahitan wae" ("All right, because you are doing another juragan's job now, tomorrow you need no longer to collect the pre-cut material"). Sewers will react variously in response to their juragan's ultimatum. The more skilled sewers (fine sewers) will react coolly. They will calmly quit and work for another juragan. Less skilled sewers (coarse sewers) will be quite intimidated. Usually they will apologise to their juragan and will accept no more pocokan jobs. Because of the pressures exerted by their juragan, some sewers I interviewed were really afraid to accept pocokan jobs even though their juragan had not provided them with a job for quite a long time. Pak Nardi is one example. One day when I visited him he was not doing any sewing. He said that his boss had been in Jakarta for couple of weeks, so the work had been temporarily halted. His boss said that the work would be resumed when he came back again from Jakarta. The problem was, he did not know for sure of how long his boss would stay there. He was really confused. If he did not work he complained he could not buy any rice, but if he accepted a temporary job he was afraid that his boss would come and suddenly give him a job while he was busy with work for another juragan. If that happened he said that he would feel ora kepenak (uneasy) because he had had a good relationship with his boss for many years.

By contrast, the more flexible juragan will allow their garment workers to accept pocokan jobs from another juragan as long as these workers still give priority to the jobs that are given by their permanent juragan. Sewers usually prefer to work for the more flexible juragan. Pak Sriyono said that he enjoyed working for his juragan because the latter had three remarkable characteristics, he was: (a) netral (neutral), which means that he did not prohibit his sewers accepting pocokan jobs; (b) ora rewel (not too demanding) which means that his juragan was not too strict in applying quality control; (c) loma (generous) which means that he readily gave his sewers loans.

Generally speaking, though not necessarily always true, big juragan are stricter in responding to the problem of mocok than are the small juragan. This because: they are under more pressure to produce a bigger quantity of garment products during the peak season compared to their smaller competitors. They can supply a relatively constant stream of jobs which can be used as an instrument to justify their policy of disallowing their labourers to accept pocokan; The greater social distance between big juragan and their labourers means that some big juragan have less empathy with the livelihood difficulties which have to be faced by their labourers than do the smaller ones.
The Problem of Hijacking Sewers

Hijacking sewers is another bone of contention between one juragan and another in the peak season. At the heart of this problem lies the acute shortage skilled sewers in Kalitengah. The problem will be most apparent in the peak season when many juragan in that village need skilled sewers to produce the fine garment products demanded by consumers such as batik sutera kecewa and batik prod. When they are put under pressure by the need to produce more garment products in order to reap more profit benefit in the peak season, some juragan, choose a short-cut solution by hijacking another juragan’s sewers to meet their own requirements. The hijacking is done by offering a higher piece-rate wage to the sewers who are needed. If the sewers agree to the offer, the following day they will quit their permanent juragan and go to work for the hijacker juragan. Interestingly, because Kalitengah is a small village, it is very common for permanent juragan know that their sewers have been hijacked. In this case they will ask how much the latter will be paid by their hijacker juragan. If the juragan thinks the new piece-rate wage being offered by the hijacker juragan is rational, he/she will increase the sewer’s wages to the same amount offered by the hijacker juragan in order to ensure the sewers keep working for him/her.

Because the process of hijacking sewers involves offers and counter-offers of wages, juragan and the other people in Kalitengah refer to what is happening as tumpang-tumpangan (putting something on top of another). The problem of sewer hijacking in Kalitengah during the peak season is exacerbated by the appearance of temporary juragan who actively do business only in the peak season. This type of juragan is usually willing to pay a higher piece-rate wage than those offered by the common juragan. Temporary juragan can do this because they do not have permanent sewers and do not have to bother to think about how to provide jobs for their sewers in the slack season. That is why ordinary juragan, who make long-run business calculations, constantly complain that these temporary juragan are irrational in setting the piece-rate wage for the sewers.

Sewer hijacking is a sensitive issue, particularly if it is done by juragan who live nearby or still have kin relationships with the previous employers of hijacked sewers. Even though it is sometimes the sewers themselves who ask other juragan to be “hijacked” (in the case of lecekan sewers who are always searching for new juragan who are willing to pay higher wages), the previous juragan will accuse those juragan who are willing to hire the lecekan sewers of uncouth behaviour or of being norm breakers. One juragan, Haji Marno, once told me that he was very upset by the behaviour of Pak Robin (who lived near his house), who had “hijacked” one of his tukang itik (button-hole-makers). The experience was all the more bitter because this tukang itik was his own sister. He said that at that time he had not been able supply his sister with a job for a couple of days because of a hitch with the raw materials, but he could not bring himself to believe that Pak Robin had had the sheer cheek to use that opportunity to hijack his tukang itik. He gave a comparison to illustrate his position. He said that just a few weeks earlier, several of his sister-in-law’s sewers had wanted to work for him because they could no longer stand working for their present juragan. Although
tempted, he refused to take them on because he would merasa tidak enak (feel uneasy) were his sister-in-law to find out that her ex-sewers were working for him. He made the same decision when several of Pak Jali’s sewers asked him for a job. Haji Marno acted as he did because he did not want to be accused of being a hijacker.

To prevent hijacking, besides increasing the wage of their workers to the same amount as that offered by the hijackers as long as the amount is still rational, juragan usually emphasise the importance of kekeluargaan (a sense of family or togetherness) between them. The sense of family here is actualised by juragan with the promise that they will still give their workers jobs in the slack season.

The internalisation of the sense of family by sewers is represented by their preference for working for reliable juragan who can provide them with a job at all seasons rather than hijacker juragan who are willing to pay high wages but only for a short period. Cogently, even more telling are several cases where, as the result of the impact of the sense of family, sewers are willing to undergo “self-exploitation” for the sake of their juragan. Pak Samidi is one example. One day when I visited his home, I found that he was ill. When I asked him why, he told me that he had worked overtime for three days in a row. He said that his juragan had not ask him to do the extra work, but only told him that if he could finish the job, the products would be taken to the market the following day. Since he knew that the market was bustling at the peak season, he would feel regretful if the products were not finished when his juragan needed them, so he took the initiative to do extra work which had caused him to fall ill. Bu Sugiyem is also willing to do extra work for her juragan, who is also her elder brother, in the peak season. She said that her juragan supplied her with thirty-two pieces of pre-cut cloth every day during the peak season. To finish her job, she had to work from 9.00 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. and continued her work again after she had taken her sahur (early breakfast before fasting during the Ramadan) from 4.30 a.m.-6.00 a.m. before she did domestic chores for her family.

Of course, besides being driven by the motive of actualising the sense of family and togetherness, sewers are willing to do extra work because they also need extra money to celebrate Lebaran and to save in preparation to face the slack season. For most sewers the opportunity to earn more money occurs only during the peak season.

5.3.2. The Working Relationship During The Slack Season

The slack season is marked by a declining demand for garment products. The slack season inexorably casts its shadow in every marketplace. There is no big difference between very large Klewer Market, Solo and the small market in Kalitengah itself. In the slack season every juragan complains, almost always using the same statements such as “Wah pasare lagek sepi” (“The market is humdrum”), “Kulo ten pasar malah tombok” (“I go to the market only to lose money, instead of making a profit”), “Lungo neng pasar ora cucuk” (“The effort spent and the benefit from trading in the market is out of kilter”) and so on to indicate that the garment market is not conducive to making a profit.
As a subsequent impact of that situation, juragan will usually cut their volume of production or even halt their production temporarily until business conditions are ripe for them to restart their activities. Juragan in the village said that in slack season they would usually cut their production by at least 50 per cent of their “normal” rate condition. My survey of the profile of the garment industry in 2002 shows that in slack season the total production of garment products in that village was 36 per cent of the normal production rate in the peak season. There are only a few juragan, as I mentioned in the previous section, who do not slacken production.

Needless to say, the slack season is a hard time for the majority of garment workers, particularly for the coarse or less skilled sewers who are mostly either women or elderly sewers. Many of them have to make do with fewer jobs and eventually with less income too. If in the peak season garment workers work seven days/week and are supplied with an abundance pre-cut material, in the slack season they usually only work three to four days/week and are supplied with only a few pieces of pre-cut material. Bad though it is, this situation is considered better by some garment workers than the fate of their fellow workers who find themselves redundant. Below is an illustration of the battle faced by one garment worker during the slack season.

Case of Bu Tuginah, a coarse sewer during the slack season

Bu Tuginah is a 55-year-old buttonhole-maker who lives with four family members. Three months after Lebaran 2000, I paid a visit to her home. At that time her home was quiet. She said that she had just finished her task of making buttonholes for thirty shirts. With a piece-rate wage Rp 60, Bu Tuginah said that she could only earn Rp 1,800 that day. That money was not enough to buy 1 kg rice, since the price of 1 kg of rice was Rp 2,400 at that time. The situation was a stark contrast the way she was a few months before, prior to the Lebaran celebration, when I had also paid a visit to her home. At that time she was a very busy person. “I don’t have a time to cook”, she said to assure me of how busy she was. Her home was piled high with unfinished shirts, which all needed buttonholes. She told me that every day her bosses supplied her at least with 430 unfinished shirts. Therefore it was no wonder she said that she could earn more than Rp 25,000/day or the equivalent to 10.4 kg of rice by doing her work as a buttonhole-maker.

There are many more garment workers who suffer the same fate as Bu Tuginah. These workers have to strain every sinew to the top of its bent to make ends meet until the peak season comes round again. Some of them who possess other skills try to find a job outside the garment industry in construction or agriculture. Those garment workers who do not possess any skills other than sewing remain in the garment industry and just have to shoulder the consequences.

The scarcity of jobs in the slack season eventually affects the balance in the working relationship between the juragan and the buruh. In the peak season it is the juragan who, need their buruh, in the slack season the situation is reversed; buruh need their juragan.
Unfortunately, the bargaining position of the labourers, which weakens in the slack season, is undermined by redundant garment workers who are willing to be paid lower piece-rate wages in order to find a juragan who will to hire them. Hence, the combination of the two main problems which blight the slack season --the problem of job scarcity and the need to survive which forces buruh to readjust their bargaining position-- creates the dynamics of the working relationship between the juragan and the buruh. These dynamics are revealed the following incidents.

Loss of Jobs
It is a common occurrence in Kalitengah that, after the peak season, particularly after the Lebaran celebration, for garment workers to lose their jobs for a couple of weeks because their juragan halt production. In this case, garment workers have no choice, but to obey the decision of their juragan. Some sewers even said that they did not dare ask their juragan about when production would be resumed. These workers have to be patient until their juragan think that the time is right to restart the production.

In order to survive during this period of waiting, garment workers have to make every effort to find sideline jobs. Those who come from the southern part of the village (from the more rural region) will usually go to the tobacco plantations during this period of enforced rest to seek a supplementary income until garment production resumes again. Those who live in the northern part of the village (in the more urban region) are more likely to try to find sideline jobs in the trading sector (as petty traders), hire themselves out as casual workers, or breed poultry. Finding a sideline job is one coping strategy to which garment workers resort to survive the slack season. The author's household survey shows that almost 24 per cent out of 412 sewers in Kalitengah have sideline jobs.

Asking for payment in advance is another way to cope with the slack season. Generally speaking, sewers can always ask their juragan for an advance payment when they are faced with pressing needs. The amount of the loans doled out by juragan varies; it depends on the financial capability of each juragan. Usually the amount of the loan is between Rp. 10,000-50,000. Therefore ---if the off-session continues for quite a long time--- that money is simply not enough to suffice as supplementary income. In relation to this, Pak Warto, a 50-year-old coarse sewer, told me the following story.

"I am really disappointed in the attitude of Kalitengah juragan in general. They "exploit" us by holding us back with plenty of work ---which enables them to reap huge profit--- in the peak season. However, they just abandon us and leave us without a job in the slack season. It is common for us to borrow some money from our juragan in the slack season. They usually allow us to borrow around Rp. 10,000. However, that amount is too small for us to pay for our needs during our jobless period, even though my juragan always gives me special treatment by allowing me to borrow twice what the other sewers are normally allowed. Here, there is no guarantee from our juragan that they will give us a job in the slack season, let alone guaranteeing fulfilling our basic necessities".
When their employers can no longer help them, garment workers will try to borrow money from other sources such as kinsfolk, more distant relatives, or close neighbours. Sometimes they even need to sell their valuable belongings. The final safety net is composed of the *warung* owners (shop-keepers). In the slack season, when they do not have a job, sewers will usually ask the shopkeepers for credit (*ngebon*) to buy basic necessities with the promise that they will pay back their loan when garment production begins again.

**Reducing The Piece-Rate Wage**

Several *juragan* use the slack season for their own benefit by cutting the piece-rate wage of their workers. This decision is taken to “balance” their workers’ demands to increase their piece-rate wage in the peak season. Those *juragan* told me that since they had no other option, they always increased the wages of their workers if they were asked to do so in the peak season. However, these *juragan* usually always warned their workers that their wages would be reduced again in the slack season when the situation in the garment business deteriorated.

**Conflict Among Garment Workers**

The increase in the competition to find a scarce job in the slack season also causes conflict between one sewer and another. Trouble flares up when one sewer snatches another sewer’s job by suggesting a lower piece-rate wage to a *juragan* who promptly offers them a job. This incident usually leads to “psychological warfare” among those sewers who realize by spreading malicious gossip or by *nengnengan* (not talking to each other). Another result of the psychological warfare is that sewers feel unhappy with their *juragan* who are ready to compare invidiously the willingness of one sewer to the reluctance of another to accept the same condition, namely to be paid a lower wage to another. They feel that their loyalty to their *juragan* has been betrayed if the latter gives a job to other sewers who are willing to be paid, let’s say Rp 50 lower than they would accept.

Another source of conflict among sewers during the slack season arises from the unfair treatment of sewers by their *juragan*. It is far from uncommon for *juragan* to supply more pre-cut material to their favourite sewers or to sewers who have close ties with them, including kin, more distant relatives, and close neighbours. The sense of injustice in this case can trigger feelings of envy, which eventually generates a tense relationship between “spoiled” sewers and other sewers who do not receive special treatment from their *juragan*.

As has already been intimated, the fate of all garment workers is not necessarily the same. As a matter of course, generally speaking, the more skilful sewers experience better conditions than do the coarse sewers. *Juragan* too adopt different “policies” in their treatment of their workers during the slack season. Some *juragan* told me that they felt obliged to provide a job for their workers, even though they themselves were in a pretty precarious position in the slack season. They consciously make this decision because they know that the livelihood of their workers depends on the work they supply them. Pak Prapto
complained to me that he got a headache just thinking about how to use his limited capital as efficiently as possible in order to keep his workers busy during the slack season. Other juragan told me that they tried to provide their workers with casual jobs while waiting for the right time to restart production.

6. Conclusion

The working relationships between the juragan and the buruh in the garment industry in Kalitengah village are complex. This complexity can be attributed to the fact that the working relationships between these two parties are very much affected by Javanese culture and its norms and values which prevail where this particular garment industry is located. Under these circumstances, to achieve their economic goals, both the juragan and the buruh must honour these cultural aspects in order to maintain social harmony (rukun). Failure to do so will incur various social sanctions from their community. Pertinently, the generosity and kindness shown by the juragan to their buruh, in an industry which is characterised by various exploitative practices in its day-to-day operations should be understood within this framework: How can the juragan accomplish their economic goals and still maintain social harmony? In this case the generosity of juragan can be said to be driven more by instrumental motives than by moral altruism. This because all this generosity and kindness will be shown by juragan only if they know that their buruh will reciprocate by giving them their loyalty. However, it is important to note here that buruh are also rational economic actors, so they will reciprocate the generosity of their juragan only if they can achieve equal (rational) economic benefits as well. If not, they will break “the unwritten law” and become a disloyal sewer (penjahit lecekan). Indeed, we can conclude that norms, values, and culture which govern the informal working relationships in the garment industry in Kalitengah, are “obeyed” because so far both parties have still felt that they do derive equal (at least rational) economic benefits. Should this cease to be the case, they will break the unwritten law and “prefer” to be called stingy juragan or disloyal buruh.