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THE INFORMAL ECONOMY OF THE JUST SHARE IN INDONESIA'S MOTORBIKE – TAXI INDUSTRY

Wednesday 31 July
9.30–11am

Speaker

Dr. Robbie Peters
University of Sydney

Location

Kambri Precinct Marie Reay 3.03,
ANU Registration not required

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ANU College of
Arts & Social
Sciences
Asia & the Pacific

About the Lecture

Indonesia's new ride-hailing economy is touted as a partnership between the motorbike-taxi-drivers and the company that owns the smart-phone application used to get customers. Drivers must be accountable, and the company must give them 80 per cent of the customer's fare. In reality, company profits have boomed, while driver incomes have plummeted. A flood of new drivers into the ride-hailing market forces them to work longer for less, while the government's repeal of petrol subsidies makes motorbike use more costly. This skewed share provokes driver strategies of unaccountability like taking-off one's uniform to negotiate face-to-face fares with customers; giving one's license to a friend to act in one's place, 'spoofing' one's smartphone to misrepresent one's GPS location, not taking customer orders, or sharing rather than responding individually to orders. These are quotidian responses to the 'friend or exploiter' conundrum that drivers display at protests over their declining incomes and the booming profits of the application provider. They are a means of redistributing a just share through a principle of cooperation based on

messiness and spontaneity and expressed through the term *kerabut* – a chaotic livelihood involving many people through which opportunities emerge

About the Speaker

Robbie Peters is a Senior Lecturer in anthropology at the University of Sydney. His book, *Surabaya, 1945-2010* was shortlisted for the 2015 EuroSEAS humanities book prize. He has written journal articles on urban renewal and the political economy of violence in Indonesia and on gender and work in Southeast Asian cities. His current research and publications tackle such issues as the cultural politics of death and its commemoration in the Indonesian city; the on-demand motorbike taxi economy in Indonesia and Vietnam; and the effect of new cash transfers programs on Indonesia's urban poor. He is most interested in the history and consequences of revolutionary violence in Indonesia, about which he is writing a book.

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