SOCIETY + SPACE

CRITICAL SPATIAL PRACTICE AND URBAN POOR POLITICS: (RE)IMAGINING HOUSING IN A FLOOD-PRONE JAKARTA

BY EMMA COLVEN AND DIAN TRI IRAWATY

This essay is part of the Critical Spatial Practice forum.

Resistance in the ruins

In August 2016, behind the Maritime Museum in North Jakarta's *kota tua* (old town), we walked into the neighborhood of Kampung Akuarium, or rather its ruins. The *kampung* – a term meaning village that is used in the urban context to describe self-built, semi-formal neighborhoods – and its 500 some residents had been forcibly evicted by the city government four months prior. Though the city demolished the housing, it stopped short of clearing the land. The ground was littered with shards and fragments of people's homes; timber, glass, brick, tiles. Despite this, many residents were holding out in temporary homes constructed atop what were once land plots, and in tents erected among the rubble. Community spaces had been hastily put back together in an act of reclaiming space and rights.

Photo 1. Kampung Akuarium in August 2016. The banner in the left of the photo asks DKI Jakarta to support the existence of the kampung, along with neighboring kampungs Pasar Ikan and Luar Batang, both of which were also forcibly evicted in April 2016. Photo: author's own.

The *penggusuran* (eviction) of Kampung Akuarium was by no means an isolated event. Instead, it followed a series of evictions in recent years carried out by the city under the under the guise of flood management, including that of Kampung Pulo, Bukit Duri and Luar Batang, to name a few. Evictions in Jakarta have historically been legitimized by problematic representations of *kampungs* as slums, obstacles to development, and symbols of backwardness. This conforms with a popular narrative in Jakarta (and other cities in the post-colony) that informality is incompatible with development and modernity (for a full discussion, see Irawaty 2018).

More recently, it has become common practice to evict already-vulnerable residents to accommodate flood management projects and reduce flood risk. The Jakarta Legal Aid Institute reported that in 2015, 48 of the city's 113 evictions were related to flood mitigation. These evictions have had an overwhelmingly detrimental impact on *kampung* communities adjacent to riverbanks, reservoirs, and the coast who have been evicted to accommodate such projects, often without adequate compensation. In addition to losing their land, evictions are also traumatic events for residents (Immanuel 2017). These same communities have often been simultaneously (and inaccurately) portrayed in political and popular discourse as a primary cause of urban flooding (Leitner, Colven and Sheppard 2017). This simplistic narrative, which belies the much more complex arrangement of soci0-ecological processes contributing to flooding, has used the urban poor as a convenient scapegoat for the city's water woes, and portrayed evictions as a "necessary evil" (Padawangi 2019: 67).

The recent wave of evictions in Jakarta is indicative of a broader trend across cities wherein forced, state-led evictions are increasingly seen as compatible with environmentalist agendas, as a recent body of critical geographical scholarship can attest to (Doshi 2013, 2019; Anguelovski 2019). This literature has highlighted the contradictions between green and red agendas (Baviskar 2003); the mobilization of aesthetics (Ghertner 2015) and notions of environmental 'beauty' to justify evictions of the urban poor (Harms 2012); and the production of increased risk for riverbank settlers via attempts to minimize environmental risk (Millington 2018). Alvarez (2019) proposes the concept of 'benevolent evictions' to describe a new model of dispossession being deployed in Metro Manila, in which the state displaces the vulnerable and 'undesirable' poor from the city center to the periphery under the premise of enacting charity and goodwill, and "saving lives." Their resettlement is further framed as being part of a "participatory" housing program.

Contributing to this critical scholarship, Weinstein et al. (2019) observe in Mumbai and Kolkata that development agendas which contribute to flooding have remained unchanged despite the state's recognition of flood risk as a problem. They critique the recent trend in urban planning to treat mainstream urban resiliency and sustainability agendas as a potential solution to render the continuation of capitalist urban development, and the resolution of its associated socio-ecological costs as mutually achievable goals. Similarly, Betteridge and Webber (2019: 6) argue that, far from being transformative, urban resiliency planning is "an inherently conservative practice that emphasizes maintaining existing (or prior) conditions."

In this essay, we focus on how these urban resiliency projects and environmental interventions are resisted by urban poor communities, who often stand to gain little benefit from their implementation. While flood risk management in Jakarta has effectively become a tool to dispossess the urban poor, evictees have not gone down without a fight. Working alongside activists and urban poor NGOs, these communities have organized to challenge state-driven displacement and resettlement, and to stake claims to land that are often not recognized by the state. Together, these actors have engaged in various forms of 'critical spatial practice' to resist the dominant mode of global urbanism that "bears the imprint of previous rounds of domination and capital accumulation, when European colonial authorities sought to remake Asian, African, and Latin American cities along the lines of emergent principles of the European urban planning" (Sheppard et al. 2013: 894), and which all too often works against Jakarta's urban poor. We explore these practices in which Jakarta's *evicted* communities and their allies engage in order to contest the dominant modes of urban governance and flood management. We begin firstly by briefly tracing the relationship between market-led urban development, evictions and flood risk in Jakarta.

Ecological afterlives of Jakarta's urban transformation

During the 20tn century, Jakarta experienced rapid rates of urban growth which transformed its urban landscape and ecology. More recently, these changes have been greatly accelerated. Between 2011 and 2014, Jakarta's real estate market experienced incredible growth and intensive speculation. Knight Frank report that prime residential, and price office development land indices in Jakarta increased by 184% and 192.3% respectively, between 2011 and 2013. Situated within a national context of "hybrid neoliberalism", Jakarta's landscape reflects the long-standing dominance of Indonesian property conglomerates with connections to political elites, as well increased flows of foreign investment (Herlambang et al. 2018).

While demand and growth have slowed in recent years, the interest of foreign investors remains high due to the potential for enormous capital gains, which give Jakarta a competitive edge over cities. Additionally, the "stories [of Jakarta's growth] that [investors] hear convince them to come to Jakarta" (Colliers property consultant, May 2019, personal communication). As a result, real estate agents are able to continue selling upscale residential apartments, utilizing seductive marketing images and the performative effects of architectural scale models in lieu of actually-existing buildings. Potential buyers are reminded that floor plans and models are artistic representations, and 'should not be regarded as representations of the final product' nor be considered part of any offer or contract (May 2019, personal observation). For example, Agung Sedayu and Salim Group's Pantai Indah Kaput (KIP) 2 development has not yet been completed, but the website reports that units for two residential areas and two shophouses are already sold out (at the time of writing, June 2019). The promotional website includes a YouTube video of 'project progress', which mostly depict a striking lack thereof: an unfinished bridge and main road, empty fields of soil and disturbed vegetation, and the early foundations of a building.

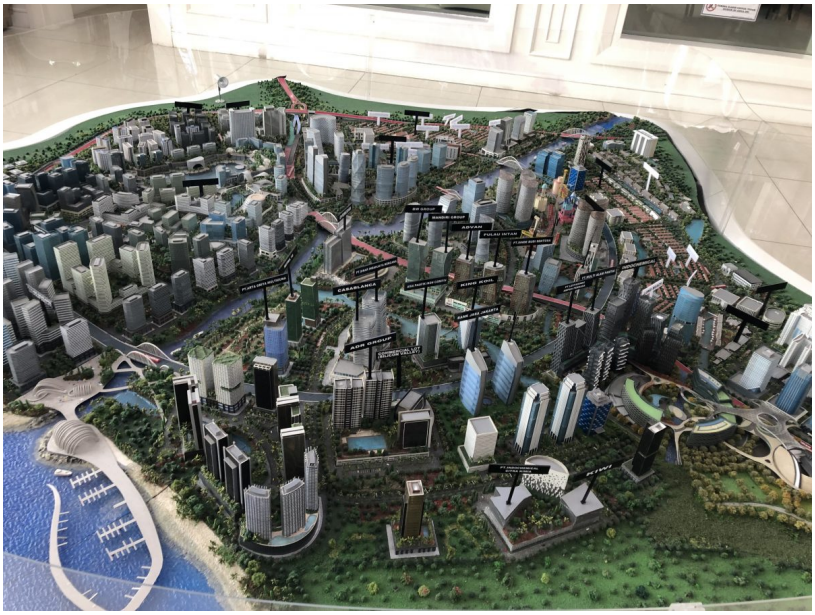

Photo 2. The model for the planned Pantai Indah Kapuk (PIK) 2 project. Marketing gallery, Penjarigan, North Jakarta. Photo: author's own.

Jakarta's real estate boom, urban growth, and increasing inequality have contributed to an already-chronic lack of affordable housing. In a city where land is already scarce, and land prices already high, the city government has consistently struggled to provide adequate housing for the poor. For example, the government-led the *Kampung Deret* Program launched in 2013 pursued in-situ *menata tanpa menggusur* (upgrading without displacement) in order to provide housing for the poor. However, the project failed due to legal issues and was discontinued by the end of 2014 (Rukmana 2018). Another policy requiring developers to include affordable housing in their developments has also been largely ineffective due to poor regulation.

In this context, Jakarta's *kampungs* offer an important, alternative form of affordable housing for the urban poor. Home to an estimated 60–70% of Jakarta's residents (Wilhelm 2011 cited in Rukmana 2018: 85), these neighborhoods play a vital role in the economic, political, and social fabric of Jakarta. But *kampung* communities are under increasing pressure from market forces, as private developers and state actors have come to regard them as wasteful and unproductive spaces of "dead capital" (Roy 2011: 227; Irawaty 2018). Under contract from developers, land brokers are actively and slowly assembling plots of land via divide and conquer strategies (Leitner and Sheppard 2018) on which to build new middle-class and premium residential apartment buildings.

Photo 3. Billboards outside the PIK2 marketing gallery advertising luxury homes and offices with sea views, as well as installment payment plans. Penjarigan, North Jakarta. Photo: Emma Colven

The fallout from these transformations has also been borne by the city's ecology. Owning in part to weak regulation, many projects have been built on land that developers lobbied to have rezoned. In other instances of 'elite informality' (Roy 2011), some are in violation of Jakarta's spatial plan (Rukmana 2015). These developments have increased the pressure on the city's many rivers, canals, and flood infrastructure, and contributed to rates of groundwater extraction so high that they have earned Jakarta the moniker 'the sinking city'.

Jakarta experienced major flood events in 1996, 2002, 2007 and 2013. In February 2007, when heavy rains left some 75% of the city inundated, Jakarta reported losses of USD 900 million (Mohsin 2015). In response, the government has undertaken two primary flood management projects in recent years to reduce flood risk: dredging and *normalisasi* (normalization) of the city's rivers and waterways; and strengthening the city's sea wall. These projects have been partly supported by the financial backing of the World Bank and Japanese International Corporation Agency, as well as the technical expertise of an entourage of Dutch and European engineering firms.

These environmental interventions have had an overwhelmingly detrimental impact on communities adjacent to riverbanks, reservoirs, and the coast who have been evicted to accommodate the projects, often without compensation. Batubara et al. (2018) place these projects within a broader context of capitalist urbanization that has continually prioritized accumulation of profit over the urban poor.

These projects have also garnered critique from an ecological perspective. Critics wage that these projects are reflective of concrete-heavy, infrastructural fixes that have been subject to critique within geography and urban planning scholarship for failing to attend to the social and political dynamics that produce flood risk in the first place. Additionally, such projects typically involve top-down implementation, excluding residents who are assumed to lack the necessary (technical) knowledge to be able to contribute or participate.

(Re) imagining housing in a flood-prone Jakarta

Informed by these critiques, a network of actors from across Jakarta have engaged in a range of critical spatial practices to challenge processes of urban displacement dispossession, and forced evictions, often carried out in the name of flood management but which facilitate further commodification of land. This network includes evicted *kampung* communities (and those vulnerable to eviction), some of which are organized within urban poor network (JRMK), non-profits the Rujak Center for Urban Studies (RCUS) and *Architecture San Frontières Indonesia* (ASF-I), and community organization *Ciliwung Merdeka*, as well as community organizers, architects and artists. Together, they have produced a set of counter-hegemonic imaginaries of alternative urban and ecological futures, drawing on situated forms of knowledge that link theories of social and ecological justice to practice. In the section that follows, we describe these practices, and consider how they generate friction against the enclosure and commodification of urban commons, and mainstream urban resiliency planning, which often fails to engage with broader processes of capitalist urbanization and capital accumulation.

In recent years, the city has offered compensation in the form of public housing *rusunawa* (an abbreviation of *rumah susun sederhana sewa*, simple rental apartments) to evicted communities. This policy has been critiqued for a number of reasons, including that apartments are often located far from the original location of the community (Irawaty 2018), and do not accommodate the economic activities of residents, contributing to lowering incomes (Savirani and Aspinall 2017). The supply of *rusunawa* is also vastly insufficient. Citing government data, Amalinda Savirani (2017) reports that Jakarta had just 24 public housing developments in 2017, constituting less than 10% of all apartments.

Photo 4. A woman sells snacks in the ground floor of the Pluit rusunawa where she has lived since being evicted from Pluit Reservoir in 2013. She commented that she was quite happy living there, as she could still make a living. Photo: Emma Colven.

In stark contrast to these generic public housing projects that involve the eviction and large-scale displacement of residents often to peripheral urban areas, community architects and planners, academics, local community organizations, and *kampung* residents vulnerable to eviction have collaborated to produce alternatives designs for in-situ upgrading.

In 2015, community architects and planners from *Ciliwung Merdeka* and Bandung-based Indonesian architect Yu Sing of *Akanoma Studies* collaborated with residents to develop designs for *kampung susun* (meaning stacked housing). Guided by the community's desire to stay by the river, these designs incorporated the elements of *kampung* living that residents' value, such as integrated social and economic spaces. While the city's flood management plans aim to quickly dispel water from the city and into the Java Sea, the design reflected a shared understanding that controlling floodwaters is no longer tenable and that, as one community architect from ASF-I told me, the time has come to "embrace that flood[ing] is going to happen." (August 2017, personal communication). *Kampung susun* is imagined as part of a floodable landscape: rather than keeping the water out throughout the wet season by relying on floodgates, dykes and concrete, the design included lower floors that can accommodate floodwaters without displacing residents.

Perhaps more important than the design was the process through which it was imagined and developed. While city-led evictions and resettlement programs have involved little to no consultation with communities, designs for *kampung susun* were developed in close collaboration with communities. Observing a pervasive perception among residents that their own "local knowledge, local ways of doing things are old, outdated, not contemporary and not useful" (October 2015, personal communication), community architects sought to bolster the value of localized forms of knowledge by utilizing a participatory approach.

Despite these efforts, the designs have still not been realized. While initially meeting with a number of community organizers, then-governor of Jakarta Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (known as Ahok) abruptly and unexpectedly ended negotiations between the city administration, and the community and their allies. A key principle central to their proposal was the process they envisioned: Ciliwung Merdeka required kampung residents to be involved throughout the redevelopment process. Meanwhile, Ahok persisted with his desire to implement the design using a top-down approach. Kampung Pulo was subsequently evicted in 2015, and Bukit Duri shortly thereafter in 2016. A ruling by the Jakarta State Administrative Court the following year would declare that the eviction of Bukit Duri was illegal, and residents would win a class action lawsuit granting them compensation. *Ciliwung Merdeka* and residents have since continued to advocate for *kampung susun.*

Collaborations with artists have also been an important medium for (re)imagining housing designs for Jakarta's urban poor. In 2017, on Indonesia's Independence Day, The Rujak Center for Urban Studies, Japanese artist Jun Kitazawa, The Japan Foundation and Meguro Regions Exchange Foundation organized the event, *Lomah Rumah Ideal* (ideal home contest). The contest encouraged residents to submit entries for their ideal home. Residents constructed prototypes of their designs using materials from the local community.

Photo 5. Residents examine the entries for the contest. August 17, 2017. Photo: Emma Colven.

One design for *rumah langit* (sky house) resembled a tower more than a functional home. Two boys sitting at the top of the tower joked with the audience that it was designed to provide a lookout for Satpol PP (police officers) who may arrive at any time to initiate evictions (August 2017, personal observation). This illustrates how an 'ideal' home for residents of kampung Akuarium was considered one with security from eviction.

Photo 6. Two boys from Kampung Akuarium sit inside the rumah langkit entry. August 17, 2017. Photo: Emma Colven.

By asking residents to use their memories of their *kampung,* Kitazawa aimed to create a sense of collectivity. Though somewhat utopian, this contest brought the community together, and perhaps momentarily eased the painful reality of their eviction. Even while residents stood among the rubble, the sense of excitement and celebration was palpable.

Partly in response to other evictions, *kampung* communities have engaged in greening projects to make their *kampungs* more aesthetically acceptable, in an effort to prevent their own potential eviction (Immanuel 2017). In 2014, the spatial plan for Jakarta designated longstanding North Jakarta *kampung* Tongkol as an "illegal" settlement, making it a target for eviction. Led by long-time activist and *kampung* resident Gugun and supported by and the University of Indonesia (UI), the community led efforts, who were organized within KAKC (Komunitas Anak Kali Ciliwung), in 2015-6 to pre-emptive evictions and displacement by greening their own neighborhood (Immanuel 2017). These efforts, which have received much attention from the international press, included aesthetic changes such as painting murals, as well as material improvements, including adding a septic tank system, and moving housing back from the riverbank to be in compliance with spatial planning laws. A prototype house (*rumah contoh*) was also constructed by laborers close to the community, with the assistance of ASF-I architects, and funding from UPC.

Whether through participatory planning, artistic collaborations, or community-led greening projects, *kampung* residents and their allies have been able to collaboratively (re)imagine a future Jakarta that is inclusive of the urban poor, and to envision alternatives to the eviction and displacement. By engaging in critical spatial practices, these actors have been able to contest and challenge market-led urban development, and normative modes of urban planning and environmental management, which have typically increased their vulnerability and marginality in the city.

An alternative future for Jakarta

Contestations between the city government and its kampung residents illustrate the stakes of conflicting ideas about how to adapt to flooding and provide affordable housing. In Jakarta, as in many other cities where evictions have become a common tool of both environmental management and urban development, it is no longer feasible to disentangle urban resiliency and flood risk management plans from broader processes of uneven urban development, dispossession and displacement. As the examples above demonstrate, creative and progressive approaches to housing Jakarta's urban poor have been largely led by residents, NGOs and community organizers, and generally dismissed by the state.

However, the current governor of Jakarta, Anies Baswedan who took office in 2017, may represent a sea change in urban poor politics. In 2017, prior to his election as governor of Jakarta, a *kontrak politik* (political contract) with Anies was drawn up, led by JRMK, a network of 31 kampungs across Jakarta, UPC, scholars from UI's architecture department, and the Rujak Center for Urban Studies. Learning from past experiences of promises being broken by politicians, this contract outlined several demands of *kampung* residents, including specific land use and title changes, and support for *becak* (rickshaw) drivers (Savirani and Aspinall 2018). In exchange, and contingent upon Anies' election as governor, organizers guaranteed that Anies' team would secure first-place victories in the election in the 31 kampungs.

After Anies's victory, those involved in the contract moved quickly to enter into negotiations with the city government. The result was a Community Action Plan (CAP) to improve living conditions in 16 *kampungs* and protect residents from evictions. This was included in the 2018 Jakarta local budget (Savirani and Aspinall 2018). The CAP has received mixed reviews. Critics says it lacks a clear implementation plan. Founder of *Ciliwung Merdeka* Pak Sandyawan Sumardi, for example, has critiqued the Bukit Duri CAP project, led by city-owned developer *Jakarta Konsultindo*, for failing to meaningful involve the community, and to develop a tangible plan for the construction of housing, dismissing it as "*hanya beautifikasi*" (just beautification). The lack of a more general long-term strategy for Jakarta's *kampungs* and the urban poor has also been noted by critics. While evictions have been greatly reduced, they have continued under Anies' leadership. In December 2018, Anies announced the city would continue its project of river normalization, the same project that led to the eviction of riverbank settlements including Kampung Pulo and Bukit Duri, and which will inevitably lead to further evictions. It remains to be seen whether future evicted residents will be provided with compensation and low-cost apartments as planned. However, the CAP has also accomplished a number of significant achievements. JRMK, UPC, Jakarta Pedicab Driver Union (Sebaja), Ancol Street Vendors Association (KOPEKA Ancol) and kampung residents have praised the governor for involving them in planning processes, and talks are still underway with potential for *kampungs* such as Tongkol to gain security of tenure (personal communication, June 2019). After two years in office, Anies has also delivered on some of his political promises to the urban poor by building temporary

shelters/housing for two evicted kampungs (Aquarium and Kunir) and issuing two Governor Decrees: no 878/2018 for Task Force for Kampung Planning and Governor Regulation no 90/2018 on the Urban Settlement Improvement which targeted 4000 RW/neighborhoods in Jakarta.

However limited the gains thus far, these developments were initiated and propelled by *kampung* residents and their allies, who have worked together to develop and reimagine housing for the urban poor, informed by the alternative concepts of floodable landscapes, kampung living, and participatory planning. Whether aspirational or actualized, these creative housing solutions offer an alternative to normative ideas of urban resiliency and have provided inroads for challenging dominant modes of urban governance and flood risk management, which have often cost the urban poor dearly.

In addition, by (re)imagining housing, *kampung* residents and local community organizations have created a space in which to negotiate with the state. This is testimony to the potential for critical spatial practices to generate tangible, potentially transformative change. Anies' pro-poor stance signals a significant break from the past, when forced evictions were often violent, unannounced, and uncompensated. This turn towards a more progressive politics did not emerge in a vacuum. Rather, Jakarta's urban poor and their networked allies have played an important part in facilitating its arrival and generating political will to envision and perhaps implement alternative futures for the city. By engaging with the state on their own terms, these actors been able to resist and contest processes of eviction, displacement, and uneven development, and carve out space for alternative imaginaries of urban living in a flood-prone city.

Acknowledgements

This essay is the product of many years of conversations, and collaborative fieldwork with the members of our *Jakarta Kolektif*, to whom we are indebted: Dimitar Anguelov, Helga Leitner, Sam Nowak, and Eric Sheppard. We are also grateful to Leah Immanuel and Hannah Erkin for sharing their insights, in addition to all of our informants who go unnamed here: community organizers, activists, artists and architects, and property consultants. Any errors or omissions are our own.

Works Cited

Alvarez, M K (2019) Benevolent evictions and cooperative housing models in post-Ondoy Manila. *Radical Housing Journal* (1)1: 49-68.

Anguelovski I, Irazábal-Zurita C & Connolly J. J. (2019) Grabbed urban landscapes: Socio-spatial tensions in green infrastructure planning in Medellín. *International journal of urban and regional research 43*(1): 133-156.

Baviskar A (2003) Between violence and desire: Space, power, and identity in the making of metropolitan Delhi. *International Social Science Journal* 55(175): 89–98.

Betteridge B and Webber S (2019) Everyday resilience, reworking, and resistance in North Jakarta's kampungs *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 1–23. Online version: https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848619853985

Batubara B, Kooy M and Zwarteveen M (2018) Uneven urbanisation: Connecting flows of water to flows of labour and capital through Jakarta's flood infrastructure. *Antipode 50*(5): 1186-1205.

Doshi S (2013) The politics of the evicted: Redevelopment, subjectivity, and difference in Mumbai's slum frontier. *Antipode* 45(4): 844–865.

Doshi S (2019) Greening displacements, displacing green: Environmental subjectivity, slum clearance, and the embodied political ecologies of dispossession in Mumbai. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 43(1): 112–132.

Herlambang S, Leitner H, Tjung LJ, Sheppard E and Anguelov D (2019). Jakarta's great land transformation: Hybrid neoliberalisation and informality. *Urban Studies* 56(4): 627-648

Immanuel L (2017) Tolak gusur! Repertroires of resistance to forced eviction in Jakarta. *The Rujak Center for Urban Studies Works in Progress.* 31 August 2017.

Irawaty D T (2018) Jakarta's Kampungs: Their History and Contested Future. MA Thesis. University of California, Los Angeles. Available at: https://cloudfront.escholarship.org/dist/prd/content/qt55w9b9gg/qt55w9b9gg.pdf (accessed 15 June 2019)

Leitner H and Sheppard E (2018) From kampungs to condos? Contested accumulations through displacement in Jakarta. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 50(2): 437-456.

Leitner H, Colven E, and Sheppard E (2017) Ecological security for whom? The Politics of flood alleviation and urban environmental justice in Jakarta, Indonesia. In: Heise UK, Christensen J and Niemann M (eds) *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*. New York: Routledge, pp.194 – 205.

Millington N (2018) Linear parks and the political ecologies of permeability: environmental displacement in São Paulo, Brazil. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 42(5): 864–881.

Mohsin A (2015) Jakarta under water: The 2007 flood and the debate on Jakarta's future water infrastructure. Jurnal Wilayah Dan Lingkungan 3(1): 39–58.

Padawangi R (2019) Forced evictions, spatial (un)certainties and the making of exemplary centres in Indonesia. *Asian Pacific Viewpoint* 60(1): 65–79.

Pearsall H & Anguelovski I (2016) Contesting and resisting environmental gentrification: Responses to new paradoxes and challenges for urban environmental justice. *Sociological Research Online* 21(3): 1-7.

Roy A (2011) Slumdog cities: Rethinking subaltern urbanism. *International journal of urban and regional research* 35(2): 223–238.

Rukmana D (2015) The Change and Transformation of Indonesian Spatial Planning after Suharto's New Order Regime: The Case of the Jakarta Metropolitan Area. *International Planning Studies 20*(4), 350-370.

Rukmana D (2018) Upgrading housing settlement for the urban poor in Indonesia: An analysis of the Kampung Deret program. In: Grant B, Liu CY and Ye L (eds) *Metropolitan Governance in Asia and the Pacific Rim: Borders, challenges, futures*. Singapore: Springer, pp.75–94.

Savirani A and Aspinall E (2017) Adversarial linkages: The urban poor and electoral politics in Jakarta. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 36(3): 3–34.

Sheppard, E, Leitner H, and Maringanti, A (2013) Provincializing global urbanism: A manifesto. *Urban Geography* 34(7): 893–900.

Weinstein L, Rumbach A and Sinha, S (2019) Resilient growth: Fantasy plans and unplanned developments in India's flood-prone coastal cities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 43(2): 273–291.

Emma Colven is an assistant professor in International and Area studies at the University of Oklahoma. Informed by political ecology and critical urban geography, her research agenda explores the relationships between urban processes and ecological change in cities of the 'global South'. Her research examines the intersections of flood management, urban development, and evictions in Jakarta.

Dian Tri Irawaty is a PhD student in the Geography department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research interests are broadly in the subject of housing, urban poverty, and urban politics. She is currently interested in exploring and examines the various understandings of kampung, a residential community in Jakarta, Indonesia, particularly addressing on what informs and motivates different understandings of kampungs, and their implications for the future of kampungs.