

# Everyday speculation in the remaking of peri-urban livelihoods and landscapes

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[journals.sagepub.com/home/epn](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/epn)**Helga Leitner, Samuel Nowak, and Eric Sheppard**

Department of Geography, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

## Abstract

Peri-urbanization is transforming the urban-rural interface of metropolitan areas across the global south. Large-scale planned developments and infrastructure projects result in the widespread displacement of residents and the disappearance of agricultural fields, vegetable plots, and small enterprises. Through multi-year fieldwork in eastern peri-urban Jakarta, we shift the optic from the large players driving these transformations—developers, land brokers, and investors—to examine how residents of peri-urban settlements (kampungs) respond to unexpected developments and manage the uncertainties associated with market-induced displacement. We conceptualize their practices as everyday speculation, extending speculation beyond its financial meaning to include social and cultural aspects. Both displacees in relocation kampungs and holdouts in kampungs subject to displacement make the most of emergent spatiotemporal rent gaps to devise ways to improve their livelihoods and accumulate wealth, but they also attempt to realize their social and cultural aspirations of reproducing kampung ways of life characterized by dense social networks and commoning practices such as mutual aid. Speculation reinforces pre-existing economic inequalities among kampung residents but is not obliterating social and cultural values that contest the norms of neoliberal global urbanism. Scaling up from everyday speculation by individual households, we identify three paths of kampung transformation that are concatenating across a shape-shifting speculative kampung landscape that coexists in a complex and synergistic relationship with the planned developments. Understanding residents' everyday actions is thus important to grasping the full scope of peri-urbanization.

## Keywords

Peri-urbanization, market-induced displacement, land transformations, informality, southern urbanism

## Introduction

Peri-urbanization is proceeding apace across major metropolises of the global south, in some cases exceeding historical dependence on the metropolitan core to take on a life of its own. Peri-urban

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### Corresponding author:

Helga Leitner, Department of Geography, University of California, Los Angeles, 1255 Bunche Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095, USA.

Email: [hleitner@geog.ucla.edu](mailto:hleitner@geog.ucla.edu)

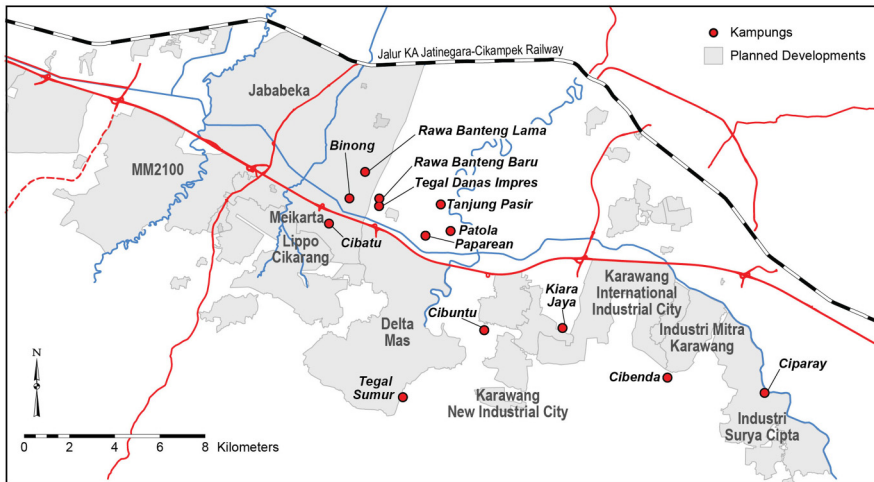
space is famously glossed as a complex and diverse intermingling of rural and urban livelihoods, economic activities, and land uses (Webster et al., 2016). It is shaped by peri-urbanization, a dynamic spatiotemporal process involving a multiplicity of actors located and operating in multiple sites and geographic scales. Jakarta's peri-urban frontier is experiencing a particularly high speed of land transformation: Rice paddies, fallow arable land, and vegetable plots are rapidly disappearing, replaced by industrial estates now interspersed with gated residential subdivisions, new towns, and "integrated" (commercial and residential) estates built for Jakarta's emergent middle class. Much of the speed and nature of the process is driven by the private sector corporations and developers plotting out large residential and industrial estates on greenfield sites. State authorities and planners sometimes facilitate this process, at other times simply providing the ex-post legitimization of development "facts on the ground". This is accompanied by a loosening of the bonds with central (DKI) Jakarta, as peri-urban space develops its own distinct global connectivities.

This has entailed the displacement of thousands of peri-urban residents, small formal and informal enterprises, from their paddy fields and kampungs: Peri-urban land grabs (Zoomers et al., 2017).<sup>1</sup> Developers convert land from diverse tenurial rights to leasehold, bringing it into the capitalist land market, and agricultural land is rezoned for industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Peri-urbanization is not only due to real estate developers and investors, however; residents also proactively shape the spaces and rhythms of peri-urbanization. The market-induced displacement of residents and associated relocation dynamics leave a distinct imprint on peri-urbanization. Some kampungs are torn down and disappear; some are relocated *en masse*; others flourish as wealthy residents become rentier landlords, housing the low-paid workers building and servicing nearby developments. Everywhere, kampung residents are trying to figure out how to improve or sustain livelihood possibilities in what is a highly dynamic and unpredictable situation.

In this paper, shifting attention from the major to the minor players in the spirit of everyday urbanism (Chase et al., 1999; Fincher et al., 2019; McFarlane and Silver, 2017), we analyze how the processes of market-induced displacement and relocation are shaped by kampung residents' aspirations and practices. Specifically, we examine residents' complex mobilities and connectivities across peri-urban spaces, land transactions, rentiership, inequalities in their ability to extract value from relocation, and their attempts to realize socio-cultural aspirations for themselves and their communities.

We conceptualize these aspirations and practices as everyday speculation. When kampung residents face high degrees of uncertainty, triggered by processes such as the rapid and unexpected encroachment of peri-urban real estate projects and confronted with the possible loss of community and valued kampung ways of life due to displacement, their everyday decisions and actions are informed by financial and socio-cultural speculation. Financial speculation means utilizing their available assets to manage risk, improve their livelihood possibilities, and accumulate wealth. However, everyday speculation is also about realizing social and cultural aspirations such as maintaining kampung ways of life, characterized by dense social networks and community institutions, and such communing practices as mutual aid and care work.

The empirical research reported here draws on multiple sources of information. In collaboration with DimitarAngelov, Wahyu Astuti, Emma Colven, Dian Irawaty and Melinda Martinus, we conducted four rounds of fieldwork in December 2013, August 2017, July and August 2018, and July 2019. The fieldwork included in-person, semi-structured interviews (in Bahasa Indonesia) with 47 households in 13 peri-urban kampungs in Cikarang and Karawang (Figure 1). Interviewed households were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that different income groups, genders, and locations within the study area were represented. Interviews included soliciting information about their migration history, household composition and economic activities, quality and size of housing and property, land prices, and displacees' aspirations and overall assessment of their experience of displacement and relocation. Interviews were



**Figure 1.** Cikarang study area.

supplemented by observations in kampungs. Interview transcripts, debriefing notes, and observations were translated and transcribed, and analyzed through iterative coding based on repeated close readings of the transcripts supplemented by NVivo software analysis. Names have been changed to ensure confidentiality. Multiple return visits to reinterview households in six kampungs, enriched by the generosity through which we were welcomed back, allowed us to develop deeper insights into how they respond and adapt over time to the constantly changing economic and physical landscape, and to observe and document these rapid transformations firsthand. Return visits also enabled us to interrogate interpretations from the previous rounds of fieldwork.

The paper is organized as follows. First, offering a conceptualization of peri-urbanization, we establish that existing scholarship neglects the everyday speculative practices of local residents and how these shape peri-urbanization. Second, turning to Jakarta's eastern peri-urban frontier, we sketch out the dramatic transformations of this landscape encountered by peri-urban residents. Third, we detail the everyday financial and socio-cultural speculative practices of both residents who are displaced and those who hold out, their inequalizing nature, and how these practices are transforming the peri-urban landscape as kampungs decline, relocate, and grow, and rural livelihoods disappear. Concluding, we reflect on the implications of these everyday practices for theorizing peri-urbanization and speculative urbanism in cities of the global south.

## Peri-urbanization, market-induced displacement, and everyday speculation

Across the global south, peri-urban regions are being rapidly transformed as populations and non-agricultural activities exceed the geographical bounds of existing metropolises. Peri-urban spaces have distinctive characteristics: the urban and the rural interpenetrate and mesh, often clashing; there are dramatic declines in agriculture and arable land, with implications for people's livelihoods—food security, poverty, social inequalities, and ecological consequences. Yet peri-urban regions are not simply an extension of the metropolis—a zone of transition from the rural to the urban. Rather, they are developing their own global connections and distinct peri-urban rhythms and dynamics. Bartels et al. (2020) argue that the “peri” in peri-urban references an area whose dynamics have been loosened from dependence from the cities that it surrounds, in contrast to

suburbs which remain in some sense dependent.<sup>2</sup> Examining cases of peri-urbanization in Africa and South America, Kanai and Schindler (2019) find that peri-urbanization is structured around peri-urban nodes of global connectivity, facilitated by a state-led infrastructure “scramble”. In the Philippines, Ortega likewise shows that peri-urban areas are developing their own transnational connections, shaping their spatiality. He dubs this Desakota 2.0, suggesting that it is a further extension of McGee’s (1991) theorization of the distinctive nature of peri-urbanization—an interplay of urban and rural living in southeast Asia. Ortega (2020: 5) describes Desakota 2.0 as a worlding project that envisions “a rapidly urbanizing world where the urban and rural are in a dynamic process of transformation”, emphasizing how distinct geographic contexts produce differentiated peri-urban dynamics and outcomes.

Taking this conceptualization of peri-urbanization as our starting point, we develop two theoretical claims based on our research. First, *kampung* residents experience market-induced displacement in ways that are not simply responding to, but also shape peri-urbanization. Second, *kampung* residents engage in what we call everyday speculation. Speculation is not only financial but also socio-cultural. Financial speculation is on land and property and is inequalizing; residents with greater economic, social and cultural capital are positioned to further benefit through speculation. Socio-cultural speculation is about realizing *kampung* residents’ imaginaries and aspirations for futures that involve sociality, commoning, and mutual aid—contesting the individualized nature of urban life normalized by neoliberal global urbanism (Sheppard et al., 2013). In what follows, we locate these propositions within the relevant literature.

### *Market-induced displacement and peri-urbanization*

Peri-urbanization has triggered the massive displacement of local residents, as large developers and the state cultivate and harness new global and regional connectivities that transform agricultural land and settlements into industrial, commercial, and residential developments. Studies of peri-urban displacement in southern metropolises have been dominated by the analysis of state-organized displacement (e.g. Adam, 2014; Levien, 2011; Lombard, 2016; Mbiba, 2017; Shih, 2017; Wang, 2020), also referred to as development-induced displacement (Satiroglu and Choi, 2015; Shaw and Saharan, 2019).<sup>3</sup> This focus on state-led displacement overlooks, however, the more diffuse and market-directed processes of induced displacement (e.g. Levien, 2018; Shatkin, 2016) that prevail in and beyond contemporary peri-urban Jakarta.

Others have focused on how these state interests articulate with that of capital—especially big developers, land brokerage firms, and international investors—as each seeks to extract value from peri-urbanization (Harms, 2011; Kan, 2019; Karis, 2017; Labbé, 2013; Leaf, 2002; Phadke, 2014; Shatkin, 2016; Winarso et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2013). Comparing Jakarta (Indonesia), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Kolkata (India), and Chongqing (China), Shatkin (2016) argues that variations in peri-urbanization and associated displacement reflect the differing power and authority that the state and private capital wield in land management and control. For example, when state power over land and its management is more or less unchecked (e.g. under Indonesia’s former President Suharto) developable land is more easily transferred to actors closely connected to the ruling regime. Emergent rent gaps incentivize state actors to use coercive and legal power to dispossess existing landholders, with uneven or no compensation to those displaced. Levien (2011) examines the actions and strategies of state governments and different factions of capital in land dispossession associated with the creation of the Mahindra World City Special Economic Zone in peri-urban Jaipur, India. He argues: “rather than seeing accumulation by dispossession as a generic outcome of over-accumulated capital needing an outlet, I see it as a political process through which the state assists capitalists in overcoming the barrier to accumulation presented by not fully capitalist rural land markets” (p. 479).

Other scholars have examined how a broader range of actors shape peri-urbanization. In Phnom Penh, interviewing households unable to reoccupy previously owned homes after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, Fauveaud (2014) analyzes how brokers, small developers, local family investors, and entrepreneurs, undertaking a plurality of practices, shape peri-urban development. Taking advantage of cheap land and increasing land values on the urban periphery, some construct rental units to meet local housing needs in close proximity to peri-urban industrial districts. This triggers peri-urban land speculation and rent-seeking. In peri-urban Saigon, Harms (2011) explores how villagers carve out a niche in the light of rapid transformations, examining their responses and aspirations. Even as peri-urban residents constantly transgress the urban and the rural in their everyday lives, he suggests, they continue to conceive of the rural and urban as a binary opposition: symbolic spaces that represent an inside and an outside. Studying the urbanization of a peri-urban village near Hanoi within the larger historical and political economic context, Labbé (2013) highlights how residents of informal settlements shape peri-urbanization through their livelihood and land strategies. As we document below, similar processes characterize peri-urbanization in greater Jakarta.

In this spirit of expanding the actors shaping peri-urbanization beyond the state and big developers, we focus on the more diffuse practices of peri-urban residents as they experience what we call market-induced displacement. Market-induced displacement refers to a situation where residents are approached and pressured to sell their properties, triggering relocation that is neither forced nor voluntary. While they may refuse, broader structural conditions and actions of developers and land brokers on the ground make it difficult to resist pressures to sell. Having sold for below the capitalist market price, the various challenges they face after moving are similar to those faced by households experiencing development-induced displacement (Leitner et al., 2021). As we show, these land market pressures and uncertainties also trigger everyday speculative practices that reshape peri-urban landscapes and livelihoods.

### *Everyday speculation*

Our second theoretical claim is that kampung residents engage in everyday speculation, with two registers: financial speculation on land and property, but also socio-cultural speculation on a distinct peri-urban future. Speculation has a complex genealogy: Until the late 17th century, it had a much broader meaning than its current overwhelmingly financial connotation. Financial speculation, whereby individuals and organizations seek to enhance their wealth by speculating on the future value of such assets as land, property, and financial instruments, has the largely pejorative connotation of being an unproductive use of capital enabling the “idle rich” to get richer (Christophers, 2020; Kaldor, 1939; Marx, 1972 [1885]; Piketty, 2014). The term speculative urbanism has also been mobilized in this sense, analyzing how speculative real estate investments dispossess the urban majority via middle-class housing estates and aspirational world-city infrastructure projects (Goldman, 2011).

Here, we examine the everyday speculation of kampung residents as they seek to make the best of things under conditions of radical uncertainty—when and where the future seems unpredictable (Bear, 2020). When kampung residents face high degrees of uncertainty, triggered by processes such as the rapid and unexpected encroachment of peri-urban real estate projects, speculation informs their everyday decisions and actions: Utilizing any assets available to them, through financial speculation they seek to improve their livelihood possibilities and accumulate wealth.

Whether in Jakarta’s peri-urban spaces or on Wall Street, speculators’ capacity to make gains and realize desired futures depends on their socio-spatial positionality. Yet the important question of which local residents gain or lose from displacement and everyday speculation in land and property is a somewhat neglected issue. In peri-urban Accra, Bartels et al. (2020) analyze how unequal

power relations between different classes and groups of actors (poor, farmers, middle classes, and elites) create inequalities in access to resources. This also has received attention by Harms (2011), Fauveaud (2014), Levien (2018), Chang (2019), and Kan (2019). In peri-urban Jakarta, as we show below, kampung residents with wealth and connections are positioned to further accumulate by financially speculating on spatially differentiated and rapidly rising land values, unlike less-well off residents.

Everyday speculation is not simply financial, however. Individuals and households engage in socio-cultural speculation when they seek to realize non-economic aspirations under conditions of uncertainty (Humphrey, 2020; Karaman et al., 2020; Simone, 2013). In Jakarta, these aspirations are about maintaining or reproducing a kampung way of life characterized by dense social networks and commoning practices such as mutual aid—contesting the possessive individualism associated with neoliberal global urbanism.

Others examining contestation and resistance have questioned existing theorizations of urban displacement. In peri-urban Guangzhou, where in situ marginalization and dispossession of farmland does not lead to the physical uprooting of residents, Shih (2017) finds accumulation by dispossession inadequate for describing the mix she observes of co-optation, coercion, negotiated consent to displacement and forced evictions. Kan (2019) describes how, rather than evicting residents and triggering widespread resistance, the Chinese state now enrolls villagers as participants in a capitalist land market via speculative rentiership: “accumulation without dispossession”. Leitner and Sheppard (2018: 442–443) propose the mid-level concept of contested accumulations through displacement: Not all displacements entail dispossession, wealth is accumulated (unequally) by residents as well as capitalists, and “commoning and contestations over land transformations may block or exceed the logic of the capitalist market”.

## Jakarta’s peri-urban frontiers: Dynamics and connectivities

The greater Jakarta metropolitan region, centered on but exceeding Jabodetabek (an acronym for Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi), has been rapidly peri-urbanizing since the 1980s (Winarso et al., 2015). Peri-urban populations quadrupled (to approximately 20 million inhabitants) between 1980 and 2010, whereas DKI Jakarta’s population increased by just 50% (to 9.5 million) (Herlambang et al., 2013). The 1981 Jabotabek Metropolitan Plan envisioned expansion beyond DKI Jakarta, zoning the areas around Bekasi and Tangerang for industrial development and the south as a water catchment area (Douglass, 1989; Rukmana, 2015). During the 1980s and 1990s, President Suharto granted large plots of plantation land to well-connected Indonesian-Chinese conglomerates and developers (Winarso and Firman, 2002) enabling them to create extensive peri-urban land banks (Shatkin, 2016; Winarso, 2000). This changed after the 1997 financial crisis. The end of the Suharto regime and subsequent political *reformasi* meant that kampung residents no longer could simply be evicted: Developers had to “persuade” them to sell. This is facilitated by development permits (*izin lokasi*) from the National Land Agency (BPS), which give developers a de facto monopoly over land acquisition (Shatkin, 2017). Since 2006, a new real estate boom has facilitated increasingly spectacular peri-urban developments (Herlambang et al., 2019; Hudalah and Firman, 2012).

The eastward expansion, where this research is located (Figure 1), is anchored by the Trans-Java Toll Road, supporting industrial estates that have become Indonesia’s major locus for inward manufacturing FDI (Rukmana et al., 2019). These industrial estates now extend beyond Jabodetabek into the Karawang Regency to the east, as does peri-urbanization (Hudalah et al., 2013; Novianty, 2015). Since 2006, the industrial estates have been supplemented by, and diversified into, peri-urban residential and mixed-use estates stretching along the toll road. Middle class populations were drawn to three large residential projects within our study area: Lippo Cikarang (built by

Lippo), Delta Mas (Sinarmasland), and Jababeka (PT JababekaTbk), which are evolving into integrated (residential, industrial, and commercial) developments. In May 2017, Lippo announced the spectacular, controversial, “affordable” new town of Meikarta, anticipating one million residents. Karawang International Industrial City (KIIC; Sinarmas, with Japan’s ITOCHU Corporation) opened further east in 2012, expanding in 2016. Right next door, The China Fortune Land Development Co. Ltd—a recent, fast-moving Chinese entrant into Jakarta’s largely domestic property industry—is constructing Karawang New Industry City as an integrated development on land purchased from Agung Podomoro (Figure 1).

In short, peri-urban land use patterns are being dramatically transformed by well-heeled and well-connected property developers investing speculatively in spectacularly marketed projects, triggering dramatic decreases in arable land and agricultural work and a shift to tenant farming. Adequate infrastructure is key to the success of these planned developments. Under President Jokowi, the hopelessly congested toll road (taking up to four hours to cover 35 km from central Jakarta) has been supplemented by second toll road (on pylons over the current road), paralleled by a Jakarta Light Rail Transit line and a planned, Chinese-financed, high-speed rail line. The Cikarang region also is developing direct connections with the global economy. Jababeka hosts the Cikarang Dry Port, enabling firms to obtain import and export certificates on-site. A new seaport for Jakarta (New Priok Port) immediately north of our study area should open in 2023 with a connecting toll road and railway to Cikarang, and a new Karawang International Airport is envisioned (not yet under construction). The majority of firms operating in the industrial estates, both export- and domestically oriented, are branches of foreign-owned TNCs, and residential developments are marketed as all-in-one developments providing world-class living inter-referencing European, Japanese, and Californian urban experiences (Bunnell, 2015). Developers promote their international retailers and hotels, English language schools, and university campuses.

The physical landscape is also being reconfigured. Developers flatten Cikarang’s rolling terrain prior to development and provide surface water through canalization, with at times poor water quality (Triana et al., 2018). Rural kampung residents complain that developers block waterways, making rice cultivation impossible and then declaring the land as wasteland and thus available for development. With massive groundwater extraction to build and operate new developments, water quality and availability are declining (Naryanto, 2008; Roekmi et al., 2018).<sup>4</sup> From the air, the peri-urban frontier is now a patchwork landscape of planned developments and associated infrastructure, surrounded by lingering rice paddies and other farmland, green space, and burgeoning kampungs. The kampungs stand out not just for their irregular morphology, but also because they often are elevated relative to the land that has been flattened for the planned developments. While these changes are spectacular, the formal developments house just a modest share of Cikarang’s population: The residents of peri-urban kampungs—some having farmed the land for decades, others attracted by opportunities created by the formal developments—are far more numerous.

This peri-urban kampung landscape is continually shape-shifting as kampungs disappear, are transformed, and emerge anew. Some kampungs have been completely replaced by planned developments. Others are hanging on: Holding *izin lokasi* for this land, the developer could decide to start building at any time. Much of the original population has been replaced by migrants working in construction and the planned developments nearby, living in rental units (*kontrakan*) built by wealthy kampung residents (Cibatu, Binong; Figure 1). Third, are newly emerging kampungs on greenfield sites adjacent to paddy fields: the destination for displaced residents moving from other kampungs onto cheaper land where they buy into an emergent kampung or green space (Rawa Banteng Baru, Cibuntu Baru, Tegal Danas Impres). These rhythms of displacement and relocation concatenate across the landscape through speculative grassroots peri-urbanization, analyzed in detail below.

## Peri-urbanization through everyday speculation

The kampung residents in our study experience deep uncertainties associated with the rapidly growing planned real estate development projects discussed above—uncertainties that reflect their marginal social positionality in these peri-urban transformations. Driven by these uncertainties and inducements from developers and brokers, but also by the opportunities to benefit from rapidly increasing land values and a steep land price gradient, they engage in everyday speculation. In this section, we analyze these practices of everyday speculation and how, through them, kampung residents shape peri-urban livelihoods and landscapes. In particular, we narrow in on two populations who speculate differently, with different resources and capacity to accumulate based on their class positions within the kampung: those experiencing market-induced displacement and those holding out in kampungs threatened by displacement. Those who are displaced speculate on where to move, how to invest money from the sale of their land, and how to make a living and realize their social and cultural aspirations. Those holding out speculate on when to sell, whether and where to buy up more land, and when and where to build rental units.

As we show in “kampung transformations”, these everyday speculations remake peri-urban landscapes surrounding Jakarta, but not equally or in the same manner. Residents’ everyday speculations are shaped by their social positionality, especially social class. While class in Indonesian society is difficult to pin down, there is a tendency to flatten class differences within kampungs: residents are often thought of and represented as uniformly lower-class or even as a distinct kampung class in itself (Newberry, 2014). Yet, we find stark socio-economic divides in our study population. *Wealthy residents*—often with formal, skilled jobs, or their own businesses—have been able to leverage their pre-existing wealth to hold out, secure more land holdings, formalized property rights, and rental units that further propel wealth accumulation. These residents reported a monthly household income of between 10 and 60 million IDR, which the World Bank (2019) characterizes as middle class to upper-middle class. *Less well-off residents*, on the other hand, have either already been displaced and purchased property in a newly emerging kampung, or have moved into a threatened kampung as a renter. These residents reported engaging in informal work, unskilled jobs in factories, tenant farming, or construction, often piecing several of these sources together for a household monthly income of between 2 and 7 million IDR. The World Bank (2019) characterizes this as “aspiring middle class” to lower middle class. While there are other factors at play, we find these class differences crucial for understanding the means through which kampung residents are displaced or able to hold on, described below.

### Market-induced displacement and relocation

As discussed in “Jakarta’s peri-urban frontiers: Dynamics and connectivities”, new and expanding industrial and residential estates are the driving force behind displacements, pushing the peri-urban frontier ever-further eastwards. For many peri-urban kampung residents, market-induced displacement is nothing new. Residents of Kampung Rawa Banteng Baru chronicled a recurrent displacement history: from their original kampung location at the current site of a sports stadium within Jababeka to Rawa Banteng Lama in 1998, and since 2012 to Rawa Banteng Baru (in Bahasa Indonesia, lama means “old” and baru “new”).

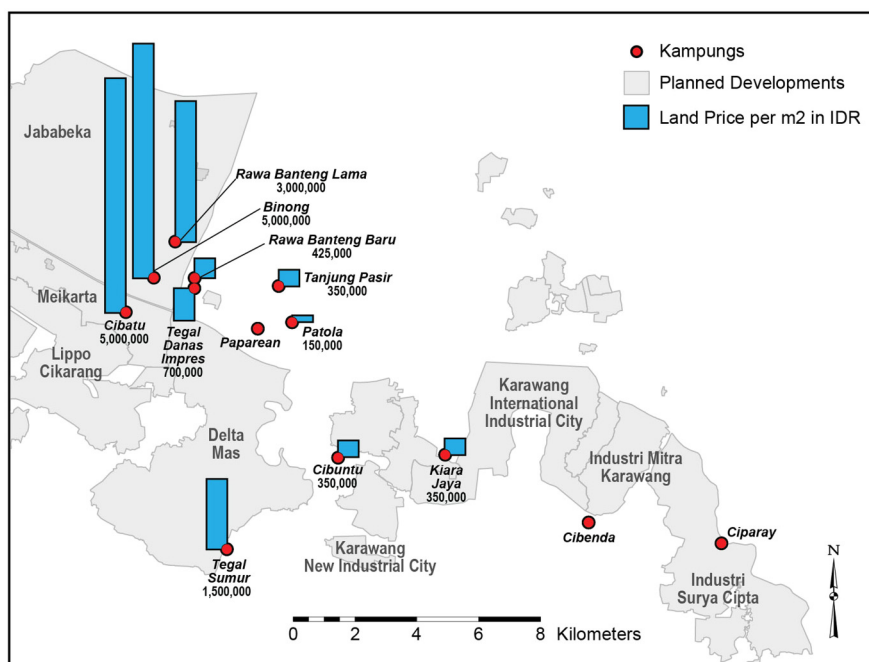
The negotiations preceding displacement are highly individualized and secretive: Those assembling the land tell residents not to discuss their negotiations with one another, discouraging them from joining forces to collectively negotiate a sales price. In our study, only one kampung, Kampung Cibuntu Lama located at the edge of paddy fields, involved a collective land swap, organized by the RT.<sup>5</sup> Forty-six households relocated and rebuilt their kampung on land owned by the buyer (an Indonesian company), only a stone’s throw away (500 m) from their previous location.



Collective negotiation and relocation can reduce the risks faced by kampung residents. Even in this case, however, the majority of the kampung households (114) sold their homes individually to this buyer. More generally, interviewees commented that collective negotiations often fail, not only because of different social positionalities (for further detail see “rentiership and holding out”), but also reflecting residents’ different aspirations.<sup>6</sup> In this case, some residents did not join the swap because they wanted to get more money for their property.

Besides the pressures to sell, the dramatic land price gradient (Figure 2) provides an important incentive for people to sell and relocate. For example, the large number of residents who relocated during 2012–2013 from Rawa Banteng Lama to Rawa Banteng Baru (still surrounded by paddy fields) could sell their land for 1.8–2 million IDR/m<sup>2</sup> and buy land for 150,000–300,000 IDR/m<sup>2</sup>. This 85%–92% price difference over just 2.8 km represents a gradient of 30%/km.<sup>7</sup> This dramatic gradient enabled those kampung residents with land to sell to improve living conditions and engage in entrepreneurial activities.

We were fortunate to interview a significant number of kampung residents also after displacement, enabling us to learn about how market-induced displacement triggered everyday speculation, trace their displacement afterlives, and assess whether and how speculation proved beneficial. Interviewees considered relocation as beneficial for their quality of life: The new houses they built were larger and better equipped, and many were able to build different quarters within a house, or conjoined houses, to accommodate multiple generations. IbuSanti and Pak Agus exemplify this trend. Moving from Rawa Banteng Lama to Rawa Banteng Baru, they were able to more than double the size of their land from 220 m<sup>2</sup> to 540 m<sup>2</sup> and build two new homes on the compound, one for Pak Agus’s brother.<sup>8</sup> Wealthy displacees had funds left over to construct new *kontrakans* and/or open a small store (*warung*).



**Figure 2.** Spatial price gradient, 2019.

Relocation generally takes place over short distances: 500 m to 5 km. There are close networks and connections among the peri-urban kampungs we studied, predating the development projects inducing displacement. Thus, displacement and relocation are not only facilitated by steep land price gradients but also shaped by kampung residents' kinship networks and activity spaces. For example, "Pak Ardi in Binong moved from Rawa Banteng Lama to Binong when he married his wife in 1982. Ibu Asli moved from Jayamukti village to Binong, and her husband moved from Cibatut to Binong".<sup>9</sup> These networks serve as important channels through which knowledge about land prices, land availability and the desirability of different locations circulate, through word of mouth and now the ubiquitous smartphone; they can also play an important role in mitigating risk. It became obvious from the interviews that land, its value and availability are everyday topics of conversation, with residents across the board well-informed about prices and new developments. This is important to everyday speculation since it reduces the risk of purchasing property at otherwise unfamiliar locations. Yet it cannot reduce external uncertainties, such as a bust in the property market or the announcement of a new planned development.

As kampung residents in our study speculate, the futures they seek to realize are not simply about accumulating economic capital: a bigger and more luxurious house and a more secure livelihood. Speculations on their imagined futures are also about maintaining and recreating cherished social and cultural values: commoning practices—identified as one of the biggest benefits of kampung life, as the following quote from Ibu Asli (echoed in other interviews) documents:

Unlike in a housing complex where people would live individually, the relationship between neighbors in the kampung are stronger. At the same time, I have more freedom as well here.<sup>10</sup>

In Rawa Banteng Baru, female residents continued to participate in community institutions such as prayer groups (*pengajian*) in a mosque built with funds received from Jababeka. In other kampungs, they joined savings and physical exercise groups and established youth organizations. At the inter-household scale, displaced kampung residents maintained commoning practices such as mutual aid and care work, including everything from childcare, to sharing food, to lending money, to barter. For example, Ibu Endah and Pak Suyono lent money to a neighbor in desperate need of cash, who in return let them cultivate his paddyfield until the debt was repaid.<sup>11</sup>

While only a small minority of residents on this peri-urban frontier are still farming, the desire to maintain connections to the land—if only being able to see paddy fields—also figures prominently in kampung residents' aspirations.<sup>12</sup> Owning a paddy field and property is both a form of cultural capital and status symbol and an important security blanket.

Relocated kampung residents were able to realize better housing and recreate kampung life at the new site, but their hopes of finding well-paid work in the factories mushrooming around them were rarely realized. Reflecting on this, kampung residents explained that in part this is because they lack the required education and skills for these jobs, including a high school certificate, fluency in Bahasa Indonesia rather than their native Sundanese, and digital skills to apply for jobs posted only online. Women especially expressed their frustrations about company policies preventing women 25 years and older from applying for factory jobs, driving them to seek out informal work to contribute to household income. In Rawa Banteng Baru, we encountered a group of about 10 women in their late 20s and older performing informal piecework in one of their homes—rubber shock covers for motorbikes—for a nearby automotive parts company. They described trimming around 1000 rubber shock covers daily, for which they were paid 70 IDR (0.5 US cents) per piece, less than US \$5 per day shared among them.<sup>13</sup> Some of these residents also rely on family members' remittances from abroad to make ends meet. By contrast, a major source of income for the minority of better off relocated kampung residents is rental income, primarily from kontrakans and sometimes also from paddy-fields. They have purchased land and built

workers' housing both in the kampung where they reside and in kampungs in close proximity to the planned developments and factories. As this demonstrates, kampung residents' potential to realize dreams and imaginaries through everyday speculation is starkly shaped by their socio-spatial positionality (class, wealth, gender, and location).

### *Rentiership and holding out*

Kampung residents with access to social and economic resources have been holding out on selling their land, remaining in their original kampung. In Binong and Cibatu, kampungs that have experienced dramatic transformations in the last 10 years, all but a handful of original residents have left; for those who are less well off, the prospect of money now outweighs the risk of waiting for possibly a higher price later. As Haji Yusuf, a wealthy holdout in Cibatu, put it: "Those who hold on are...the upper middle class (like me) and those of the lower middle class have moved out".<sup>14</sup> Residents like Haji Yusuf are positioned to accumulate even more wealth through financial speculation: holding out for a higher sale price on their land, building new rental housing, buying up land in their kampung as others are squeezed out, and purchasing more land in different parts of the peri-urban frontier. Meanwhile, renters—drawn by construction work and low-wage service jobs in the industrial and residential estates—move into the *kontrakans*, feeding the emergent rental economy.

Wealthy residents speculate on the continued, rapidly increasing land prices, guessing when prices will be highest and hoping that boom will not turn to bust in the meantime. In Binong, for example, those who sold in 2012 received approximately 600,000 IDR/m<sup>2</sup>, whereas those who waited until 2018 received 5 million IDR/m<sup>2</sup>, a 733% increase over just six years. For a hypothetical 200 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land, the difference of 880 million IDR is a fortune for the majority of kampung residents, and more than enough to build an average-sized *kontrakan*. Several of the larger landowners told us they would hold out until they were offered 10–15 million per square meter, confident that developers like Lippo and Jababeka will eventually have to purchase their land to realize their projects. Those with the resources to do so also purchased land inside the kampung as the less well-off leave, with the expectation that land might eventually reach such prices.<sup>15</sup>

Holdouts also speculate by constructing *kontrakans* for roughly 36–41 million IDR per unit, which is prohibitively expensive for less well-off kampung residents. A typical *kontrakan* (Figure 3) has two stories with some seven units on each floor, a 509–570 million IDR investment. Construction is funded through several different sources, such as selling land held elsewhere, from other income streams (e.g. a business) or loans from family and friends, some of whom may have capital available, having already sold and left. Short-term bank loans are rarely resorted to. Those investing in *kontrakans* speculate that they will recoup their investment and turn a profit before they are forced to sell, at which point the building will be razed by the purchasing developer. For the typical *kontrakan*, it would take over 5 years of rental income to pay off the initial investment,<sup>16</sup> but *kontrakan* owners supplement rental income through side businesses, including selling their tenants basic necessities such as potable water, gas canisters, etc.

Landlords cannot be assured of turning a profit, but the high demand for rental housing makes *kontrakans* an enticing speculative investment. In Binong, one informant told us that units in her *kontrakan*, built in 2018, have rarely been vacant longer than a day. In one instance "the tenant moved out at 10 am and then we cleaned the room at 3 pm. After I showered, there was already someone looking for a room to rent".<sup>17</sup>

Renters are primarily migrants from Central and West Java, drawn by jobs in factories and planned developments. They face cramped living conditions: rental units are 9–14 m<sup>2</sup>, separated into a living space, bedroom, and kitchen/bathroom in the back. Rents average 600,000 IDR



**Figure 3.** A kontrakan plus shop (orange), with owner's villa on left.

(US\$43) monthly for two adults, plus 100,000 IDR for each additional person. Many are filled with young families but as many as seven construction workers will share a unit, particularly in kampungs proximate to job sites. Renters stay just three months on average, due to the short-term nature of construction jobs or contractual work like cleaning or gardening. High turnover and an ever-growing supply of kontrakans enable some flexibility for renters to move to better located or larger units.

Beyond material resources, holdouts also rely on their social capital. Kinship networks—distributed throughout the region via marriage and displacement—create dispersed connectivities over peri-urban space (see “market-induced displacement and relocation”), but they also concentrate wealth within certain kampungs. In Cibatu, the remaining 20 households are “*saudara*”—a loose Indonesian term to describe kin (blood relatives or otherwise)—who could hold on to their land partially through their relationships with wealthy family members. Not all *saudara* are rentiers, but all rentiers are *saudara*:

INTERVIEWER: Out of the 20 households that [...remain], what percent owns rental houses here?

IBU NADIYA: Out of 20 households, maybe 5. All of them are [my mother]’s *saudara* [laughs].<sup>18</sup>

Kinship and social networks also enable access to resources and information. When Binong resident Ibu Asli wanted to build a rental property in Karawang in 2014, she borrowed 100 million IDR from a distant relative in Cibatu. These complicated and dense networks underscore how residents’ socio-spatial positionality generates differential conditions of possibility for speculating.

Rental income also fuels speculation on land further afield. *Kontrakan* owners reported land holdings scattered across the region. IbuAsli owns land in four of our study sites (Rawa Banteng, Cibatu, Tanjung Pasir, and Binong) and four other kampungs, where she acts as landlord for *kontrakan* tenants or tenant farmers. When asked about where she preferred to invest her capital, she responded: “To be honest, I think it’s better to invest in land [than rental housing], because the price keeps going up. If it’s something like this *kontrakan*, it’s a building—like a car, it has a ‘productivity period’”.<sup>19</sup> As wealthy kampung residents invest in paddy-fields and kampung land, or construct rental units, they move with the real-estate frontier, reinforcing rent gaps and gradients (see Figure 2). These residents are keenly aware of conditions and land prices also eastward in Karawang, where developers do not yet have development rights, water quality is still good, and land more affordable.<sup>20</sup>

### *Kampung transformations*

Scaling up from the experiences of individual displacees and holdouts, we turn here to how this is transforming kampungs and thereby the peri-urban landscape. We identified three trajectories of kampung transformation, reflecting the differential relative location of kampungs with respect to the planned developments. First, immediately proximate *hold-out kampungs* experience population decline, immigration as they become locales for a burgeoning rental economy, bifurcating into landlords and renters. Second, those somewhat further away are rapidly growing as *relocation kampungs*: destinations for displacees, where a rental economy also may emerge and where displacees seek living arrangements that also speak to their rural imaginaries. Third, are largely *rural kampungs*, relatively disconnected from the planned developments, where irrigated rice production is still common. With the growth of new planned developments, leapfrogging over kampungs and rice paddies to create new development nodes and instituting new frontiers between planned development and its others, kampungs may shift between these trajectories, diffusing these transformations across the peri-urban landscape. Land outside the planned developments is thus a shape-shifting speculative kampung landscape, coexisting in a complex and synergistic relationship with the planned developments.

The first trajectory is exemplified by hold-out kampungs such as Binong, Cibatu, and Rawa Banteng Lama; pre-existing kampungs over which a developer has a monopoly right to develop the land occupied by the kampung (IzinLokasi). Kampung Cibatu overlooks the planned central business district of Meikarta and is almost completely surrounded by Lippo-owned land. People started leaving in 1995, when Lippo was buying up land for 1500 IDR/m<sup>2</sup>. The price exploded to 3 million IDR/m<sup>2</sup> by 2014, and 6 million by 2019: A nearly 400,000% increase in 24 years. Of the approximately 300 kampung households in 1995, only 20 remained by 2019. As Kampung Binong was encroached on by Jababeka, its 1000 households declined to 40 by 2019<sup>21</sup>; Rawa Banteng Lama declined from 239 to 139 households between 2012 and 2019.<sup>22</sup>

While the bulk of prior households sold and have left, hold-out kampungs also attract a new population of migrants seeking low wage employment. Population change has taken the form of replacement rather than population loss. The built environment now is marked by signs of prosperity amidst outmigration, as empty plots sit side by side with the brightly painted *kontrakans*, whose owners build fancy villas and compounds—the new kampung landmarks. The moderate wealth and class differences, and mutual aid, that characterized the pre-existing kampung have been replaced by a small rentier class of wealthy residents and a steady churn of less well-off worker-renters. Interrelations between these groups are characterized by competitive market transactions rather than mutual aid.

Second, are relocation kampungs on greenfield sites, characterized by rapid population increases through relocation of displacees from nearby. Kampungs Rawa Banteng Baru and Cibuntu Baru

exemplify this, albeit in very different ways. Rawa Banteng Baru reflects the cumulative result of individualized actions whereas Cibuntu Baru was a collective relocation (discussed in “market-induced displacement and relocation”). Those relocating from Rawa Banteng Lama founded Rawa Banteng Baru, repurposing a name indicating a shared identity, and reconstructing their social and built environment. Rawa Banteng Baru is somewhat further away from the planned developments of Jababeka and Lippo Cikarang/Meikarta—about 1.3 km from “old” Rawa Banteng (Lama) and Binong as the crow flies, or about 3.8 km and 2.4 km, respectively, via the winding, often narrow road network. Rawa Banteng Baru also became a destination for Binong displacees, as land was one fifth of the price.

Induced displacees with land title in their origin kampung were positioned to take speculative advantage of the rent gradient, building a new and larger compound housing their extended family (unlike in central Jakarta where land is scarce), and making good on their imaginaries by relocating next to what is still a rice paddy. Mutual support networks persist, surviving relocation, as multiple families followed the same path. Social polarization is less stark than in Binong and Cibatu because of the presence of this lower class/aspiring middle class. While prosperity is evident, so is uncertainty. Wealthy displacees who were able to leverage excess money to build *kontrakans* speculated about how long it would take before this kampung becomes a target for developers and land brokers, evaluating this against how long it will take for their investments in a *kontrakan* to realize a positive return. Nevertheless, new *kontrakans* remain under construction.

Patola, Paparean, and Tanjung Pasir exemplify kampungs that largely have a rural character. Rice cultivation is still common, and many houses border on agricultural land or locally owned fishponds. Farming also is supplemented by rural industrial work: for example, in brick kilns that are now largely driven out of business by the popularity of aerated concrete blocks (Hebel). Farming is decreasing and shifting from farmer-owners to tenant farming. According to interviewees, less than 70% of households in Patola still farm, and just 30% in Paparean. Of these, only half own the land they farm; the remainder farm others' land or hire laborers to farm their land. Some land is also farmed informally. Interviewees often do not know who owns the land, other than to say it is outsiders. Groundwater quality has become a problem, forcing households to drill deeper to reach less contaminated water and buy potable water from vendors.

Residents now seek jobs in nearby factories and construction (or as guards in a nearby prison for those in Patola); jobs that again are hard to come by. Population is increasing in these kampungs, as they attract displacees from kampungs further west speculating on the rent gradient. Long-term residents we interviewed value their *arisan* and *pengajian* but welcome the increased energy and diversity brought by new residents. Our information on individual moves suggests that these kampungs are more closely connected to hold-out and replacement kampungs than to one another. Land brokers also occasionally appear in these kampungs. According to our informants, 60% of Patola's paddy fields had been sold to outside investors and our interviewees speculated that they would be willing to sell and move if offered 500,000 IDR/m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>23</sup> Kontrakans are now starting to be built in Paparean and Patola, which are close to the tollway, by both wealthy longer-term kampung residents and people living elsewhere who have acquired land.

## Conclusions

To date, as discussed in “peri-urbanization, market-induced displacement and everyday speculation”, studies of peri-urbanization overwhelmingly focus on the major players whose large-scale planned developments have come to dominate this landscape. There is far more to peri-urbanization than this, however. From Bekasi to Karawang, many more people live outside these planned developments than inside, occupying a much larger land area that also is experiencing rapid transformation shaped by kampung residents' everyday speculative practices. It follows—as is the case for so

many areas of urban research—that studies of peri-urban land transformation must also attend to seemingly mundane but nonetheless significant everyday urban practices.

Shifting the optic, we examine residents of kampung settlements on Jakarta's eastern peri-urban frontier. Having worked and made homes and kampung communities, often for generations, they now see themselves progressively engulfed by these developments and pressured by powerful market actors to sell land for which they hold title rights. Facing this prospect of market-induced displacement, kampung residents practice everyday speculation as they seek to advance their material interests and socio-cultural aspirations.

Seeking to manage constantly changing development plans and associated uncertainties, kampung residents engage in financial speculation to improve their livelihoods and/or accumulate wealth by taking advantage of rent gaps created by rapidly increasing land values and steep land price gradients. They display a highly differentiated ability to engage in financial speculation and extract value from land transactions, development, and relocation. Wealthy kampung residents with access to material resources and social capital are positioned to further accumulate wealth: holding out for a higher sale price on their land, building new rental housing, buying up land in their kampung as others are squeezed out, and purchasing other land across the peri-urban frontier. Less well-off kampung residents also take advantage of rent gaps and realize better housing, but their hopes of finding formal employment in nearby factories were rarely realized—a particular challenge for women.

Everyday speculation is not simply financial, however; it is also about realizing social and cultural values. Our interviews reveal that one of the most cherished values pursued by displacees, by and large successfully, is reproducing and re-establishing the sociality and mutual aid characterizing kampung ways of life. A further aspiration is maintaining connections with the land and the rural landscape, even if this means just being able to see a rice paddy. By reestablishing kampung ways of life, residents also challenge the dominant, individualized and isolating, norms of living prescribed by neoliberal global urbanism.

These findings offer new insights into the lived experiences of speculative urbanism more broadly. While significant work has documented how urban residents become enrolled into a “speculative governmentality” reflecting globalized financialization (Goldman, this issue), residents in our study speculate in ways that intersect with, but cannot be reduced to, such enrollment. Caught up in the pressures and uncertainties of market-induced displacement, kampung residents speculate in two realms that are often considered incompatible: One oriented toward wealth accumulation and the exchange value of land and property; the other oriented towards reproducing sociality, commoning practices and mutual aid (the use value of land). While it may be tempting to see these practices as mutually exclusive, residents' enrollment into either realm is never complete. They sell property to developers without becoming perfectly enrolled into capitalist land markets, continuing to live and work outside the state-regulated formal economy. Similarly, while holding onto mutual aid and commoning practices, they seek to advance individual material self-interests. While it is critical to center the speculative practices of urban and peri-urban residents, it is thus equally important to resist one-dimensional explanatory frameworks that reduce them to neoliberal subjects. Scaling up from everyday speculation by individual households, we identify three paths of kampung transformation that are concatenating across a shape-shifting speculative kampung landscape that coexists in a complex and synergistic relationship with the planned developments. Understanding residents' everyday actions is thus important to grasping the full scope of peri-urbanization, but also speculative urbanism.

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## Notes

1. In Bahasa Indonesia, the word kampung is used to describe both long-standing rural communities and the urban informal settlements auto-constructed by rural-urban migrants.
2. Keil (2017) similarly argues that suburbanization is complexly shaped by extra-local forces and developing its own dynamic—extended urbanization.
3. In China, scholars examine how the 1989 Land Use Rights Reform Act dispossessed peri-urban farmers of farmland but not necessarily their homes.
4. Confirmed in local interviews, August 2018
5. Interview: 18 July 2018. RT refers to the locally elected leader of the neighborhood or Rukun Tetangga, the smallest administrative unit of Indonesia's political system.
6. Fieldnotes, August 2018.
7. We observed similar gaps between other kampungs (Figure 2).
8. Interview: 15 July 2018.
9. Fieldnotes, 18 July 2018.
10. Interview: 15 July 2018.
11. Interview: 15 July 2018.
12. Only a small minority of the kampung residents interviewed are still farming. Most are tenants, having either already sold their farmland or never having owned any.
13. Fieldnotes, 15 July 2018.
14. Interview: 18 July 2018
15. Interviews: 19 August 2017; 18 July 2018.
16. Assuming a 14-unit *kontrakan* at full occupancy (600,000 IDR\*14 units\*60 months = 504 million IDR).
17. Interview: 15 July 2019.
18. Interview: 14 July 2018.
19. Interview: 15 July 2018
20. Interview: 8 July 2019
21. Interview: 14 July 2018.
22. Interview: 19 July 2019.
23. Interviews: 9 and 10 July 2019.



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