2. How to Prove You are Not a Squatter: Appropriating Space
and Marking Presence in Jakarta

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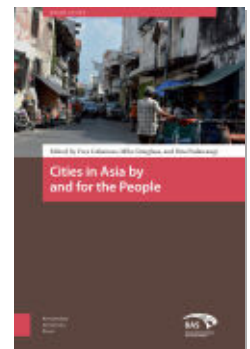
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2   How to Prove You are Not a Squatter

## Appropriating Space and Marking Presence in Jakarta

Jörgen Hellman

Abstract

In Margaret Everett's notes on the urban poor in Colombia, she observes that 'the threat of eviction makes people reluctant to invest labor and resources in their homes' (Everett 1999, 1). Tunas and Peresthu (2010, 315) report from Jakarta that, 'Without security of tenure, the inhabitants of informal settlements are reluctant to invest in improvements to their living conditions'. They continue by emphasizing, 'Without clear legal status regarding land, the residents will never be encouraged to upgrade either the housing or the living environment' (Tunas and Peresthu 2010, 320). However, these observations differ significantly from my experience of working in informal neighbourhoods on urban river banks in central Jakarta where tenure security is weak. Although they were exposed to both annual flooding and constant threats of eviction, the residents were persistent in renovating and extending their houses and improving their environment. In this chapter I address this apparent paradox by discussing the strategies used by squatters to secure ownership of their houses and transform squatter areas into recognized neighbourhoods.[1]

Keywords: commons, squatter, Jakarta, *kampung*, neighbourhood, floods

Figure 2.1   Maps of (a) Jakarta, (b) Indonesia, (c) Kampung Pulo
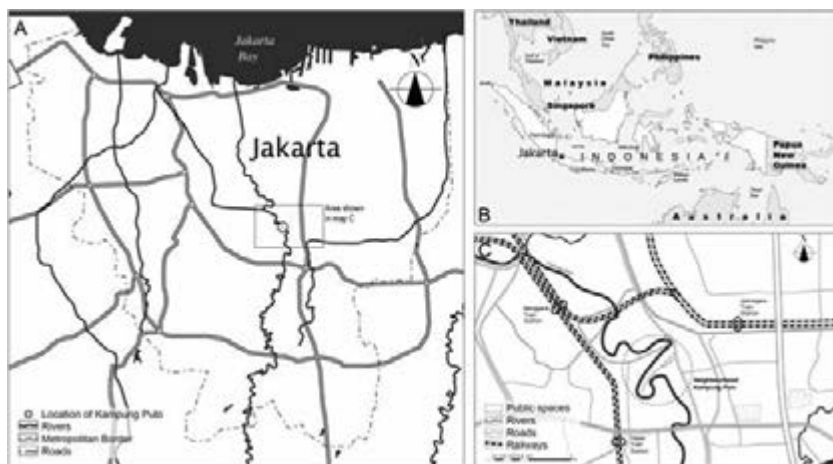
Source: Ariel Shepherd

1   Introduction

The history of urban development in Jakarta is filled with forced evictions (Jellinek 1991; Sheppard 2006; Silver 2008). Although resistance occurs and can sometimes become violent, it is often fragmented and short-lived (Jellinek 1991; Silver 2008; Somantri 2007). However, the city's civil society has a strong capacity to recreate social and economic networks after natural disasters and emergencies (Hellman 2015). *Kampungs* ('impoverished neighbourhoods') in Jakarta have therefore been characterized not only as transient, exposed, vulnerable, and fragmented (Jellinek 1991), but also as resilient, active, and enduring (Wilhelm 2011).

Extremely weak tenure security is a common feature of descriptions of urban *kampungs*. Although *kampungs* form an undisputable part of Jakarta's history, their legal status and even definition remains unclear. This uncertainty puts people at a disadvantage when relocation programs are implemented. Households practise a variety of strategies to enhance their 'bargaining capacity' vis-à-vis government authorities. Buildings, signposts, street names, and so on are used to demarcate presence and signal endurance (Raharjo 2010, 129–42, 200–13). This sort of 'boundary sharpening' (Raharjo 2010, 90) process is intended to claim the area as part of a *kampung,* rather than allowing it to be defined as a squatter settlement—an informal construction of social space that precedes (or enhances) the secure tenure of a settlement. This 'planning from below'

confronts political administrators when implementing policies to re-green the city, upgrade infrastructure, or exploit centrally located urban land to attract the economically strong middle class. As Vollmer and Grêt-Regamey point out, urban river banks tend to be attractive to 'low-income residents' as well as 'a growing middle class' and they therefore become highly 'contested areas' (2013, 1553) .

This chapter considers a number of issues—including the disposition of people to invest in risky projects such as illegal houses on a flooded riverbank, the images of the *kampung* as both resilient and transient, and the question of what constitutes a *kampung*—to be closely intertwined. The ethnographic questions guiding this inquiry concern how houses are established as legal buildings and how this affects the opportunities of the inhabitants to create viable livelihoods. I discuss the roles that documents, heritage traditions, the choice of materials, and architecture play in defining the legal status of a house and how those accused of being squatters use the built environment, infrastructure, political system, and social activities to establish their community as part of local society (i.e., become recognized as a *kampung*). I contend that the building and repair of a house is not only a financial investment, but also a strategy for becoming included in local society and for transforming squatter areas into legal neighbourhoods that are recognized by state authorities. Private investment in one's house thereby forms part of a broader resource-building strategy that is not *only* a financial venture at the household level.

The chapter starts by establishing a working definition of 'commons', with which I analyse *kampungs* as a form of collective, social, and material resource. After this, I discuss the problem of defining the *kampung* and the contradictory images of *kampungs*. The subsequent section, which focusses on Kampung Pulo, is the main ethnographic section; it illustrates how houses fit into the socio-political context. By analysing the *kampung* as a commons, I show how squatters mark out their presence, appropriate space, and create resources for themselves.

Questions brought up in the intellectual debates about 'cities by and for the people' include: how spaces for alternative development are appropriated and sustained; what potential exists for people to create commons in urban settings; what theoretical and conceptual tools may generate ideas about cities by and for the people; and how the notion of 'collective' is defined. My focus on illegal settlements and house building addresses these questions through a discussion on people's rights to be agents in the construction of urban spaces and how they can achieve greater influence

over the management and governance of these spaces. These are questions that concern not only economic and material conditions, but also issues of identity, belonging, and sustainability.

2   Theory: Analytical Strategy and Argument

As an analytical framework, I employ the concepts of 'commons' and 'commoning'. I use these concepts to analyse what, exactly, people create by investing in their houses and what effect(s) this investment might have, or is expected to have, on relocation processes. These concepts also provide a tool for understanding the contradictory images of *kampungs* as both resilient and fragile.

2.1   Commons: From Material to Immaterial Resources

As in the well-known article by Garrett Hardin (1968), the term 'commons' is conventionally used to refer to a natural resource that is used by a specific community. However, in certain academic traditions the term has developed into an analytical concept for describing how various tangible and intangible resources are created and for examining the struggle for ownership over these resources (Casas-Cortés, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2014, 451).[2] Pablo Alonso Gonzalez (2014, 359–90) provides a comprehensive review of the shift from regarding commons as natural resources to seeing them as 'any natural or manmade resource that is or could be held and used in common' (Berge and van Laerhoven 2011, 161). These resources can be either material or non-material, and may take symbolic or social forms, such as social services (Nonini 2007). In fact, Pranab Bardhan and Isha Ray (2008, 9) point out that even 'shared understandings are themselves a sort of common resource'. Vijayendra Rao (2008, 168) deals with such shared knowledge in the form of identity constructions and contends that 'common property can also be social—defined within symbolic space'. When used to refer to social construction, the concept draws attention to the power plays that frame, intersect with, and are entangled in the process. The notion of commons has, then, changed from indicating resources to

2   'From an anthropological perspective, perhaps the most productive rethinking of the commons emerges as a result of efforts to take the word as a verb, "to common"' (Casas-Cortés, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2014, 455).

an 'analytical and political, rather than a physical, category' (Bardhan and Ray 2008, 18).

Without further elaborating on the history of the academic debates about commons, I take this broad approach to the 'commons' as an analytical concept as my point of departure. I rely mainly on the work of Ida Susser and Stéphane Tonnelat (2013) and David Harvey (2012) to construct an analytical strategy for understanding the 'messy' way issues of belonging, social relations, space, land, and material assets are interwoven in a local neighbourhood in Jakarta. More broadly, I examine how investments in *kampungs* may be better understood by viewing such neighbourhoods as commons.

2.2   From Commons to Commoning: From a Noun to a Verb, and from a 'Thing' to a Relation

The shift from seeing commons as community-owned natural resources to viewing them as jointly produced and consumed resources, both material and non-material, entailed an interest in phenomena such as guerrilla gardening, knowledge communities, and cultural heritage. These phenomena concern how commons are not only consumed, but also produced, something termed commoning.

'Commoning' according to Harvey, is a social practice that establishes a 'malleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/ or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood' (Harvey 2012, 73). In an urban context Susser and Tonnelat (2013, 108) argue that social movements play an important role in creating social groups that can claim and reclaim commons, building on the idea that people have 'the right to urban everyday life, the right to simultaneity and encounters, and the right to creative activity.' Hence the commoning process is dependent on a social group that defines itself as stake holders with collective objectives.

Commons are neither state-owned nor market commodities. Nonetheless, they are a resource that is exploited by a group of people. 'At the heart of the practice of commoning lies the principle that the relation between the social group and that aspect of the environment being treated as a common shall be both collective and non-commodified' (Harvey 2012, 73). Hence, commons are 'neither private nor public' (Susser and Tonnelat 2013, 107). The market may feed on these commons in the sense that a neighbourhood or city may, for example, be marketed as a tourist attraction

even though it is something that has been created by and belongs to the citizens (Susser and Tonnelat 2013, 74). In short, commons are resources but not commodities.

Susser and Tonnelat identify three types of urban commons. The first is located in everyday life and 'revolves around issues of production, consumption, and use of public services and public goods reframed as a common means for a decent everyday life'; the second is public space, exemplified by streets, subways, cafés, and public gardens; the third is art and 'collective visions within which each individual may find a place', which help urbanites to 'conceive of the city as a collectively produced living place'. These commons are not necessarily 'perceived as such', but are instead a form of 'potential urban commons' or even 'the commons of tomorrow' (Susser and Tonnelat 2013, 108–9). Citizens should be the 'primary stakeholders' in urban commons; one of the 'practical as well as theoretical challenges is to invent for each commons, the right mix of institutional and community controls and their reach' (Susser and Tonnelat 2013, 108).

Susser and Tonnelat's three kinds of commons can all be found in Jakarta's *kampungs*. However, the social and political structures in the *kampungs* are designed to manage individual and household crises and to satisfy the authorities' need for governance tools, rather than to protect commons or to address collective needs. In the conclusions I will return to this need for organizing a collective of 'primary stakeholders' to control and sustain the commons.

2.3   Cities as Commons

Cities constitute a specific issue in the debate about commons. 'The ambience and attractiveness of a city […] is a collective product of its citizens […] and thereby create something common as a framework within which all can dwell' (Harvey 2012, 74). As I understand Harvey in this case, is that the commons of a city is not only or always connected to a certain identity but also a mode and way of being, what Simone has referred to as 'cityness' (Simone 2010). It is intangible, still a resource. However, this resource is not just lying there, ready to be harvested (as a common field, or natural resource) but is produced (and presumably reproduced as well). Harvey sees 'the metropolis […as] a vast common produced by the collective labor expended on and in the city' (2012, 78). Simone has a similar view of urban commons as 'work in progress' (Simone 2014, 6). The commons are not 'an assortment of public goods' but rather a way

of creating relations and envision collaboration (Simone 2014, 261-63). I understand this production as a creation of relations, and the more socio-economic, cultural and political relations that exist in the city the stronger, or more 'fertile', is the urban common. In my view this way of conceptualising urban commons rhymes closely with Susser and Tonnellat's idea about urban commons as collective visions and the importance of having stake holders 'producing' (in Harvey's terms) and controlling these resources.

A more specific way of commoning urban space is squatting (Casas-Cortés, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2014, 460–61). Maribel Casas-Cortés, Sebastian Cobarrubias, and John Pickles illustrate this with the European tradition of house occupation, describing Cañada Réal in Spain as an example of squatting that creates informal settlements. These commons are especially vulnerable to threats of eviction and market exploitation (Harvey 2012, 77). When they disintegrate, there are severe ramifications for the community: 'By the time the market has done its destructive work, not only have the original residents been dispossessed of that common which they had created […] but the common itself becomes so debased as to be unrecognizable' (Harvey 2012, 78). This has repercussions for the daily life of citizens: 'Those who create an interesting and stimulating everyday neighbourhood life lose it to the predatory practices of the real estate entrepreneurs, the financiers and upper class consumers' (Harvey 2012, 78). The parallel between the loss of the commons and the *kampung* evictions in Jakarta described by Lea Jellinek (1991) is striking. In these evictions, families are not only dispossessed of their houses; their livelihoods and life worlds are also shattered. The conclusions I take with me from Harvey is that although being crucial to the communities 'life and livelihood' commons in the *kampungs* are transient 'work in progress' lacking a social group of stakeholders for their protection.

2.4   Argument and Analytical Strategy

I argue that the private investments locals make in their houses are not simply made for economic profit, but also partly an effort for them to be incorporated into *kampung* society and to build a sustainable livelihood. Hence, evictions cause severe repercussions. *Kampungs* are not necessarily perceived as a commons by their inhabitants, and they are fragile resources that depend on weak institutional arrangements.

To elicit the reasons underlying people's choice to invest in housing, *kampungs* need to be examined as an intangible common comprising

material structures, socio-economic relations, the political administration, and juridical agreements. Just as the metropolis is a common created through collective work that adds or create value (Harvey 2012), a *kampung* is a work in progress produced by the people living in it and formal inclusion in a *kampung* protects people to some extent. Being recognized as part of a *kampung* entails paying taxes for houses, having an official address, taking part in elections to the local political administration, etc., all of which are used by the inhabitants to argue that they cannot be defined as illegal. However, although they sustain the lives of the inhabitants, the *kampungs* are vulnerable to various pressures since they are not supported by any explicit institutional framework and are not defined as commons either by the people living there or by other citizens. *Kampungs* are vulnerable for three main reasons. First, they lack what Ostrom (1990) has defined as crucial for a common, namely an institutional framework that defines the responsibilities and rights of a specific social group in relation to this resource. Second, the *kampung* is an immovable resource that people cannot take with them if they are evicted. Third, the *kampung* is difficult to use as a base for political mobilization because it combines a variety of value regimes rather than constituting a single resource. They constitute a kind of assemblage of resources that varies from social networks, influence over political decision makers, work opportunities, access to loans, etc. These are resources embedded in social, economic and political fields that, although being intertwined, have their own values and logic.

3   Method and Implementation

This chapter builds on material from my own fieldwork and from burgeoning research on *kampungs* in Jakarta. The ethnographic material derives from three periods of fieldwork (one month in 2012, two months each in 2013 and 2014). Three neighbourhoods along the Ciliwung River in Jakarta were chosen as research sites. One main reason for choosing these specific *kampungs* was that they included established and long since recognized settlements and on their fringes, more recent housing areas that aspired to be incorporated into the settlement and to transform their official status from illegal to legal. A mixture of participant observation, interviews, casual conversations, and structured and unstructured observations was used. Thirty formal, recorded interviews were conducted with people living in the three *kampungs*; each series of interviews was initiated with a focus

group of four to five people. After the initial meeting with each focus group, individual interviews were set up with each of the participants. In addition, interviews with leaders in the political and administrative systems of the *kampungs* were also conducted. Apart from these three neighbourhoods, regular visits were made to two additional *kampungs*. In one, relations were established with representatives of a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that focussed on search and rescue activities. The cooperation with this specific NGO resulted in boat trips along Ciliwung river and several discussions about hazards experienced by people living along the river. In the fifth *kampung*, several meetings were held with an NGO that focussed on poverty reduction and social work. In the meetings with the two NGOs, a variety of issues ranging from search and rescue procedures to eviction and the socio-economic strength of the communities were discussed. Apart from formal interviews, observations and casual conversations were conducted throughout fieldwork. These included everyday conversations with people living and working in the neighbourhoods and with the participants from the focus groups (but without recording devices or prepared questions). Notes taken on these observations and conversations were compiled in a field diary.

4   Jakarta Kampungs—A History of Transience or Resilience?

In the Indonesian-English dictionary, the *kampung* is translated as 'village' (Echols, Shadily, Wolff, Collins 1992, 258). In Poerwadarminta's lexicon *kampung* is equated with *desa* ('village'), but also with city blocks of low status and uncivilized behaviour (Poerwadarminta 1996). However, the definition of *kampung* remains a matter of debate (Guinness 2009; Krausse 1975). John Sullivan has made the case that *kampung* were 'a modern development of relatively recent vintage', where the 'Indonesian state provides the crucial vessels which give this type of community its characteristic outer form—its shape and social boundaries—plus some of its internal structuring' (1992, 11). In his discussion on community building in urban *kampungs*, Patrick Guinness (2009) argues against the idea that community values are being undermined by modernity and the state, which posits that the *kampung* is a 'state construction without strong foundations among urban residents'. Nor does he share the scepticism of Hans-Dieter Evers and Rüdiger Korff (2000, 237) about the 'potential of kampung communities to defend their location or achieve

their demands against state pressures' (Guinness 2009, 23).[3] Instead, in Guinness's view, *kampung* society is full of acting subjects and 'strong local impulses to community' (2009, 24). Although Guinness conducted his study in Yogyakarta, his findings are echoed in Jakarta (see Hellman 2015; van Voorst 2013; Wilhelm 2011). Given these contrasting images of the *kampung* that have emerged from the research, in this chapter I explore how the notion of a resilient civil society might be compatible with that of fragile communities that are unable to mobilize enduring political resistance.

4.1   Kampung Kota

In this section the ambiguities and contradictions inherited in the concept *kampung* is described. In the end of the paper I will return to my view of the *kampung* as an assemblage of resources which has the potential of being constituted as a form of urban common.

Jakarta is often referred to as a *kampung kota* ('urban village') because of its peculiar skyline with skyscrapers surrounded by low-rise village buildings and the ambiguity of its social forms, which do not readily fit into a binary system of modern vs. traditional or city vs. village (Sihombing 2010).[4] The concept of *kampung* carries the connotation of rural life (Krausse 1975; Sihombing 2010), but is definitely part of forming the city of Jakarta. The term *kampung* does not correspond to an administrative unit in Jakarta and has no clear-cut criteria for delineation (Krausse 1975).[5] However, many *kampungs* are old settlements (Krausse 1975) that form part of the city's history and constitute landmarks for local belonging to a territorially bound community (Krausse 1975, 34; Sihombing 2010, 84).

The *kampung* consists of a certain type of housing, with one- and two-storey buildings crammed into densely populated areas that have under-dimensioned infrastructure in terms of roads, water supply and sanitary equipment (Sihombing 2010). Living in a *kampung* also denotes

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3   Somantri (2007) also concludes that resistance happens but is not formalized into an enduring form and does not affect decision-making processes or build long-term empowerment.

4   Terry McGee relates the concept of *kampungkota* to the development of *kotadesa* ('village cities') where he argues against the conventional idea of urbanization as a 'spatial separation of rural and urban activities' (1991, 4). Jakarta is placed in a category of *desakota* ('city village') with a 'mixture of agricultural and nonagricultural activities' (McGee 1991, 7).

5   A specific administrative unit adapted to the *kampung* level, called *Rukun Kampung,* has been phased out in favour of one at the *Rukun Warga* ('neighbourhood') level (Guinness 2009, 12; Jellinek 1991, 124)

a particular quality of life. The word *kampung* can be used adjectivally as *kampungan* to refer to 'uncivilized social behaviour' (Harjoko 2009, 7). *Kampung* communities are usually regarded as backward, pre-modern, poor, and unhygienic. However, this has changed somewhat as *kampung* has also become a 'symbol of identity, a nostalgic link to the past or to one's kin or *adat* (tradition)' (Guinness 2009, 33). *Kampungs* are often described as poor and containing semi-permanent buildings that are easily washed away by floods and destroyed by fires, and this creates an image of vulnerability and transience (Jellinek 1991).[6] On the other hand, they have a documented capacity to quickly re-establish social relations and physical structures after floods and fires (Hellman 2015; Wilhelm 2011). In his doctoral thesis, Sihombing explores this ambiguous relationship by starting out from Jellinek's (1991) research of an urban kampung in Jakarta in which she highlighted the different views held by kampung dwellers and planners: 'The former saw the kampung as a bustling hive of activity and a place of hope, a stepping stone to a better standard of living. The latter saw it as a slum whose inhabitants were caught in a vicious circle of poverty' (Jellinek 1991, xix).

Thus, although the *kampung* is a symbol of belonging that is imbued with a certain nostalgia, it is also frowned upon as backward and uncivilized. These conflicting images can coexist in the concept of *kampung kota* (Sihombing 2010). The *kampung* and *kota* ('city') are structuring tropes in the self-image produced in and of Jakarta. They seem to be antagonistic (corresponding to a rural village versus an urban space), but in reality they are symbiotic. The large malls, administration, and business communities that are usually associated with *kota* are dependent on the cheap labour force living on inexpensive plots of centrally located urban land. Since the prices of land and housing in central Jakarta are high, labourers are forced to illegally occupy land. For their part, *kampung* dwellers are economically dependent on the jobs created by the service sector. Hence, for people with a weak economy and insecure working conditions the *kampung* is a key to the city (Jellinek 1991, xviii-xxiii).

4.2   Kampung as Community

In her fine grained ethnography of a local neighbourhood in Yogyakarta, Newberry (2006) unravels the meanings of community. However, as

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6   Although often depicted as poor and vulnerable, most *kampungs* include a broad socioeconomic spectrum ranging from dirt poor to middle-class.

Newberry points out the term community is multi-layered and at a closer look becomes rather ambiguous in the *kampung* context (see also Guinness 2009, 4–15, 33; Jellinek 1991, xxii; Sihombing 2010, 93–115; Wilhelm 2011, 43–5). In Clarke's excellent overview of the concept of community, he points out that it has been used to connect—and moves *effortlessly* between— 'vernacular discourses with governmental ones; political discourses with academic ones; emotional discourses with analytic ones; and nostalgic discourses with ones in which futures are imagined and anticipated' (Clarke 2014, 54). This malleability makes the concept hard to pinpoint, but gives it a certain attraction. Among other things, 'community' may be used to refer to a place, a particular form of social relations or identity, or a social and analytical scale (Clarke 2014, 48). All of these usages can be found in the literature on *kampungs*. Although being an academically inconsistent concept, 'community' has been a concept regularly used in both politics and everyday lives of many people.

According to Sihombing's (2010) research, the closest one can come to a sense of community in the *kampung* is found in social formations such as the *Rukun Tetangga* (RT) which is an administrative section of a *kampung* (Sihombing 2010). Antony Sihombing (2010, 93) defines 'community' as a 'group of people living together […] united by shared interests or socio-cultural background'. While he describes the *kampung* as a geographically delineated space, this sense of community is found in the RT. The RT has an elected leader and is the smallest administrative unit in the political administration of Jakarta; Sihombing locates the 'community' in the RT because it is the administrative level and social formation in which mutual help and collective work are organized and performed. My own fieldwork partially corroborates Sihombing's observations. I found that some mutual help, locally termed *gotong royong*, was conducted by neighbours at the RT level, but that it was not necessarily organized by the RT leader. The RT was an important link between households and the government, as well as between NGOs and charity organizations. However, socio-economic safety nets were not constructed in relation to the formal RT organization; instead, they were built through individual networks of reciprocity (Hellman 2015, 474–76). Hence, according to my findings, the RT did organise some practical work but did not foster any strong notions of identity or community.

Widely used but loosely defined, the meaning of *kampung* rests somewhere between 'community' and 'neighbourhood' (Sihombing 2010, 115). The concept of the commons may shed light upon this space between a neighbourhood and community, as it frames the *kampung* as a socially

constructed resource and includes, but is not limited by, geographical and material dimensions while still expressing a sense of belonging.

5   Kampung Pulo—Building Houses and the Construction of Commons

In contrast to the people in Everett's (1999) report, cited in the introduction, the squatters of Pulo are long-time residents who live on the margins of an established neighbourhood. The settlement has slowly grown beyond its original boundaries and invaded the riverbanks. Several of those I interviewed recalled that the river had been wide and clean a few decades ago and that the riverbank had been their playground when they were small. Most of the houses on the riverbank date from the 1960s or later. Syafrudin, one of the RT leaders in Kampung Pulo, for instance, has lived his whole life (about forty years) in the same house on the riverbank. After a severe flood in 2007, it was levelled and he had to rebuild it from scratch. For this reason, most of the houses were rebuilt recently, although their histories in fact date back several decades. Kampung Pulo is one of the oldest *kampungs* in Jakarta and is well known to a broad audience because the media frequently uses it as an illustration of the annual problem of urban flooding, which takes a hard toll on buildings all over the city and negatively impacts health and the economy.

Administratively, Kampung Pulo is part of the Kelurahan Kampung Melayu district.[7] As with other parts of Jakarta, Kelurahan Kampung Melayu is divided into RTs, with a few hundred people, and RWs (aggregations of RT), each level represented by an elected administrative leader. The official task of RT and RW leaders is to create harmony and stability and assist the state bureaucracy in producing and processing documents and implementing political decisions. However, the leaders are elected by the local community (through a kind of informal elective constituency), who then expect them to represent their opinions (and not the government). The RWs are in turn aggregated into the Kelurahan level (i.e., Kelurahan Kampung Melayu), which has a *lurah* ('leader') appointed by the Governor.[8]

Kampung Pulo is in many ways a typical Jakarta riverbank settlement (Vollmer and Grêt-Regamey 2013, 1552). It offers a good illustration of what

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7   By coincidence, the Kelurahan includes the term *kampung* in its name.
8   Kelurahan Kampung Melayu consists of about 30,000 inhabitants, while the geographic area of Kampung Pulo comprises approximately 15,000.

happens when urban development from below meets top-down city planning efforts that fail to take into consideration the existing local 'socially constructed spaces' (Padawangi 2012, 336). The part of the neighbourhood that is threatened with eviction has been built without permission on the state-owned land of the riverbanks. While the majority of houses in Pulo have unclear legal status, whether a household is identified as a squatter household is only of real concern for those on the riverbank, which is affected by flood mitigation projects.[9] These projects involve the construction of protective walls and inspection roads along the riverbank, and therefore require all households close to the river to be relocated. Jakarta's flood mitigation projects are 'bluntly' formulated, with little or no consideration of the local context (Vollmer and Grêt-Regamey 2013, 1552; Padawangi 2012). Their main weakness is a failure to acknowledge that simply offering financial compensation or substitute housing in apartments is inadequate. Eviction implies both immediate economic losses and further effects on people's livelihoods. As will be described in the next sections, houses play an important role as a node of relationships in the *kampung*; they are not only material assets, but provide a means for people to become established as social and juridical subjects, which in turn is key to the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.

5.1   The Creation of Legal Houses and Subjects

Tenure security is not only about ownership, but also about establishing a proper house and positioning it within a wider environment of legal and social space and everyday living. In my fieldwork, I found that although the households were included in the administrative system the legal status of property owners and their tenure rights were constantly being called into question. Those who live on the riverbanks are by default defined as squatters by the authorities, since the law prohibits building on the riverbank.[10] Although recognized as a formal RT, the people did not possess any formal building permits or tenure documents. When I asked about the legal status of the buildings, they produced receipts for taxes paid for the land and *surat keterangan* ('formal sales contracts') that had been stamped by the *lurah*. However, *surat keterangan* simply document the completion of a transaction that has been accepted by the involved parties and witnessed

9   For an overview of Indonesia as a 'project society', see Aspinall (2013).
10   The Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo stated in 2014, 'We will not tolerate people occupying riverbanks anymore' (*Jakarta Post*, 2014).

by the *lurah*; it does not include formal acceptance of tenure rights by the authorities.[11] Acquiring formal recognition of landownership is an expensive and complex bureaucratic process that involves seventeen administrative steps and eighteen different agencies (Nikmah 2010, 11; Tunas and Peresthu 2010, 320).[12] The costs and knowledge required makes the process unfeasible for most *kampung* dwellers, and the result is that most have only informal rights to their property. This means that from a legal perspective they can easily be evicted.[13]

The strongest evidence used to demand acceptance as legal residents were receipts from the *Pajak Bumi dan Bangunan* ('tax for land and houses'), also known as the PBB. The PBB is a tax based on the size of land occupied, its location, and the standard of the house. Documents like *surat keterangan* and PBB receipts were treasured and considered valuable assets, and they were among the first items to be protected in an emergency, such as a flood or fire. However, many people lacked this piece of evidence, whether for economic reasons, ignorance, or destruction by floods and fires. In these cases, people might appeal to their inheritance or informal rights to the land. People living in the *kampung* referred to land as their inheritance and claimed that their situation was different from that of squatters in other areas, who were first-generation settlers. They argued that even without any formal or documented ownership they had certain rights. In interviews, they stressed that the land was a *turun temurun* ('inter-generational inheritance') and that they lived in a 'real *kampung*', meaning that they considered inheritance rights as applicable to the land there.

Having one's house accepted as part of an RT is the first step in avoiding being labelled as a squatter, and therefore enhances tenure security. RT status positions a house in a specific place and is a means of acquiring a *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* ('identity card'), also known as a KTP, which is mandatory for all Indonesian citizens. The KTP is an important piece of evidence proving that a person has been recognized as a citizen at a specific location. To secure a KTP, the applicant requires an address. This means that

11   See Mercy Corps (2008, 5–9) for a comprehensive overview of the complexity of informal and formal ownership of land in Jakarta.
12   See Raharjo (2010) for an overview of Basic Agrarian Law (BAL), which gives the state the right to control land, water, and airspace. See Winayanti (2010, 86–9, 141–66) for a more detailed presentation of this law and obstacles confronting people who try to register land rights. Kusno describes the situation as a tacitly accepted 'legal dualism' (2013, 145–49) that regulates the formal and informal ownership of land.
13   This is not unique to the urban context. Only 1 per cent of all land in Indonesia is claimed for private ownership (Tunas and Peresthu 2010, 320).

the house is not only a physical building, but also a tool for gaining recognition as part of the legal and administrative system. The status of belonging to an RT provides the person with an address and hence the possibility of getting a KTP. The registration of a KTP at a particular address means that the house has been incorporated into the local community and is accepted by the authorities. The existence of the house is proven by a PBB receipt and/or the *surat keterangan,* which vouches for the physical permanence of the house and its historical record. In turn, the house legitimizes the KTP connected to its address.

A KTP is necessary to prove one's identity as a citizen of Jakarta. KTPs give the right to schooling, healthcare, and other social services; those without them are treated as illegal citizens of Jakarta (Winayanti 2010, 169). Migrants from other parts of Indonesia who move into houses and rental spaces are not granted a permanent KTP for Jakarta. Their KTPs place them in their villages of origin; in case of eviction, they are directed back to their home village. It is therefore not the legal status of land ownership that concerns people in Pulo per se, but how it affects their status as citizens. 'It is not the illegality of land tenure that *kampung* residents consider to be a problem; rather it is how their rights as citizens are affected because of the status of their land tenure' (Winayanti 2010, 221). In short, property ownership is a way to be recognized as a citizen. Owing land provides people with an address and hence a KTP. According to Nikmah (2010), the two major reasons people are evicted as squatters are because they lack land certificates and do not possess a KTP Jakarta.

The RT has a restricted geographical outreach that does not correspond to either the *kampung* or individual's socio-economic networks. The RT administration and the services it provides can be used to articulate specific needs of the community or individual households. At the same time, it is an administrative form that fragments political mobilization and helps govern the political space. While this administration affects all inhabitants, it does not correspond to any ethnic, religious, or socio-economic criteria that strengthens a sense of belonging. Everyone is more or less dependent on an efficient RT administration, but RTs do not nourish a sense of solidarity (cf. King and Idawati 2010, 2).

5.2   Commons as Public Space, Labour, Consumption, and Services

Raharjo (2010, 2) argues that 'in informal settlement development tenure is gained gradually through unauthorised territorial claims, largely by means of the production of the built form'. This description is very much

in agreement with how the establishment of riverbank settlements in Pulo has happened.[14] People invested not only in their own houses, but also in the environment and infrastructure. They bought water pumps to clear the streets from floods and to extract ground water for cooking and washing. Some of these were financed by allocations from the *lurah's* budget, but most of them were paid for either by private charity or neighbours pooling their money. Water, drainage, and sanitary facilities were not fully provided by the authorities; instead, they were left for local, private, and community organizations to solve. Although it is possible to link up with tap water facilities, the costs are prohibitive for most people living on the riverbank. In Pulo, several sanitary facilities have been built by the community to cater to the needs of the large number of households that lack private bathrooms. These facilities were financed by either neighbours pooling their resources or by private enterprises that charge a small fee.

When Syafrudin described the changes that had taken place since he was a child, he noted modifications in the environment: houses are now built with more permanent materials; they have communal water pumps; and there is cement on the roads. These changes were corroborated in interviews with other people. Such changes both indicate economic prosperity and signal historical permanence: the anticipated endurance of the neighbourhood into the future. When I was walking through the *kampung* with one of the residents, he pointed out that the whole community had adapted to the recurrent floods by building two-storey houses, attaching ladders to the upper floor so boats could be accessed during floods, and tying ropes along the pedestrian paths to help people walk through minor inundations. He claimed that this shows how people adapted to the local circumstances, and in turn demonstrated that the neighbourhood had existed for a long time and was not a recent illegal settlement.

The lanes between the houses are used for shops and *warungs* ('small eateries'), washing, drying clothes, and breeding chickens. Most households have established some sort of trade, often in everyday commodities and food products. Usually they place a few chairs on the street, which become meeting places for gossiping and socialising in public spaces. Syafrudin's house is a good example. As we sit outside the front door chatting, we are constantly interrupted. His wife is selling instant coffee and everyday household items from a rack at the front door. The drinks are made to either take away or consume on the spot while talking with Syafrudin, his wife, me,

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14   These findings are reinforced by Winayanti and Lang (2004) and Winayanti (2010).

or other visitors. Others come by to have their phones repaired. Syafrudin makes money by selling cell phones at the market. He recently took a course in repairing and servicing phones, and now offers these services at his home as well. Since Syafrudin is an elected RT leader, people drop by to have letters signed, to claim social services, or for other administrative matters. A dog starts barking in the distance and the visitors begin to gossip about the stress people have been feeling because of a roaming stray dog. This description of one visit to Syafrudin is typical. Apart from being the home of an extended family, the house functions as a social hub, an administrative office, a repair shop, a storeroom (for cell phones), a convenience shop, and a small restaurant.

Syafrudin's house mirrors the *kampung* as a whole by mixing private, state, and collective ownership and usage. *Kampung* houses are open to the public space of the street, but privacy increases as people move into, and up the stairs of, the house. Every front door is open and everyday life is played out in the semi public/private sphere of the front room. There is no sharp distinction between private and public space; one simply fades into the other. The privately owned houses stretch outward through *warungs* and public facilities, and the public space seeps into the privacy of the house through the same activities and the open doors. The same goes for the administrative, political, and juridical space in which the RT-level activities move between the private (for example, the administrative archives kept inside the house) and public (street) sphere.

The borders between public, private, and semi-public space in the *kampung* are diffuse. However, this also makes space into a sort of public good: a commons to be used for the establishment of cafés, new streets (as houses are built), and public facilities such as sanitary services and water pumps. Space may be appropriated for private purposes when building a house or a raft for transporting people over the river. However, the space that is considered private by the house owners is seen by the authorities as a public space occupied by squatters.

5.3   Commons as Risk Management

Pulo is hit every year by floods ranging from a few decimetres to several metres. These are recurrent disasters that take a hard toll on houses and the environment, as well as on human resources. Major repairs are needed every year. All families living on the riverbank struggle to raise the financial and human resources to cope with the floods, unemployment, and disease. Ibu Sunayan, who has single-handedly managed one of the poorest families

in the *kampung* ever since her husband's death, has rebuilt her house three times. To manage these uncertainties, socio-economic networks in the form of family, neighbours, employment contacts, and rotating savings organizations have developed in Pulo, as is common in poorer communities that lack formal social security systems.[15] These networks are built on reciprocity and exchange, rather than on shared values or solidarity based on identity (e.g., religion or ethnicity). The networks are spun from each household and differ according to people's skills and circumstances. Sunayan, for example, used a combination of state emergency relief, private charity, and personal networks of neighbours and relatives to raise credit and resources for rebuilding. The saving systems and socio-economic networking in urban *kampungs* described by Hellman (2015), Lont (2007), Simone (2010), and Simone and Fauzan (2012) provide a certain degree of security and supports Guinness' perception that *kampungs* are communities with strong agency.

However, when it comes to external actors involved in risk management the picture is more diverse. In some places external actors are very active and present while in other they are not. According to interviews and a provisional compilation by Forum Permukiman Jakarta (Forum of Jakarta Housing and Settlement for the Poor), also known as Forkim, surprisingly few NGOs or Community Based Organizations (CBOs) engaged in long-term empowerment projects have been established in Kampung Pulo. The NGOs that are present tend to focus on emergency relief and charity. One exception is Ciliwung Merdeka, an NGO known to be working with empowerment projects in Pulo. However, their main location and activities are in Bukit Duri across the river. This partly contrasts with Padawangi's (2012) findings in *kampungs* located in North Jakarta, where there are NGOs with long-term commitments to advocacy and mobilisation of the locals in negotiations with the authorities. What does correspond if one compares the different

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15   In their book *Ropewalking and Safety Nets: Local ways of Managing Insecurities in Indonesia,* Koning and Hüsken (2006) analyse the weaknesses of the official security systems in modern Indonesia. In the absence of a state-regulated social security system, risk has been dealt with through reciprocal networks. Lont (2005) also points to the multitude of self-help organizations concerned with microcredit that exist independently of the state in Javanese communities. Sullivan (1992, 71–84), Jellinek (1991, 34–40), and Guinness (2009, 101–16) have all documented the importance of locally embedded social security nets in small-scale, poor societies in Java. Drawing on decades of research, Wisner et al. (2004) conclude that in general resilience systems in poor communities consist of diversifying incomes and the development of social support networks. The World Bank also acknowledges that although having 'livelihoods that are relatively fragile[, ...] well established social networks [...] are [...] one of the adaptive strengths of Jakarta's urban poor' (2011, 21).

kampungs is that civil society, NGOs and state institutions parallel each other and work both in cooperation and in conflict with each other.[16] So, although a certain coherence exist in how socio-economic networks are established to deal with risk the engagement of external actors differs a lot between *kampungs*.

5.4   Commons as Collective Visions

A common may be constituted by a sense of community, the community itself being a resource to draw on in times of crises. However, of the three commons described by Susser and Tonnelat (2013) the sense of a collective identity may, at least in Kampung Pulo, be the weakest, and I will return to this point in the conclusion. The term *kampung* is a living, vernacular notion in Jakarta that forms part of daily life. However, there are few social, economic, administrative, or political forms that correspond to or are articulated through this concept. It is nevertheless a concept that is used in relation to belonging and it is crucial in the imaginary of Jakarta and is sustained in research and the media as well as by locals. It is an expression that is used to identify a place (e.g., 'I live in Kampung Pulo'). *Kampungs* are marked on maps of Jakarta, but the term is also used to refer to a particular way of living and to a judicial sphere. People say, for instance, *ini benar benar kampung* ('this is really a *kampung*') when claiming hereditary land ownership rights. The term is also used in expressions such as *pulang kampung* ('going home to one's origins, family, place, and village') and there is even a Facebook community for Kampung Pulo (that is mainly used to communicate flood warnings). The term also frequently appears in the media to denote a place or a way of life, such as in *kampung kumuh* ('dirty, poor *kampungs*'). For example, in *Tribun Jakarta* (2014) the Governor of Jakarta was quoted as saying that he hopes that Jakarta will rid itself of *kampung kumuh* and replace them with *kampung deret* ('well organized and state-built, small-scale housing').

The collective visions of the future of the *kampung* is strikingly contradictive and although being a living concept there seem to be few visions of a *kampung* community or *kampung* solidarity. There is no 'group of stake holders' protecting the *kampung* albeit the mass of resources assembled under this conceptual umbrella.

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16   A good example of how this works is van Voorst's (2014) description of rights and the relatively autonomous way people search for support from different actors and organizations.

5.5   The Intertwining of the Three Commons

The three commons (located in everyday life, public space and collective visions) described by Susser and Tonnelat (2013) are intertwined in Jakarta's *kampungs*. The every day life commons, labour, consumption, and services are, in different ways, located and related to the house and to the status that the house provides to its inhabitants as legal citizens. A 'squatter' is usually defined as someone who lives in or on property that they have occupied. However, in Kampung Pulo, a well-built house (on occupied land) is the best form of proof that the inhabitant is not a squatter. It is also a hub that interconnects the three commons. The house opens up avenues into different forms of collective visions of belonging, that of the citizen as well as of being part of a *kampung* community. Owning a house is the key to becoming a legitimate citizen: it provides the owner/builder with receipts for taxes and contracts for transfer of ownership that are witnessed by legal authorities in the political system. The house represents one's longstanding presence; the tiled floors and concrete walls are symbols of an anticipated enduring future existence. The house enables a person to establish their presence in an RT, and also in the socio-economic life of the *kampung* and beyond. The house also constitutes a crossroad between every day life and the public. It is a place where a shop may be established, and it provides a hub for entrepreneurship and socio-economic security nets that extend beyond the RT and the *kampung*. The private space inside the house fades into the public space of the street, where everyday chores such as laundry and drawing water are done and where the public sanitary facilities are located.

The commons of the *kampung* consist of an assemblage of privately, jointly, and collectively owned space, material assets (such as houses, pumps, and sanitary facilities), and social relations (such as safety nets). The value created is a common, the *kampung*. This resource is used by people living within the geographical parameters of the *kampung* to create a viable livelihood. The patchwork of administrative institutions, private organizations, working spaces, socio-economic safety nets, social relations, and bonds of affection add value to the *kampung*. This value is not easily verbalized or conceptualized, although it is implicit in expressions such as *betah di sini* ('I like it here') or *aman di sin* ('I feel safe here'). Indeed, such value may not be recognized at all until it is threatened by eviction. When evicted, 'relationships of mutual aid and social networks are dismantled as populations disperse. These social networks are a critical survival tool for the urban poor who must constantly weather economic fluctuations and uncertainty. Even when families receive compensation for lost homes,

these social relations are virtually irreplaceable' (Everrett 1999). Since the *kampung* is a commons that lacks the institutional framework necessary for sustainable use, it easily falls apart.

As mentioned, the *kampung* is what Simone terms a constant 'work in progress' (Simone 2014, 6) and Susser and Tonnelat label a potential (emerging) or even future commons. These commons are not necessarily 'perceived as such', but are rather a form of 'potential urban commons' or 'the commons of tomorrow' (Susser and Tonnelat 2013, 108–9). They provide services that are often taken for granted by their users. Recalling Mattei's remarks on the intrinsic value of commons, 'many of those who benefit from the commons do not take into account their intrinsic value, only acknowledging it once the commons are destroyed and substitutes need to be found' (Mattei 2012, 38). The *kampung* is, as I see it, a shorthand for a temporary assemblage of resources (such as fresh water, sanitary facilities, access to political structures and private donors, socio-economic security, and work) that together provide a sustainable livelihood. Although it is private property, the house is the entry point of a relationship with, and a way of creating, these commons. It is a living and working place, but it is also a ticket for establishing oneself as a juridical subject (a citizen) and neighbour. It is therefore not only a house, or simply a material or social space. It is a key for establishing people as stakeholders in a social relation with the intangible commons that are subsumed within the notion of the *kampung*.

6   Conclusions and Future Research

Commons take different forms in different cities according to context and history. In this chapter, I have argued that in Jakarta the *kampung* is an important form of commons. Although Jakarta's *kampungs* have been dismantled for a long time through evictions and expropriations, they are part of the city's history and continue to play an important role in the everyday lives of the city's vulnerable inhabitants. It is therefore worth considering what role these vaguely defined but significant social formations may play in the city's future and what rights and expectations citizens have in their formation.

Kampungs are strong and resilient in the sense that their inhabitants are able to establish socio-economic safety networks for dealing with natural disasters. The RT is part of this security system and functions to link households with state bureaucracy and private charities. However, neither the RT nor private socio-economic networks generate a strong

sense of local identity that can be used to mobilize political solidarity and support. This means that these communities tend to be fragile with regard to political change.

The everyday handling of risk and livelihood through personal socio-economic networks is ineffective for mobilising collective resistance to eviction threats. People who live only a few hundred metres apart but are separated into different RTs therefore fail to coordinate and organize to create solid resistance or establish themselves as a collective and active counterpart in negotiations about evictions. Dealing with the threat of eviction demands different strategies than coping with everyday threats (such as floods, diseases, accidents, and economic issues). The threat of eviction cannot be handled by households through their socio-economic networks, since these networks focus on providing support during individual and household crises rather than on collective action. Consequently, the socio-economic networks that form the backbone of these communities' resilience do not translate into political strength.

To create a sustainable commons, a group of 'stakeholders' or social group relating to the commons must be delineated (Ostrom 1990). However, in Indonesia, the state will be one of the main actors deciding the future of Jakarta's *kampungs*. Entering into non-violent communication with the state requires certain conditions, including 'a common subjectivity' (Bertho 2013, 129), a collective vision forwarded by a united group of people, where this vision and the unity may count as a common in Susser and Tonnelat's use of the word. As noted, the urban commons that Susser and Tonnelat have described are only possibilities; it is only collective mobilization that can make them an urban reality. In Pulo, and allegedly in many of Jakarta's other *kampungs*, the lack of collective subjectivity tends to prevent these resources from being explicitly recognized as commons that deserve appropriate institutional forms of management.

Neither the RT nor socio-economic networks are sufficient for generating political mobilization or claiming ownership of urban space. To strengthen the chance of citizens gaining greater influence in managing and governing urban spaces and create urban commons, 'the future of the commons would be much brighter if the state would begin to provide formal charters and legal doctrines to recognize the collective interests and rights of common-ers' (Bollier and Helfrich 2012, xviii). Just as private ownership of houses may seem paradoxical to the establishment of urban commons, it may also seem paradoxical to suggest that the state should protect these commons. Indeed, Bollier and Helfrich warn about the potentially conflicting interests that may arise if commons are managed 'within the existing

system of law and policy' (Bollier and Helfrich 2012, xviii). However, in Jakarta the legal, social, and political situation of *kampung* dwellers is extremely unclear. Citizens' rights crisscross between private, civil, and state domains, where responsibilities may be either honoured or ignored. To establish the *kampung* as an urban commons, an explicit institutional and organizational setup and knowledge of how to manage this kind of non-material commons are required. Future research needs to map out 'the observable processes of 'commoning' and what boundaries, exclusions, and regulations produce urban space as an equitably accessed resource' and how these boundaries are entangled 'with local, political, and administrative institutions such as regional or municipal governments' (Narotzky 2013, 123). It remains a challenge 'to invent for each common the right mix of institutional and community controls' (Susser and Tonnelat 2013, 108). If citizens are to gain influence over urban space as a commons, more research is needed on the potential of establishing local institutional arrangements to build, regulate, and manage commons in the form of social relations, social services, and public space. We need to know about the forces that inhibit the emergence and definition of these spaces as urban commons and also about the forces that may be mobilized to sustain them and build viable institutional management systems.

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About the author

Jörgen Hellman is Associate Professor in Social Anthropology at the School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University. He is currently working on a project titled 'Coping with Recurrent Emergencies: The self-organization of Civil Society in Jakarta During Floods'. This is an interdisciplinary project conducted with his colleague Associate Professor Marie Thynell, researcher in Peace and Development Studies. In the project they analyse how civil society organizes itself in times of hazards and how it interacts with the city administration and NGOs. The project studies how city government and citizens in flooded areas of Jakarta act to deal with the risks induced by recurrent floods. What strategies and actions do they formulate to confront these challenges?