

## **Urban Evictions, Public Housing, and the Gendered Rationalisation of Kampung Life in Jakarta**

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### **Abstract**

*The dispossession of urban communities across class and racial lines is a global phenomenon linked to the expansion of international investment in the development of 'exemplary' city space. However, city evictions are also historically-informed and gendered processes which are continuous with past colonial and postcolonial urban rationalisation projects. Drawing on testimonies of women evictees in Jakarta, as well as interviews with public housing managers, this article details the gendered nature of the rationalisation of urban life in the context of a contemporary evictions regime. We argue that the rationalisation of urban space serves to sharpen the gender order by placing material constraints on women's roles, limiting their economic activities, and defining them as hygiene-responsible housewives. Further, and in turn, the limited provision of 'rusunawa' public housing, which we show to be a gendered spatial and social transition informed by state doctrine on the family, provides the state with justification for dispossession itself. Finally, women's everyday acts of refusal and resistance show not only that kampung forms of social life continue to be preserved in Jakarta, but also that rationalisation itself is a negotiated and contingent process.*

A wealth of literature on urban dispossession has analysed how this global phenomenon is enacted across racial and class lines in cities in both the Global North and Global South (see, for example, Brickell et al 2017; Chakravartty & Silva 2012; Olds et al 2002). Our contribution complements this literature and adds to cognate scholarship with a gender concern (for example Brickell 2014; Brickell & Baxter 2014) by closely considering the related *gendered* aspects of dispossession and relocation in the specific context of Jakarta. As this city is produced as the 'exemplary centre' of Indonesia,

*kampung* (or urban village) residents are subject to forced evictions and some of the resulting evictees are relocated to rented public housing (or *rusunawa* in the local terminology). In this article we make the case for understanding these limited relocations as gendered forms of rationalisation. Here we refer to urban planning processes which involve the removal of neighbourhoods where women had established home businesses and lived with extended family networks which enabled them to combine productive and reproductive labour. These removals have been followed, and justified by, the highly limited provision of small public flats, intended only to house the nuclear family, with restricted access to commercial space; marking a transition which significantly alters women's social and economic lives. However, these gendered forms of rationalisation are also very much negotiated, resisted, and contested by the evictees themselves. In the following paragraphs we will clarify the conceptual vocabulary which is central to our analysis; namely the exemplary centre, *kampung*, *rusunawa*, rationalisation, and *State Ibumism*. After this we will provide an overview of the specific context of Jakarta's evictions regime, followed by a summary of selected related literature in which these concepts have been developed. After this contextual and conceptual overview, the article will advance an empirical discussion drawing on interviews with evictees and public housing managers to support our main claims<sup>1</sup>.

In common with the other contributions to this special issue, the analytic of the 'exemplary centre' is our entry point in this article. In the original formulation of Geertz (1980: 13) developed in relation to the royal court in classical Bali, the exemplary centre described the material realisation of a particular order or polity<sup>2</sup> which, in turn, was designed to be productive of fitting subjectivities. The concept has since been used by Abidin Kusno (2010) across changing phases of nationalist and internationalist urbanism

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<sup>1</sup> Research for this article builds on fieldwork carried out in Jakarta during 2013 and 2014 but draws mainly from interviews conducted during 2016 after the most intense period of Ahok's evictions regime. Community members were engaged in collaboration with representatives of activist, advocacy, and mutual aid organisations who work continuously for urban justice in Jakarta. State employees were engaged directly by the researchers. Evicted women residents from the *kampung*s of Bukit Duri and *Kampung Aquarium*, *rusunawa* (public low-rent housing) residents of Jatinegara Barat and Rawa Bebek, and estate managers from each of those *rusunawa* sites were interviewed in their places of work or residence. The interviews with evicted women generally took the form of extended testimonies, rather than structured question and answer exchanges; while interviews with estate managers were more structured.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Geertz's original study, the polity was the *Negara* (lit: nation).

to refer to the realisation of a particular social and political order in material form in city space in Indonesia. In the most recent iteration of the production of the exemplary centre, international finance capital is drawn to central Jakarta land for the development of the *exemplary* luxury apartments, hotels, shopping malls, leisure spaces, and transport infrastructures of the future-oriented Asian mega-city at the expense of the urban poor (see also Herlambang et al. 2018; Leitner & Sheppard 2018). These urban poor populations have traditionally lived in kampungs (see Putri 2018) an indigenous term applied to urban villages. During the colonial era, kampungs were racially distinguished as non-European settlements, and today they form characteristic Jakarta neighbourhoods made up of densely arranged, one or two storey self-built homes. Kampungs have long been characterised as unhygienic spaces and, more latterly, they been described in a derogatory way as uninhabitable ‘slums’ (Irawaty 2018; Putri 2018). They should therefore be understood as historically racialised ‘non-European’ spaces which remain stigmatised today. Rusunawa, or orderly high-rise, low-rent public housing (see Das 2016; Arsitag 2018) has been presented as a solution to the ‘slum’ problem and the kampung’s replacement spatial form in Jakarta.

In the analysis to follow, we will attend to the kampung-rusunawa transition as a process of urban rationalisation derived from a colonial and postcolonial lineage of urban production. Our understanding of rationalisation in this article encompasses the broader orientation of agents of urban governance towards the *ordering and disciplining of both space and society* (see examples from Scott 1998, to Gandy 1999, to Cabrera Pacheco 2017). To expand on this, we reference the ordering of urban design, architecture, and spatial organisation into more geometric and calculated forms. However, beyond this, we also make reference to the associated ordering of sociality itself – from the organisation of the family unit into the nuclear form, to the formalisation of individual and household financial practice, to the regulation of hygiene routines and other aspects of individual and collective life. This hygiene-focussed ideal family unit depends upon women acquiring a particular state-approved understanding of womanhood, referred to here as State Ibuism, a concept developed by Suryakusuma (1988), which casts the ideal woman

as the underwriter of domestic order. The figure of the *ibu*<sup>3</sup> in the state's ideology of gender is racialised and classed in a complex way as a derivative of the white European housewife and the female version of the *Priyayi* Javanese figure (see also Suryakusuma 1996; Chin 2018). *Priyayi* became prominent in the Dutch era as part of the colonial administrative class and persisted beyond independence as administrators of the Indonesian republic.

Drawing on the conceptual tools set out above as well as on interviews with kampung and public housing residents, and with authorities charged with regulating the transition to rusunawa life, this article makes three main, interrelated arguments. Firstly, we argue that the rationalisation of urban space serves to sharpen the gender order by placing material constraints on women's roles, limiting and reshaping their economic activities, and defining them as hygiene-responsible housewives. Secondly, and in turn, the limited provision of rusunawa housing, which we show to be a gendered spatial and social transition informed by state doctrine on the family, provides the state with justification for dispossession itself in the sense that the, often violent, evictions of kampungs are framed as benign 'resettlements.' Thirdly, we argue that women's everyday acts of refusal and resistance show not only that kampung forms of social life continue to be preserved in Jakarta, but also that rationalisation is a negotiated and contingent process.

### **Evoking 'unsanitary' spaces and behaviours in the making of an evictions regime in Jakarta**

The context for this research is what has been described as the 'evictions regime' enacted in Jakarta under the recent governorship of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) from November 2014 to early 2017 (see Eddyono et al 2017; Wilson 2016; Tilley et al 2017; Irawaty 2018). This evictions regime followed a long history of urban poor dispossession in the city but signified a notable intensification both in terms of the numbers evicted, and in terms of the injustice in the way the evictions themselves were effected. Across the years 2015 and 2016 around 14,000 families were evicted from their kampung homes,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibu translates as wife or mother and is used as an honorific in Indonesia.

while over 11,600 businesses were also forcibly removed in Jakarta. During 2016 alone, 163 separate community evictions took place which served to forcibly remove 5,726 families as well as 5,379 small enterprises according to the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH 2017). In the year 2015, LBH figures registered that 8,145 families were evicted from their homes while 6,283 businesses were also removed (Anya 2017). Most of the evictions conducted in 2016 – 71% of domestic and 84% of commercial disposessions – took place without adequate advance consultation with the evictees. Overall, only 2% of domestic and 1.9% of commercial evictions resulted in resettlement and a viable long-term solution for those evicted according to researchers at LBH (LBH 2017). These figures particularly show the scale of destruction of kampung economies as well as the limited extent of resettlements of evictees when kampungs are destroyed. The data therefore contradict government narratives of benign resettlements which are deployed to justify evictions (see, for example Kompas 2015 “Vice President Instructs Resettlement of Tanjung Priok Slum”).

Echoing a long and varied history of the colonial and postcolonial governance of both the space and the sociality of racialised, stigmatised, and other subaltern/lower class neighbourhoods (see Putri 2018), the necessity of evictions is generally evidenced by the discursive construction of the deficiencies of both the space and its population. Discourses of hygiene have been deployed to characterise Jakarta’s urban poor neighbourhoods as degrading, unsanitary, and uninhabitable (see Jakarta Globe 2014) and thus in need of removal for the good of all Jakartans. Consider the following press report based on an interview with National Development Planning minister Andrinof Chaniago:

... Indonesia’s *slums* span a total area of 38,431 hectares. Poor sanitation and a *severe lack of education* among the residents have made these areas a *breeding ground for some of the deadliest diseases to plague the nation*, including dengue fever, malaria and tuberculosis, he added. The program will kick off next year and involves building adequate sanitation facilities as well as raising people’s awareness on health and hygiene. Andrinof assured the state would be capable of tackling the necessary infrastructure projects, but *the difficult task of altering the residents’ attitude toward cleanliness and*

*maintaining hygienic living environments* would require strong cooperative efforts.

(Jakarta Globe 2014, emphasis added)

With this understanding of urban populations in mind, Jakarta's city government instigated the KOTAKU programme (see KOTAKU 2017) which commits the administration to achieving a "slum free" Jakarta by 2019 (see also PWC 2017; P2KP 2014). This "100-0-100" movement was instigated with the goal of providing 100% access to clean water, reducing 'slums' to zero, and ensuring 100% access to sanitation across the city. Beyond the physical transformation of Jakarta's urban landscape, the Jakarta government is also explicitly oriented towards eliminating perceived 'slum'-like *behaviour* which is understood to be the cause of the spread of disease and other hazards in the city (see P2KP 2014).

We will engage more with this urban reform orientation and its ramifications for kampung residents throughout this article. However, to set such an ordering orientation in global historical perspective and to draw out the ways in which it can be considered gendered, the following section advances an engagement with literatures focussing on urban rationalisation and its gendered impact on social organisation. Our main contributions are made to this body of literature in the sense that we detail empirically how urban rationalisation works to sharpen the gender order as well as illustrating how this is ultimately contested through various forms of resistance.

### **Gendered scripts of urban rationalisation**

Above, we set out the contours of how the term rationalisation captures the ordering of urban space into more geometric and calculated forms, which itself is not separable from the ordering of social life around, for example, a defined gender order and the nuclear family. Rationalisation has been analysed in both rural and urban contexts, to describe the transformation of complex and diverse ways of relating to land and space into more orderly and simplified forms which are compatible with a liberal property regime (see work from Scott 1998 to Cabrera Pacheco 2017). Here we engage in more

detail with examples of literature in which this concept is developed in relation to gender and urban life.

Scholars researching colonial and postcolonial urbanism, in particular, have indicated the various connections between particular orders of power, forms of sociality and social conventions, and spatial organisation in urban contexts (Kusno 2000; Wright 1997; Beverley 2011). The central principles of colonial, and later postcolonial, modernists have largely required the standardisation and rationalisation of construction, urban order, circulation routes, and what Wright (1997: 323) calls a “greater attention to the hygienic aspects of design.” Architectural and spatial improvement projects have been intricately bound up with civilising and sanitising projects across various eras of colonial and capitalist urbanisation; projects which, in combination, have served to reorganise the relationship between the built environment and social life (see, for example, Ansfield 2015; Crath 2016; Gotham 2007; Hagemann 1996; and in the Malay world, Wiryomartono 2012; 2013).

The imperative of rationalisation has been identified historically in both colony and metropole, with urban technologies and ideas transmitted between these sites. Gandy’s work is particularly generative here for two reasons; firstly, he engages with Second Empire Paris which influenced, and was influenced by, other European metropolises, as well as the development of cities in their colonies; and secondly, because of the conceptual work he does to connect urban rationalisation to gendered and subaltern urban subjects. His reading of the reconstruction of the Parisian public infrastructure, including the sewer system, under Haussmann in the 1850s presented a “radical reworking of relations between the body and urban form engendered by the process of capitalist urbanization” (Gandy 1999: 23). Urban sanitation, for example, alters the way vital water sources can be accessed, as well as reforming how the body’s waste materials are dealt with. This form of urban ordering signifies much more than the making of a material and architectural order, and instead extends to the reordering of social life in relation to its material context. More than this, the sanitisation of urban space and society has particularly targeted women, the poor, and the racialised for spatial and social reform. Gandy draws out the gendered anxieties which shaped urban transformations and the rationalising impulse:

the repression of bodily functions in bourgeois society became increasingly manifested in a fear of women and the poor. Ideological readings of nature, which drew liberally on modern science, contributed towards sharpening gender differences, with a new-found emphasis on the domestic ideal and the promotion of complementary gender roles.

(Gandy 1999: 34).

Rationalisation then, encapsulates the (European-style) reorganisation of space into orderly environments in which gender roles can be defined and separated, and in which the distinction between domestic and public space is clear.

Returning to the Jakarta context, the reordering of space in European form has a long history. From the seventeenth century, the Dutch remaking of the city then known as Batavia as the ‘exemplary centre’ of its settlements in the East Indies (see Abeyasekere 1989: 6; Tilley et al. 2017) sought to rationalise a previously complex urban area which had been influenced variously by Hindu-Javanese and Muslim orders. Under the Dutch, the city was remade as a Europeanised urban centre complete with rows of Dutch-style buildings and constructed around a rational grid system with canalised waterways. Forms of social life were also ordered accordingly, with incongruous Javanese street stalls banned from European-style streets (Tilley et al. 2017). As we have noted, it was also under the Dutch that kampung neighbourhoods were distinguished as racialised non-European spaces. Into the present, kampungs maintain a reputation as ‘disorderly,’ as sites where both men and women work and, in the case of those kampungs adjacent to the river, use the waterways as a resource.

Within the broader history of urban rationalisation in various sites across the globe, there is also a more specific story to be told of forms of public housing as sites of social discipline. In the metropole itself, the Dutch established satellite communities on the outskirts of cities called *woonscholen* (or housing schools). These used a form of social provision to ‘civilise’ those domestic families which were deemed damaging to the national-imperial order because of their poverty and perceived improper behaviour (Lucassen 2010). Here we make the claim that a comparable project is evident in rusunawa housing in Jakarta today and that this project is informed by the Indonesian

state's own gender ideology. In other words, we make the more specific connection between imperial and nationalist projects to modernise urban space and society, and those to modernise, or refigure, womanhood through the example of Jakarta's public housing.

In the context of Burma, Chie Ikeya (2010: 59) has analysed in detail the development of the "ideal of the scientific and hygienic housewife-and-mother," a process authored through Western understandings of scientific advancement and bourgeois femininity, as well as through anticolonial nationalist ideals. In the Indonesia setting, an expanding literature similarly charts the gendered nature of the postcolonial national teleology, the association of women's citizenship with their roles as mothers and wives, and the state's active interest in the nuclear family as the ideal unit to both stabilise, and replicate in miniature, the patriarchal order of the state itself (Sajed 2017; Platt et al 2018). This is captured in the concept of State Ibuism, which can be understood as the broad frame for the state's shifting understanding of the ideal Indonesian woman as the proper housewife and devoted mother, derived from the European housewife and Javanese Priyayi ideals (Suryakusuma 2012). During Suharto's New Order era (1966-1998), state-engineered projects concerning female respectability projected a particular vision of women's roles accordingly as, first and foremost, wives and mothers. The figure of the ibu, the "faithful wife, dutiful housewife and loving mother – a paragon of virtue" (Parker and Creese 2016: 2) underpinned this. This state gender ideology was concretised in initiatives such as the *Dharma Wanita* state-sanctioned organisations for civil servant's wives, as well as within laws such as the 1974 Marriage Law in which men are designated as heads of households.

Core to these state ideals are notions of female respectability obtained via marriage, motherhood, and women's roles as housewives; investing women with a respectability that is easily transgressed by factors such as divorce, widowhood, or the engagement in socially proscribed behaviours such as drinking alcohol, spending considerable amounts of time away from the home, or other "inappropriate" and unfeminine behaviours (Parker and Creese 2016; Beazley 2002: 1669). State Ibuism effectively underpinned a vision for a gender order in which men and women's roles within society could be aligned to the developmental needs of the New Order regime. The promotion of the ideal of the 'responsible mother' as the woman who restricts the number of children that she has

through family planning relates to the presentation of the small, nuclear family as the idealised, modern family form (Blackburn 1999). In the present-day context, the legacies of state gender ideologies continue to be evidenced in how the state incorporates gender roles and family life within current urban planning strategies and policy-making. Within this frame, kampungs are simply not understood to be suitable urban environments for the proper ibu.

The empirical sections below will build a picture of how kampungs – with their small business-owning women, extended family households, and continued connection to the city’s waterways – defy the gendered prescriptions of the rationalised urban order, in which the woman is confined to the home in a subordinate housewife role. Accordingly, the relocation to rusunawa should be understood not ‘just’ as an act of dispossession, but as a key means for the state to discipline kampung women and inscribe distinct ‘State Ibuist’ gender roles.

### **Remaking the exemplary housewife in the rusunawa**

This section engages with the testimonies of rusunawa housing managers in order to indicate how they understand their role to be partly concerned with discipline and tutelage. Managers expect to effect behavioural changes and encourage a social order fitting of the rationalised material context of the rusunawa. Their testimonies further illustrate managers’ special concerns with domestic hygiene habits, for which women’s responsibility is presumed, and with women’s social behaviour in particular.

Rusunawa housing is, in line with a familiar story of urban public housing across the world, generally located a significant distance from eviction sites and from the communities, schools, and economic activities of those who are evicted. In Jakarta, rusunawa sites like Marunda and Rawa Bebek can be around 15 to 20 kilometres from the more central kampung neighbourhoods; although one high-rise development at Jatinegara Barat is located much closer to riverbank eviction sites. The modernist high-rise style of rusunawa architecture closely conforms to the design ideals of modern order, hygiene, and geometry. However, older sites, such as the Marunda rusunawa, have become marked by decay and neglect. The buildings comprise small units of up to three

rooms in total – two bedrooms and a living area – which accommodate the ideal nuclear family and preclude extended family living arrangements. Such units are arranged vertically, over five to sixteen storeys, with simple, square courtyard areas within the blocks, and clean corridors where commercial and social activity is generally prohibited.

The orderly nature of rusunawa planning corresponds with a broader state understanding of how life should be regulated in an ‘exemplary’ city. At the level of national government, an explicit intention has been expressed to transform the urban by means of:

[...] changing the infrastructure, changing the values, changing behaviour.

This will also affect the economic welfare of the people in the future; improve economic life, purchasing power and household income. Changing the behaviour and values is another requirement necessary to change the face of the city.

(Interview with head of National Development Planning Andrinof Chaniago at the launch of National Program of Handling of Slum Settlement 2015-2019, cited in P2KP 2014)

Clearly, urban reform is understood in terms of both spatial and social transformations by Chaniago; but who are expected to be the disciplinary agents of the *behavioural* element of urban change in Indonesia? As part of this research, we conducted interviews in various rusunawa public housing sites across Jakarta, through which officers in charge of management and maintenance were able to explain to us their aims, their ethos, and their general preoccupations. The housing officers themselves tend to be university-educated civil servants, distinguished by their level of formal education, but also distinguished visually from the residents by their white coats, or in some rusunawa sites, khaki uniforms conveying a soft-military aesthetic.

Overall, those rusunawa officers spoken to all maintained a firm sense of their special mission being one of socialising the kampung communities into a modern way of life and into acceptably respectable standards of behaviour. Residents, as one officer explained to us, “have to be educated” into living in a cleaner way, making less noise, and refraining from behaviour which disturbs others (rusunawa officer, Rawa Bebek, 2016). In line with the tenets of State Ibum, which makes greater citizenship demands of women, all of the

officers we spoke to placed more emphasis on women's behaviour than on men's. They also emphasised their own perceptions of the improvement in women's health since moving to the rusunawa, commenting, for example, on what they perceived to be the visible improvement in the condition of women's skin.

Further, the distinct environment and sociality of the kampung, in the officers' understanding, means that residents previously "lived in lower conditions" and should therefore be "very thankful to the government that they are able to live here" (*ibid*). One Rawa Bebek officer elaborates that:

Because they are from housing in the former [kampung] areas, there has to be an adaptation for the community in how they behave. The social and economic conditions are very different from before and there must be some consequences that they have to accept with the move to rusunawa housing; they have to adapt with their new environment here.

Similar statements were echoed by officials in other public housing blocks indicating that, as rusunawa managers conceive it, their role is not principally to maintain the buildings and attend to the needs of the residents, but to facilitate their acculturation into what they understand to be higher standards of living. Officers also extend the idea of rusunawa as being beneficial in comparison with the disorder of the kampung. In their understanding, public housing is a privilege which should be paid for by the residents themselves. Socialising the residents into paying a higher price for clean, running water, for instance, is understood to be part of their overall mission, providing a reminder of Gandy's observation that rationalisation reconfigures the relationship between the body and the material urban environment:

Communities were relocated here from Kampung Pulo [...] They lived there in free conditions – like to take a bath they would just go in the river, now they need to get access to clean water by paying every month. So, the first bill is like a burden because they're not used to paying for that, especially because before they didn't have to pay to live in their house. So basically for their overall living conditions they are fine but they have a burden at first because they have to

pay the rent also for the unit and all of the bills. People have to recognise that they now have very good living conditions, they can live comfortably in a better condition compared to the housing before, that's why they have to pay for that”

(rusunawa officer, Jatinegara Barat, 2016).

There is also, therefore, a general understanding among these managers that rusunawa housing is an upgrade which must be properly paid for with hard work, rather than it being compensation for dispossession. This contrasts starkly with how relocations are presented in justifications for evictions, precisely as compensation for what is demolished<sup>4</sup> (see, for example Office of Public Works 2015).

Further, and perhaps because their mission extends to the management of social life, rather than simply estate management, perceived improper behaviour is a constant source of vexation for rusunawa officers in general. Amongst these state officials there was an overall sense of frustration that their efforts to reform the behaviour of residents is just not working. Officers repeatedly referenced the improper, and moreover unhygienic, behaviour of residents as the factor which makes the rusunawa sites costly to maintain. Ever more surveillance equipment as well as security and cleaning staff are needed, they stress, to monitor residents' behaviour and to clean up after them. However, a perceived lack of hygiene standards, in particular, creates something of a double bind for them: cleaners are employed to maintain the sanitised standards of the housing, but residents come to expect the cleaners to do their jobs, and, as such, do not adequately clean up after themselves. Consider this officer's exasperation with what they perceived to be a lack of improvement in behavioural standards:

Basically, their behaviour hasn't really changed since they were relocated last year; there is trouble with the elevator, there are residents who are still

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<sup>4</sup> Access to rusunawa housing has been explicitly presented as compensation for destroyed assets and the loss of land through evictions: “the Government shall not provide cash compensation for the land, structures and other assets [...] The DKI Jakarta Provincial Government has allocated better places for the relocation. If they agree to be relocated [...] the Office of Housing and Government Building of DKI Jakarta Province will resettle the [affected persons] to Rusunawa (Office of Public Works 2015: 11).

scared of the elevator, there are kids who still use the elevator to play (up and down) there are residents who still throw rubbish out of the window from the upper floors, that's why they have to employ more people to clean up. The cleaners are employed to take care of it, so the behaviour is the same.

(Rusunawa officer, Jatinegara Barat, 2016).

In short, a hygienic residential space is achieved – by means of paid cleaners – at the expense of hygienic sociality, as residents are not compelled to take responsibility for their environment. As noted in the earlier theoretical discussion, this emphasis on hygiene and cleanliness is specifically gendered, it can be read as a judgement on women who are seen as the ones responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the home and its surrounds. More explicitly, added to this is also a much more direct (and judgemental) emphasis on women's proper roles and behaviour. Further, in relation to expressed exasperation over the low standards of cleanliness of residents, male tenants were never directly referenced, whereas women were, for example:

The mothers are always gathering in the corridors, they don't take care of the house or do the cooking for instance, they are just talking to each other and gathering, that sort of thing.

(Rusunawa officer, Jatinegara Barat, 2016).

Similar practices intended to bring order to social life in public housing are also evidenced in how ideas of security are used to control and police the lives of tenants. Security in the rusunawa is understood by the officers to be a necessary expense. There are regular patrols by security guards around the buildings and along the corridors, while CCTV cameras have been installed on every floor and in the stairwells. Officers in both the Rawa Bebek and Jatinegara Barat sites understood the surveillance system to be a means of monitoring the behaviour of residents themselves so that they can be held to account if caught acting inappropriately. Security patrols were also understood to keep

the residents safe from outside threats, a service which officers believe justifies the maintenance costs they pay.

That residents should be obliged to pay for security services in the rusunawa which are largely focused on keeping their own behaviour in check is notable and concerning. Of further interest here is the fact that security patrols and surveillance are understood to be a necessary requirement in the rusunawa, whereas in the kampung, residents say they felt safe without such measures. In the kampung, security is assured, in part, through long-term neighbourly relationships formed over time (see also Ghannam 2002: 94, in relation to the Cairo context). This relates to the residents' understanding of the permanence of their community, the long-term nature of residency, and the extended family connections which become spatially embedded as kampung communities build their homes and businesses. For instance, Ibu Lina, one of our research participants, explained that security in Kampung Pulo, the neighbourhood from which she was evicted, was maintained by the strength of the community itself.<sup>5</sup> The rusunawa, in contrast with the kampung, is a much more transient form of residential organisation. Residents find themselves grouped together with neighbours they did not know before; rental contracts are signed for only two years; some residents are evicted for non-payment of rent; and some move away, back to the areas close to their former kampungs.

Overall then, the production of Jakarta as a 'slum-free' exemplary centre involves the rationalisation of not only the spatiality, but also the sociality, of the city. Those evicted kampung residents who do end up in rusunawa housing are monitored and disciplined by estate managers who are concerned with instilling the proper behavioural habits. Women are a special focus of this disciplinary attention and the rusunawa becomes a site where the gender order, centred on the hygiene-focused housewife, is sharpened and embedded. Passive acceptance of this behavioural discipline and gendered rationalisation is not, however, in evidence among women evictees, as the discussion in the following section indicates.

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<sup>5</sup> Research participants are referred to with pseudonyms.

## **Negotiating rationalisation through the everyday politics of refusal and resistance**

Jakarta was overwhelmed by mass street protests during a crisis in city governance in November and December 2016, with estimates of many tens of thousands in attendance (Al Jazeera, 2016). However, beyond these more spectacular public demonstrations with national political impact, the Jakarta urban poor have performed varied acts of refusal, resistance, and negotiation with and against state agents of eviction, ‘resettlement’, and rationalisation. Examples of such everyday acts of refusal and negotiation in relation to relocations include: refusal of public housing; rent strikes in the rusunawa, either relating to the payment of commercial or domestic rent; and the establishment of collective alternatives to public housing. We will detail examples of each of these means of refusal before engaging with the testimonies of women who have taken up rusunawa units, only to find that rationalised life is unviable for them.

Many of the kampung evictees we interviewed for this study refused rusunawa housing when it was offered to them; some of them choosing to remake their lives on the rubble of their old homes (Tilley et al. 2017). The main reasons cited for this are, firstly, and most prominently, the distance of rusunawa housing from former neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and so on. The second most cited reason relates to the fact that women residents would have to pay rent for their living space after being dispossessed of land and shelter they considered they owned. This is seen as economically unviable, as well as being an unstable way of life which does not allow for women to build an inheritance for future generations. Thirdly, and in relation to the point above, evictions commonly mean women lose their economic space in the kampung and therefore lose their main or secondary income, thereby becoming even less able to pay rent than they would have been before their eviction. This is clearly evident in the fact that Rp 35.9 billion (around US\$2.6 million) in outstanding rusunawa rent is currently owed to The Jakarta Public Housing Agency (Jakarta Post 2018).

In relation to the first line of reasoning, one evictee, Ibu Indah, expressed her concern about the distance of rusunawa sites from her former community as follows:

I was informed about the rusunawa housing. The government said it's really good, you'll have your private bathroom, kitchen, you'll have your own unit. But I didn't want it because it's very far away and I have three children who have to go to school every day, and the school is in Bukit Duri, so it's too far. Even though the government said they would facilitate public transport every day on Transjakarta [the city bus network] to help people to commute to their work or school, it's not really helpful. One of my children has a friend whose parents moved to Rawa Bebek, and every morning the kid is always late for school. It's also very far from where we work now and we don't have private transport to move from one place to another. School starts at 6.30am, so the kids have to leave at least at 5am otherwise they will be late and the gate will be closed.

Similarly, Ibu Dina first explained that the distance of social housing from the site of her old neighbourhood at Pasar Ikan made residing in the rusunawa unfeasible. Her daughter goes to school nearby, so she felt she had to return to live on the site of her demolished home so that her daughter could finish her studies. Secondly, she also has an aversion to the idea of renting in rusunawa housing without the prospect of ownership. In relation to this second line of reasoning, women evictees commonly objected to the rental status of rusunawa homes. It is through building a home that the urban poor attempt to provide themselves with rent-free stability in their old age, as well as something tangible to pass on to their children. When they secure a plot and construct storeys for economic and living space, kampung residents consider themselves to be building an inheritance as much as they are building a dwelling. Ibu Widya explains her aversion to the uncertainty of renting and the idea of paying for a home which cannot be passed on as an inheritance:

The main thing is because [the rusunawa is] a rental house, so there is no guarantee that I can safely, securely live there and with rights for the next generation to still live there. Even though the location may be far, if there is security of tenure in the social housing so that they can finally own it, it would be better. [...] My mother said, this [kampung] house should be your house for

your retired base, so when you're old you won't have to think about a house again, you'll already have a place to live safely. Now I'm already old and cannot work and the eviction happened. And because there is no compensation I don't have an income.

Some of the women emphasised the ways in which homes and businesses are passed on through female lineages in the kampung. Ibu Indah, for instance, explained how her grandmother had managed her small shop and café business in the Bukit Duri neighbourhood. When her grandmother passed away, the business was continued by her mother. She claimed the house had been in the family for around 80 years in total by the time it was demolished in 2016. Refusal of resettlement then, relates to kampung women's awareness of their loss of income and inheritance upon eviction, as well as the inability to replicate the limited possibilities for economic mobility they had in the kampung.

Ibu Dina, who refused rusunawa housing and instead occupies the plot of her demolished home in Pasar Ikan, explained that losing a dynamic business in the kampung, even one with a modest turnover, has ramifications which are experienced beyond the loss of income. She refused a rusunawa flat, in part, because she believed she would not be able to maintain a space for economic activities. She stressed that, beyond the financial loss, the lack of a business to focus on would affect her mental health: "the business is important to keep my mind occupied with activities and not become blank and stressed with the eviction."

For these women, faced with forced eviction and unwilling to accept rusunawa accommodation, there are few alternatives. However, experiments in collective housing have emerged as a novel response to kampung demolitions. Most notably, some of the community members evicted from the Bukit Duri site next to the Ciliwung river set up a cooperative housing complex near to their former neighbourhood. A collective of around 200 evictees began by renting a former commercial venue in a building with two vast, open-plan floors. The open spaces which make up the inner floors of the building were

partitioned with temporary walls, creating small units for families to occupy, with each paying around 430,000 rupiah (US\$31) for their unit per month, including electricity<sup>6</sup>.

The cooperative housing project is designed to actively work against the rationalised social organisation of the rusunawa, centred on the nuclear family, which precludes more communal forms of daily life. Living arrangements centred on one large, communal kitchen which served all of the families housed on the site, and there were also communal laundry facilities and shared spaces for drying clothes. The atmosphere was also completely different to Jakarta's rusunawa sites in terms of the absence of surveillance equipment and uniformed security guards patrolling the corridors. There were also no white-coated officers monitoring residents' behaviour or frowning upon mothers for inappropriately gathering in the corridors rather than cleaning or cooking safely inside their private units. That residents in the cooperative housing live without the feeling of being consistently monitored by a disciplinary authority might be why they appear so much more at ease than the rusunawa residents encountered in the course of this research. As Ibu Indah articulated it explicitly: "here everybody already knows each other and it's safe". Ibu Widya also explained that she believed the adaptation to the cooperative housing experiment was easier than adapting to rusunawa housing:

[...] because the people who live in cooperative housing are the same people as in the community, I get on well with others and it's easy to adapt. It's easier than rusunawa housing because they are mixed with others and they are far away.

Those evictees who do take up the option of rented public housing speak of the difficulties of rationalised life in Jakarta's apartment blocks. As we have noted, for women with businesses in the kampung the move to rusunawa housing, with its small living-space-only units, makes their prior economic activity largely unviable because this had been dependent on the open and flexible spatiality of the kampung, with its home-

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<sup>6</sup> For comparison, rent at the time of our research in the Rawa Bebek public housing complex was charged at between 210,000 and 330,000 rupiah, without water and electricity included.

business units and passing neighbourhood trade. Rationalised life, therefore, often makes women's productive activities impossible to continue, as Ibu Indah explains when considering the prospect of rusunawa life:

It's also hard to negotiate the space [in the rusunawa]. Usually [in the kampung] I have the business at the front of the house so that I can do both taking care of the children and the business. But if I move to social housing and I get, maybe, a unit on the fifth floor and I have the shop on the ground floor, it's really hard to think of how I could take care of the kids, say, when they're sleeping, at the same time as taking care of the shop on the ground floor.

Others who have made the move confirm this fear. Ibu Lina, like many others in rusunawa accommodation, is simply not earning enough to cover her costs each month. A Jatinegara Barat resident in her 70s, she is a widow living in one rusunawa unit together with a dependent son and a granddaughter. Her street stall is the only income the family has. She transports her trolley up and down to the street from the tenth floor every day. In comparison with her business outside the mosque in Kampung Pulo, the neighbourhood she was evicted from, her income has significantly dropped. She has had help from an Islamic foundation to pay the rent, but after seven months in the rusunawa she hasn't been able to pay a single water bill. Now she owes four million rupiah (US\$290) for the water and has been given a warning from the city government. The facilities in the rusunawa make little impact on Ibu Lina because, she says, her main livelihood was much better in the kampung. Rationalised hygiene, for Ibu Lina, has therefore meant impoverishment.

Ibu Cinta, another evictee who took up rusunawa housing, previously had a shop in Kampung Pulo and has re-established her business on the commercial floor of the rusunawa. In the kampung, she says she had a much greater variety of stock to sell, a broader base to her business, and much more passing trade. In the rusunawa, she sells a more limited range of goods to the few people who pass through the commercial floor on their way home. The predicament is the same in other social housing sites across Jakarta, commercial floors have been included as some recompense for the businesses destroyed

along with the kampungs, but rusunawa residents can only sell to each other, considering how confined, distant, and securitised the sites are.

As a former kampung resident who was rehoused in Rawa Bebek after her home was destroyed soon after she had spent 40 million rupiah (US\$2,900) renovating the building, Ibu Yanti has also been impoverished by the acts of eviction and relocation. She had previously rented rooms to lodgers in her kampung house and immediately lost that rental income when the evictions happened. She also had to give up her job in a bakery when she was moved to the distant rusunawa site. Now Ibu Yanti has a stall in the rusunawa but the income does not cover her family expenditure which includes the rusunawa rental cost as well as more expensive water and electricity.

Those evicted women who did decide to make the transition and move into rusunawa housing have not passively accepted the new material constraints on their social and economic lives. Collective acts of refusal – from rent strikes to transgression of rules restricting how space is used – have succeeded in some cases in renegotiating elements of the rusunawa behavioural regime. For example, in response to evictees' complaints about their loss of the economic space they had previously had in the kampung, commercial floors have been added to rusunawa buildings. However, to begin with, rusunawa tenants who set up stalls on the commercial floor were charged an additional weekly fee to trade in a space which, as noted, attracted few passing customers. In Rawa Bebek, after the women initiated a collective rent strike, the rusunawa management were forced to cancel the rental charges on the commercial floor for stall holders. Other transgressions include the establishment of secret shops within rusunawa apartments, enabling women to sell goods while staying at home with their children; the non-payment of housing rent; and the opening up of adjacent apartments in order to facilitate communal cooking in the corridors. In short, a gendered, rationalised way of life is not so easy to impose, and residents refuse public housing or adapt the space as far as possible to kampung-style sociality.

## Conclusion

Overall then, our analysis has highlighted how the transition from kampung neighbourhoods to rusunawa housing has a critical bearing on women's lives; both in terms of their rationalisation into a particular, hygiene-conscious, housewife role, compatible with the ideals of State Ibuism, and in terms of redefining their productive and social reproductive activities when home business activities are effectively ended or restricted by kampung evictions and relocation to rusunawa. These gendered transformations are enacted in relation to the reproduction of Jakarta as the current incarnation of the exemplary centre of Indonesia. In the process, the city is reconfigured as "more than an accidental metaphor" (Geertz 1980: 13) and as the material embodiment of the political economic order itself. With this in mind, we have taken a granular look at the spatial and social remaking of Jakarta into the latest configuration of an exemplary urban centre and attended to the gendered implications of these intertwined processes.

Exemplary centres are supposed to be productive of subjectivities which are fitting of their material environments. The removal of kampungs in Jakarta is therefore not only geared towards the removal of space which is understood as contaminated, unhygienic, and degrading, but also intended to eliminate what is perceived as the 'slum'-like behaviour which contradicts an exemplary city. Under these conditions, the need to socialise women into the figure of the hygiene-responsible housewife as the key agent of domestic sanitation through the positive imperative of 'resettlement' becomes justification for dispossession itself. Further, the rationalisation of the city into the exemplary form serves to sharpen the gender order by redefining, and placing material constraints on, women's roles. We demonstrate this here by illustrating how forced evictions and the disciplinary context of rusunawa housing have ended the ways in which kampung women could combine productive and social reproductive work, while also pressuring them to conform with the role of the housewife, compatible with the State Ibuist ideal.

Finally, we have presented evidence of women's everyday acts of resistance and negotiation in the form of refusal of rusunawa housing, communal alternatives,

adaptations of public housing space to accommodate collective rather than nuclear family life, and commercial and domestic rent strikes. These suggest not only that rationalisation is negotiated and contingent, but also that kampung forms of social life are preserved by residents in the urban context, in spite of spatial transformations and active attempts to transform and manage their behaviour.

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