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Transgressing the technocratic state of postcolonial Jakarta
Putri, Prathiwi Widyatmi

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Prathiwi Widyatmi Putri

**Insurgent planner: Transgressing the technocratic state of postcolonial Jakarta**

*Abstract*

In Jakarta, Ciliwung Merdeka represents a collective body of emergent insurgent planning that has endured throughout the current neoliberal era and the authoritarian regime that preceded it. Within a movement tradition that recalls the Freirean influence on Indonesian societal transformation, the organization challenges the technocratic state and its ‘rational planning’ ideology. Insurgent planning engages with society at large, laying claim to a fundamental role of participation in emancipation. Together with other Indonesian social-political movements, it helps open a path towards another kind of state, in which a more encompassing conception of right allows diverse materialization of citizenship at the very local level.

*Keywords*

Postcolonial Planning, Urban Insurgency, Insurgent Planner, Critical Planning Pedagogy, *Kampung*
Introduction

... [I]t signals the end of a century in which modernist doctrine posed the urban questions of our time precisely by advancing planning and architecture as solutions to the social crises of industrial capitalism [original emphasis].

James Holston, ‘Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship’ (1998: 37)

In order for the oppressed to unite, they must first cut the umbilical cord of magic and myth which binds them to the world of oppression; the unity which links them to each other must be of a different nature.

Paulo Freire, ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1970 [1968]: 175)

In 2015, 113 cases of forced eviction took place in Jakarta – one every third day, on average. They directly affected more than 8,000 households (Januardy and Demadevina, 2016). In 2016, the urban atmosphere had not improved with 193 evictions in the city demolished 5,726 housing and 5,379 informal business units (Januardy et al., 2017). In response, many activists raised a shared concern: how, with communities under siege, could they establish channels for critical debate and alternative practices in urban policy making and planning? While activists search for answers in everyday praxis, scholars can help to inform that praxis by decolonizing planning theory (cf. Roy, 2005; Watson, 2009). Addressing that goal, this article draws on the voices and visions of evicted communities in Jakarta to produce context-based knowledge in the planning field (Watson, 2008). The communities may be marginalized politically, but their situated knowledge can fuel what has come to be known as insurgent planning.

James Holston’s works on insurgent citizenship (Holston, 1998, 2008) have influenced many planning scholars to scrutinize ‘participatory planning’ and radicalize it as a tool for advancing the cause of ‘insurgent planning’ (Huxley, 2013; Miraftab, 2009; Sandercock, 1998a). They address the active emancipation of marginalized citizens in the postcolonial world, North and South (Atehortúa, 2014; Miraftab and Wills, 2005; Roy, 2009b; Sandercock, 2003; Shrestha and Aranya, 2015). Insurgencies – acts of resistance to, protest against, and boycott of the institutions of the state – help to question the universalized meaning of rights built upon the needs of particular privileged groups (their dominance marked by race, class, or gender) and imposed on others whose rights and needs remain disregarded. Popular insurgencies politicize formal planning practices, pushing them beyond the boundaries of professionalized technocratic planners to include diverse everyday agencies of planning.
In studies like those mentioned above, the domain of insurgent planning has been discussed extensively and its transgressive character across formal/informal and state/non-state institutions has registered clearly. However, we are missing discussion of who the ‘insurgent planner’ is, and what the roles are (cf. Shrestha and Aranya, 2015: 438-439). Miraftab’s eminent work frames insurgencies by their relevance for ‘planning’ as a set of practices, but it leaves the ‘planner’ as a specific type of actor out of the picture (Miraftab, 2009: 41). I argue that we need to conceptualize the insurgent planner and welcome the appearance of a new discipline that is collective and participatory in nature. This notion will help us to recognize the active agencies of insurgent planning and to assess their unstable, unpredictable, and often ambiguous trajectories in creating insurgent institutions against diverse structural problems of spatial development.

The roles of the insurgent planner relate to two parallel spheres of insurgency: the normative and the everyday technical-political. The normative insurgent sphere is enacted as a political space in which an undemocratic state and its marginalizing functions or impacts can be opposed. This political space might be partial, as it emerges specifically in response to the concrete problems of certain population groups, but it nevertheless suggests a renewed universal norm of citizenship that matters to all disadvantaged groups (Swyngedouw, 2014: 132). Insurgency in this normative sphere engages with the heterogeneous society and promotes a more encompassing conception of right that allows a diverse materialization of citizenship at the very local level (Holston, 1998: 52). However, normative political insurgencies do not suffice to ensure a just long-term everyday governance of space, resources, and livelihoods. Thus when so-called people-powered (socialist-leaning) governments win power in (let us say) certain Latin American countries, the hegemony of the capitalist spatial development regime still rules within the everyday provision of housing and other essential services (Atehortúa, 2014; de Souza, 2006). The hegemonic everyday living space requires another kind of disruption to create and institutionalize a new materiality of governance – how land is allocated, how water resources are controlled and distributed, and how livelihood viability is maintained (cf. Bayat, 1997; Loftus, 2009). This is where the technical-political sphere of insurgency manifests, beyond the normative account.

Enacting a new technical-political sphere of everyday resource governance, insurgent planning distinguishes itself from the technocratic planning profession. Insurgent planners might work with conventional technocrats but they do not reproduce planning politics as practiced by today’s unaccountable state planning regime and its private-developer allies. Instead, they undertake the politics of planning – habituating and maintaining the materiality of planning technocracy and bureaucracy while simultaneously advocating a new universal citizenship by way of step-by-step life quality improvement and more egalitarian daily social relations. In other words, the technical is rendered political through a new
planning pedagogy that uses the language of planning with new grammars and vocabularies to practice collective liberation for social transformation (after Freire, 1970, 1996). The insurgent planner helps to construct new social imaginaries of the production of human settlements and of the state. This creation of new rationalities is far from promoting a singular uniform pattern of (spatial) development. This is another meaning of insurgency: disrupting the modernist space that dominates today’s construction of societal space through the morphological ideals of modern city and planning institutions (Holston, 1998).

The everyday technical-political sphere is indeed a space in which to practice active citizenship, but the political space of citizenship is more than that. An improved everyday environment will be short-lived without the existence of the normative sphere. Thus, the insurgent planner continuously fights for the latter, together with other forms of insurgent citizenship that range from sectoral unions, through liberatory scientific movements, to alternative schools of art and literature. This is also to say that both spheres – the normative and the everyday technical-political – become the single indivisible arena of the insurgent planner.

Methodologically, my contribution seeks to closely link its empirical and conceptual strands (see Lund, 2014; Sayer, 2010 [1992]). In one analytical movement, I seek to make sense of the field through the conceptual lens of ‘insurgent planning’; in the other movement, I mobilize rich material from the field to revisit insurgent planning within current planning debates on the Global South. A significant space in this article is used to reveal the historically embedded character of the ‘insurgent planner’ within particular trajectories of the Indonesian social movement. I found that the insurgent bodies share patterns that point to a Freirean legacy in Indonesia. The Freirean critical pedagogy with its embedded liberation political project has been overlooked in the conceptualization of insurgency in planning, despite the fact that both were informed initially by the Brazilian context. In such absence of cross-fertilization, the grounded experience of Freirean practice in Jakarta could enrich the planning literature.

My intention is neither to demonstrate the trajectory of Freirean influence in planning, nor to outline the reception of his legacy within the Indonesian social movement. No doubt fulfilling those tasks would enrich and expand the range of the continuum of ‘planning for social transformation’ (Beard, 2003; Rangan et al., 2016; Sandercock, 1998b). More immediately, however, it is necessary to engage with the field, in a way that my case study speaks empirically to previous discussions on citizen engagement within the Southern context of urban planning and governance (for example Mitlin, 2008, 2018; Watson, 2014). Diverse genealogies and histories of citizen insurgency and engagement in planning have informed the praxis and interconnectedness of social movements across countries in the Global South (cf. Mitlin, 2018). This view of state–society relations ‘from the South’ (Watson, 2009) echoes in more recent planning theory.
in the North (for example Albrechts, 2012, 2015), or becomes part of ‘worlding’ (cf. Robinson, 2016; Roy, 2009a, 2016). While acknowledging that theoretical concepts travel ‘from South to South’, I bring here some empirical evidence for a new Global South historiography of insurgent forms of people’s participation.

My arguments have been developed while sharing the experience of Ciliwung Merdeka, a not-for-profit organization that since 2015 has actively conducted advocacy and litigation for groups of evicted communities. Scholars have mentioned the organization in their publications on kampung informality and commons (Hellman, 2018; Leitner and Sheppard, 2018), but the social-political trajectories of this and other similar entities have remained obscure. My analysis of Ciliwung Merdeka helps to explain Jakarta’s urban conflicts and structure–agency dynamics more profoundly. I show the range of (potential) political space it created, and the further opportunities that may be captured and cultivated by other actors in order to make the spatial planning institutions in Jakarta more inclusive. Ciliwung Merdeka was not the only insurgent agency opposing the series of evictions in Jakarta.¹ I focus on the organization’s trajectory of struggles because of its activities in two of the few remaining kampungs in Jakarta’s oldest urban centres along the main river of Ciliwung (Kampung Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo in Figure 1). A kampung is an informal settlement or an agglomeration of not-fully-recognized, self-built houses; it often grows on the periphery of a formally developed urban centre, or undergoes transformation from a rural settlement to a more densely integrated kampung due to its proximity to and inclusion in an urban centre (Harjoko, 2009; Putri, 2018a; Silver, 2008).

I followed the activities of Ciliwung Merdeka in the second semester of 2015, and from mid-February to mid-June 2017. I attended several forums it organized and seven court sessions of the case that was filed by the organization. These experiences complement my structured interviews with the organization’s founder and affiliates. During the second research period, I lived on and off in Bukit Duri and interacted with 20 inhabitants. Sometimes, it was appropriate to record conversations (this material covers about eight hours in total and includes conversations with four people who were evicted but resisted relocation to social housing blocks). I repeatedly visited two locations of social housing provided by the provincial government for those evicted from Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo. There, I conducted participatory observations and several sessions of recorded interviews, from 30 to 90 minutes, involving five households

¹ The legal aid institute LBH Jakarta, Urban Poor Consortium, Ruang Jakarta (RUJAK, Centre for Urban Studies), Serikat Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia (SPRI, the Indonesian People’s Union for Struggle), and Koalisi Nelayan Traditional Indonesia (KNTI, Indonesian Traditional Fisherfolks Union) were among others seeking to create alternative discourses for equitable spatial development processes. They actively networked among each other, despite having different ideological trajectories and pursuing different political concerns, strategies, and tactics.
on different occasions. A more recent two-week visit in Jakarta was made in November 2018 to corroborate the previously collected information.

The rest of this article is divided into four sections, with each section referring directly to postcolonial Jakarta both abstractly and concretely. First, I discuss the rational model of modern planning and its discontents. Second, I discuss the multi-rationality character of the insurgent planner and the site where it emerges: *grey space* (Yiftachel, 2009b). Third, I discuss key transgressive tactics to challenge hegemonic spatial planning and spatial development practices. Finally, I conclude by assessing the emergent role of the insurgent planner in relation to ‘planning in the public domain’ (Friedmann, 1987).

**Modernist rational planning and its postcolonial discontents**

Spatial planning, in practice, is constituted by the different sets of formulation, content, and implementation employed in organizing human activities and environments. A key attribute is its *publicness* – that is, its ability to affect the collective production of space in relation to a shared use of resources and the power of the state or some other form of sovereignty (Yiftachel, 2009b; Yiftachel and Huxley, 2000). Planning matters because it is about acting; it gives directions to actors and legitimates particular authorities to control the acts in the public domain (Friedmann, 1987). Planning becomes problematic at the point where it distributes (unequal) power for control and setting the boundaries of what is controlled (Friedmann, 1992; Harrison, 2006).

How power is exercised in planning has been much discussed. As antitheses to top-down conventional planning, forms of ‘communicative’, ‘collaborative’, and ‘socially innovative’ planning have been theorized and practiced (Elling, 2017; Healey, 1999, 2003; Innes and Booher, 1999; MacCallum, 2008; Moulaert et al., 2009; Oosterlynck and Debruyne, 2013; Sager, 2002). Specifically, ‘coproduction’ has travelled into Southern planning as an alternative form of state–community engagement in governing space and resources (Watson, 2014), and as grassroots-created political space in influencing state urban policies (Mitlin, 2008). Planning contexts, forms of statehood, and *in situ* practices of democracy shape diverse developments of coproduction as a concept and practice, and thus significant differences can be drawn between the nature of coproduction in the Global South and North (Watson, 2008, 2014). Moreover, the difference is not only about the efforts being shared between state and non-state agencies, but also concerns the sphere in which the process emerges – within or beyond the recognized state-led public sphere. In many cases in the Global South, coproduction has emerged from *outside* the state establishment.
of service provisions and planning institutions, to influence changes in how state planning mechanisms operate in governing urban space and resources (Hasan, 2000; Mitlin, 2018; Putri, 2018b).

I argue that further theorization of planning for social transformation in the Global South needs to base itself on a critical account of the liberal binary concept of state–society or state–citizenship, and of the consequences for representational democracy charged with bridging these polarized spheres. The modern state imposed during the period of Western colonialism is part of a societal construct imagined or modelled through processes and historical sequences somewhere else, while the much longer embedded social-spatial-temporal universes have been disregarded in the formalization of the public sphere (see Anderson, 1998, 2016 [1983]). A critical examination of ‘public authority’, which encompasses state institutions and beyond, helps demystify the modern concept of ‘state’ by revealing its state of continuous becoming within the everyday societal sphere (Lund, 2006, 2016). As a step, this section shows the everyday presence and persistence of rational planning as the spatial and institutional essence of what we may term ‘the ugly state’, if the ‘modernist’, ‘capitalist’, ‘communist’ or ‘militaristic’ are deemed reductionist. It is also within this everyday space that discontent and resistance take shape.

The colonial-postcolonial continuum of rational planning

The power to rule the production of space does not necessarily manifest as violence. It may be embodied within the normalcy of rational planning. In the modernist approach to spatial production, human actions are viewed as measurable in terms of achieving certain ends. Hence, rational planning seeks to influence these actions to become comprehensible in terms of a predictive outcome, especially by utilising technocratic models informed by progress in science and engineering (Grabow and Heskin, 1973). It is, of course, a myth that human (economic) activities are self-consciously rational; behaviours in general are naturally entropic, non-purposive and incalculable, unless certain powers are activated to pull them towards particular rationalized objectives (Etzioni, 1967, 1986). In this way, the rationalizing power normalizes planning without necessarily being seen as violent, even when planning brings discrepancies and unevenness (see Flyvbjerg, 1998; Harrison, 2006; Miraftab, 2004).

But there is a limit to rationality. To rationalize also means to simplify. Only through simplifying complex problems can planning forge an organizing language to include the diversity of social-ecological nature into its homogenizing categorizations (cf. Mitchell, 1991 [1988]; Scott, 1998). But this is problematic to the degree that complexity remains unaddressed (cf. Watson, 2009). Rational planning also creates inherent discontent because its simplifications have to be expressed through strict spatial boundaries. Within these boundaries of planning territory, a new subjectivity subordinated to the state is created,
bounded through an asymmetric obligation–right formulation (cf. Lo Piccolo, 2010). This is often the moment at which planning is instrumentalized ruthlessly, in parallel with another cycle of rationalization designed to suppress the conflicts that may be created.

Planning discontents that arose in the colonial period – lack of satisfaction with the processes and impacts of race-based planning practices – resulted in post-independence Jakarta, only in remedies that enhanced a technocratic hope for the modern city. The belief that physical order represents societal stability favourable to development was sustained during Sukarno’s socialist-influenced nationalist state building (1945-1965) and extended throughout the era of authoritarian, liberal-militaristic economic restructuring under Suharto (see Bunnell, 2011; Kusno, 2000). The polarization between the elites and the rest helped maintain the low status of *kampungs* – as unwanted physical entities that spoke of a repressed social reality (Permanadeli and Tadié, 2014). The Sukarno administration, through a landscape of formal housing, expanded the modernization that had been introduced during the colonial era. The *kampung* was not located as the key spatial feature of newly independent Jakarta, although it formed the major urban landscape (see Figure 1). Not having to satisfy a precedent of decolonizing planning, the Suharto administration all too easily facilitated a ballooning real estate development (see Dorleans, 2000; Silver, 2008). If not by forced evictions, *kampung* communities were pushed towards peripheral areas by increased land prices. Selling property, even though at a relatively low price or under coercion from thugs and brokers, was often framed as a rational choice for the poor.
Figure 1. The twentieth-century state’s development of planned areas, and their encroachments on kampungs.

Sources: Compiled and redrawn by the author based on studies by Harjoko (2009) and Van Roosmalen (2005), as well as Jakarta Master Plan 1965, Batavia Map 1897 & 1935 (KIT collections, the Netherlands), Batavia Map 1959 (US Army Map Service collection).

Fundamentally, the complex social and property relations encountered in kampungs cannot be squeezed into the assorted categories of spatial entities known to the planning rationality of modern development: ‘sanitation infrastructure’, or ‘housing’, or ‘parcels of land’. Different logics and values are embedded within the organic layouts of kampungs. There, diverse activities of production, consumption, and social-ecological reproduction are intermingled, making it hard to distil one element from the others. Kampungs demonstrating the reality of the informal economy persist not only as an effective housing stock, but also as an integrating environment for new migrants in the city, and an antidote to rural-marginalizing and city-oriented national development (Guinness, 2009; Jellinek, 1991). But the failure of planning only
means that ‘rational planning’ becomes even more resistant to change in its praxis (cf. Grabow and Heskin, 1973). When planning is considered ‘failed’, the understanding is rarely that the model was wrong. The diagnosis is rather that there was not enough power to implement it (cf. Etzioni, 1986; Flyvbjerg, 1998). As for contemporary Jakarta, the cycle of failure and violence in planning repeats itself.

**The Normalisasi and the insurgent moments**

The authoritarian regime of Suharto, was succeeded by the so-called Reformasi era, but forced eviction was never absent in Jakarta. The number of cases increased significantly in 2015–16, mostly citing environmental revitalization and flood mitigation (Januardy et al., 2017; Januardy and Demadevina, 2016). River Normalisasi was one of the revitalization projects to mitigate flooding, under which riverbanks would be made ‘normal’ – straightened, strengthened with concrete walls, and freed from *kampung* encroachment. *Kampung* communities along river banks were perceived as not only monopolizing water frontage, but also as polluters prone to insanitary behaviours. The *Normalisasi* included the 20-km lowest segment of the Ciliwung River. It was executed according to an 8-metre zone along both riversides, displacing nearly 50,000 registered dwellers.² The space gained from the evictions has now turned into so-called inspection roads to provide access along the riverbanks for engineering the river flow. The roads were massively concreted. In many ways they disturb the water ecosystem, replacing greenery that used to function as absorbent and purifying beds for riparian water that filled community wells.

The evictions occurred without consultation at community meetings or any search for consensus, and instead were executed with armed force. Losing neighbourhoods where they had lived for more than four generations, some community groups in Kampung Pulo and Bukit Duri fought back. A riot broke out on 20 August 2015, the very day 1,000 households in Kampung Pulo were evicted. The residents challenged the armed might of more than 2,000 police and military officers mobilized against them. Journalists managed to resonate this event internationally, but the government smothered the anger of the victims in temporary rental housing, mobilized allied religious leaders and petty landlords (who had not been evicted) to ease local conflicts, and soon learned to sequence the process of eviction in smaller steps. More than a year later, just across the river from Kampung Pulo, a series of three evictions affected 526 households in Kampung Bukit Duri. In one event on 28 September 2016 a joint force of 800 personnel including public order officials, police, and military officers ‘disciplined’ 150 households in Bukit Duri. Several excavator vehicles were mobilized and destroyed self-made community dwellings, including the office of Ciliwung Merdeka. The organization, named after the river and its struggles for merdeka, or independence and

liberty, managed to bring together many inhabitants and supporters for a solidarity demonstration confronting the armed barricade. They could not stop the vehicles on that day, but their acts of resistance did not end there. Neither was it the beginning of their story. The involvement of Ciliwung Merdeka grew within the long trajectory of postcolonial struggles for socially just production of space.

**Multi-rational grey space and the emergence of the insurgent planner**

*The grey space and the ambivalent state*

After long experience in the Suharto era, of working with grassroots groups to defend human rights and the freedom to express diverse political opinions, members of various civil society networks merged to form Ciliwung Merdeka. Previous advocacy and humanitarian initiatives provided no way to engage with everyday practices because they had emerged as a reactive response after evictions had occurred. Aiming to root its activity in the everyday institutions of poor communities, in 2000 Ciliwung Merdeka opened a riverside office in Kampung Bukit Duri. Its activities also covered Kampung Pulo. The two *kampungs* are administered separately despite being connected socially and ecologically across the river. Historically the *kampungs* have been situated in close proximity to the formally planned city (see again Figure 1), yet few of their inhabitants have had access to jobs or state-led development programmes.³

Ciliwung Merdeka operated, if intermittently, to fill in the gaps left by the state. Humanitarian actions for flood mitigation and the improvement of existing public latrines were undertaken with youth and women’s groups. The organization sought to end dominant patriarchal leadership by encouraging women to take more active roles in collective decision making. Ciliwung Merdeka also introduced egalitarian leadership through savings groups and cooperatives, and a new pedagogical approach to the problems of marginalized children. Through Freirean extracurricular education, especially with music and other performance-based activities, they learned a form of alternative, liberating cultural expression.

Ciliwung Merdeka’s engagement with the grassroots shaped its concerns for neighbourhood spatial improvement in the absence of a bottom-up planning process. The organization conducted several planning exercises to find solutions to daily needs.⁴ One process was after a big flood in 2007 that destroyed many houses in Bukit Duri. Focusing on the alley where Ciliwung Merdeka had its office, some volunteer

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³ Conversations with various inhabitants who lived in Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo for three generations.
⁴ My interviews with some female beneficiaries in Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo (several occasions), and an architect affiliated in Ciliwung Merdeka (14 May 2017).
architects proposed an alternative approach to living in a regularly inundated area. Models of elevated houses were presented as a social-ecological alternative to a land-based urbanity with brick houses at ground level. Based on this planning exercise, the most vulnerable households were selected by the community group and their houses were renovated. Only one out of 14 opted for the unfamiliar elevated model. Nevertheless, Ciliwung Merdeka went on to develop this concept as a form of collective living. Kampung susun (stacked kampung), as it came to be known, was designed to leave the ground floor open as a public space during the dry season, becoming a water infiltration platform or retention pond when the floods returned. Kampung susun came to be a common vision of the community group, but only after a fire took some houses in the alley in 2010 – because pushcarts blocked the access of the fire brigade. From this experience the community learned that constructing beyond the ground level would create more mobility, while street vendors who rent rooms in the kampung would gain more space for economic activities.\(^5\) Flooding was apparently not the main spatial problem for the people. They were mainly afraid of the frequent fires in the kampung that took all resources in just one night.

Together with the everyday agencies of spatial production, Ciliwung Merdeka disentangled diverse multiple rationalities beyond the ways in which they were imagined through the rational orders of physical space. They saw that there is no uniform spatiality of kampung. Instead, spatial and institutional discrepancies in accessing viable livelihoods have become shared features due to the elongated trajectory of unjust distributions of development benefits. Diverse structural problems are deeply embedded in kampungs through ambivalent state-sanctioned policies. Most inhabitants of the river banks perceive that they could be made homeless at any time, as the history of kampungs made clear.\(^6\) But reckoning with the ambivalence of the state, they also do whatever is possible – within patron–client relations – to participate in the normalcy of development: registering their address, paying tax for the house despite ambiguous land status, paying electricity bills, and participating in the population census and elections.

A kampung can represent what Oren Yiftachel terms ‘grey space’ (Yiftachel, 2009a, 2009b). Grey space embodies a continuous production of space, in which subjectivities remain in a state of becoming, shaped by and shaping cycles of oppression. In this zone certain statutory arrangements have been stabilized yet remain outside the government’s officially recognized territories. Grey space, in many instances, is neither fully integrated nor eliminated. Its greyness supports not only the lives of the ordinary at their edge of survival, but also the endurance of ruling regimes that repeatedly fail to deliver infrastructure service despite promises made within the cycles of (electoral) politics (see also McFarlane,

\(^5\) My interview with an architect affiliated in Ciliwung Merdeka (14 May 2017).
\(^6\) Interviews with several evictees in various locations on different occasions.
Certainly within grey space an ability resides in the body politic, beyond the scope of the formal government, to govern vital resources (Holston, 2008; Lund, 2006). Governing – occupying the land and bringing key infrastructural services to the marginalized households – requires more than technical arrangements of resource allocation. It also functions through ‘social contracts’, or mutual recognitions linking the claimants of certain properties and the de facto authorities who endorse such claims (Lund, 2016). But often, even when sanctioned within the domain of statutory institutions, these social contracts are unable to counter what Yiftachel calls ‘creeping urban apartheid’, in which the shades of grey are whitened or blackened, either homogenized within the dominant production and consumption logics or criminalized, illegalized, and subjected to discrimination (Yiftachel, 2009b).

The river revitalization project, the Normalisasi, enacted this blackening of the kampung communities and their collective actions, including the struggles of Ciliwung Merdeka. Interestingly, this blackening established the greyness of kampung more firmly. In contrast to the life quality of the displaced populations, the remaining communities enjoy new open spaces, while local speculators have managed to improve the houses now directly facing the new roads (see Figure 2). The cost of rental rooms owned by the relatively privileged has increased significantly, and this has prevented many evicted households from staying in the same area in order to maintain established livelihoods.

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7 Interviews with several evictees in different locations and occasions.
To argue further, ‘grey space’ is a heuristic device to understand a sphere shared by state and society. In grey space, where the rationality of state planning fails, multiple rationalities of life become visible and help produce emancipating knowledge. In this space, the insurgent planner and the community experience the process of conscientização and become aware of their social-political condition by ‘naming the world’. Thus they name the structural hindrances and describe the inequalities and injustice they face with their own expressions and articulations (after Freire, 1970). As developed by Mansour Fakih and other Indonesian Freirean intellectuals (Fakih, 2001; Fakih et al., 2001), this process of conscientization does not depict the state of true consciousness as a simple reversal of the mirror held up by the oppressive militaristic state and its capitalist model of development. True consciousness is beyond abstract knowing,
and is best understood in the broader sense of a competent political literacy reached through acting together at the grassroots level (see also Nuryatno, 2006).

**From covert planning to Freirean insurgent planning**

The agency of Ciliwung Merdeka grows seamlessly out of a distinct strand of the Freirean movement in Indonesia that has focused on the urban informal sector. As a student, the founder of Ciliwung Merdeka worked closely with Y.B Mangunwijaya, an architect who supported *kampung* communities in Yogyakarta in their struggle against evictions. In 1990, Mangunwijaya coproduced the Code [Cho-de] River Settlement, employing an organic architectural approach that treated the construction workers as creators to incorporate local and previously-used materials. Two years later the settlement community received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. More than an architect, Mangunwijaya was a pioneering Freirean thinker in Indonesia (Yunus, 2004). Like other organic intellectuals in his time, he worked and lived with the grassroots while engaging in overt opposition to state-sanctioned mega-development projects in the 1980s. He founded an alternative school that still operates today after undergoing several transformations. Mangunwijaya’s approach continues to inflect the present.

Ciliwung Merdeka continues its work in the urban informal sector alongside the Urban Poor Consortium – the founders of which were also part of the Yogyakarta Freirean circle in the 1970s (see Nuryatno, 2006). These groups continue the tradition of overt demonstration against injustice in spatial development and violations of human rights, but in parallel they have continued the less public tradition that social movements developed during the authoritarian context. In this tradition the alternative architecture movement is instrumental in prolonging the breath of struggles for multidimensional change within the life of urban poor. In the authoritarian context where direct political opposition may be equally short-lived, Victoria Beard has argued that ‘covert planning’ has become a meaningful model of transformative planning practices based on action research, collective action, and mutual learning between planners and communities (Beard, 2002, 2003). Covert planning may comply with state-led development activities yet challenge the state’s policy and authority, allowing the community’s own version of the satisfaction of needs to manifest beyond the purview of the state (Beard, 2003: 27). In this way covert planning can safely transform into a more radical model, continuing to address long-term structural changes beyond the neighbourhood scale (see also Moulaert et al., 2010). Cumulative efforts in covert planning and other forms of community collective action, as Beard (2003) shows through her case studies, became useful sources for more radical actions that dislodged Suharto’s autocracy. Yet, as discussed above, the end of autocracy did not entail the adoption of radical planning, in both senses of ending the everyday
acts of modernist rational planning (Grabow and Heskin, 1973) and initiating structural transformations (Sandercock, 1998a). The task of the insurgent planner, therefore, is to extend the achievements of covert planning by moving beyond them.

The post-authoritarian era has rationalized its planning technocracy within the neoliberal economic agendas, welcoming anyone ready to share this vision of progress. It promotes quiescent participation within the marginalizing system to sustain the dominant mode of societal production (Huxley, 2013; Miraftab, 2009). Discrepancies in wealth possession yawn wide but the democratic face of the state is enhanced in many ways. I have observed since 2015 that evictions are often applauded by middle-class citizens. They consider this approach necessary in modernizing the capital city. The blackened ruins of the 8-metre zone were seen as a contribution towards development progress benefiting all. The dispossessed were seen as empowered through the allocation of social housing units with improved sanitary conditions. In fact, the social housing is a technical solution for no one. Those who accepted off-site relocation to rented social housing have been unable to pay the rent and water bills, while the provincial government has been spending trillions to subsidize the operation of social housing now proved to be ineffective.\(^8\)

Precisely in this context of contemporary Jakarta, I echo Miraftab’s notion of insurgent planning as the substance of radical planning within the neoliberal era (Miraftab, 2009). Not always operating as an opposition through revolutionary acts, insurgent planning appropriates ‘invited space’ or (rigidly defined) state-sanctioned participatory space, but does so while simultaneously creating ‘invented space’ or community-enacted (often spontaneous and liquid) political space (2005). I further argue that it is the role of the insurgent planner to ensure a transgressive, dualistic continuity of co-existence embracing both normative and everyday technical-political spheres. While, through covert planning, the collective body of insurgent planning has introduced planning literacy to kampung communities, insurgent planning includes an institutionalization of new planning pedagogy. Since the erasure of the kampung as a community-based productive site remains the model of development, the role of insurgent planning needs to embody beyond its space of emergence, the grey space. But only by incorporating the multiple rationalities of grey space can the insurgent planner truly link the normative and the everyday technical-political spheres at multiple scales of the public domain.

\(^8\) Several interviews with public housing staff and evictees
Transgressive tactics for new planning pedagogy

The insurgent planner transgresses various statutory institutions in both their formal and informal enactments. These transgressive tactics epitomise the attempts of Ciliwung Merdeka and its allies to defend the rights of the urban poor and institutionalize alternative planning logics. Ciliwung Merdeka promoted what evictees perceived as a better way of living and infused this technical-political necessity into two operating domains of the technocratic state: judiciary and planning institutions.

Defining and claiming rights in court

Since the first January eviction in Bukit Duri, Ciliwung Merdeka has answered with an array of law suits. The first legal move was filed on 10 May 2016 at the State Court (Pengadilan Negeri). This was a class action to end the eviction processes for Normalisasi. The provincial government responded with an uncooperative gesture, but a second approach to law enforcement had already been taken before the September eviction. Ciliwung Merdeka and 12 households of three different neighbourhoods filed another case against the South Jakarta municipality. This time the insurgent agencies moved through another legal institution: the Jakarta State Administrative Court (Pengadilan Tata Usaha Negara).

The lawsuit at the Administrative Court concerned the administrative deceit of Normalisasi implementation procedures. The community lawyers proved that some potential social problems reported to occur due to the Normalisasi had been duly recorded in the environmental impact assessment (AMDAL), a socio-ecological study required by law to accompany any large-scale development. Based on the AMDAL, the provincial government should have foreseen the needs of community relocation before it launched the Normalisasi in September 2012. Despite the anticipated problems, none of the governmental bodies in charge took steps to find participatory solutions. Moreover, the eviction took place outside the valid period of the license for the Normalisasi implementation. The program was sanctioned with a gubernatorial law (Peraturan Gubernur) that was binding until October 2014, and it could be prolonged with an additional decree only for a maximum one year (Soemarwi, 2017).

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9 It affected 115 houses occupying around 7,000 m² land in the northern segment of Bukit Duri.
11 These events were documented by Ciliwung Merdeka and verified by the author from journalists’ reports and some interviews with local residents.
More fundamentally, the government did not have any legal justification to evict the communities. The Jakarta provincial government accused the residents of squatting on state land (tanah negara). For such a claim, the government should have been able to provide administrative attestations, but this was not the case. To counter the government’s argument, the organization presented various proofs of land tenancy right and land ownership: purchase or inheritance documents, agreements of occupation, or customary land titling, as well as land and building tax receipts or electricity bills paid by evicted residents. Ciliwung Merdeka also made use the results of community mapping conducted in 2006–7 in Kampung Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo. With some urban sociologists and social workers involved, the mapping processes revealed the historical spatial trajectories of communities, including their land tenancy, since the Dutch colonial era. These versions of kampung history were presented in court during the class action trials by three different witnesses who had been involved in the mapping project.

This evidence, in addition to the proofs of government administrative deceit, was acknowledged by the Administrative Court. On 5 January 2017 a panel of judges declared that the September eviction conducted by Jakarta Governor Ahok’s administration violated the law. Their victory lifted the spirits of the 93 households, inspiring them to go on with a class action in which they demanded atonement for the material and emotional loss caused by the eviction. After almost 18 months of struggle in court, the collective lawsuit gained its victory on 25 October 2017. Each household was granted IDR 200 million (nearly USD 15 thousand) in compensation. This was, however, much less than the initial demand.

Legal action is certainly a meaningful instrument of political pedagogy. The organization and the community members learned the importance of ensuring the recognition of ‘community’ as a subject possessing rights. The concept of universal individual human rights does not suffice to recognize the specific needs of members of particular cultural groups, in this case diverse kampung communities (see also Gutmann, 1994). Their efforts were not merely to substantiate the already ambiguous postcolonial formulations of basic rights, with which ‘differentiated citizenship’ is created along with everyday unjust authorizations for granting unequal access to resources (Holston, 2008). They attempted, instead, to write their ‘own law’ with their ‘own history’. Within a complementary praxis, the organizers and community

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12 Statements of the public lawyers of the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute in court (28 April 2017) and at focus group discussions held by Ciliwung Merdeka and the Institute (11 and 25 November 2015), all of which I attended.

13 Trials on 4 April, 28 April, and 2 May 2017, all of which I attended.

members gained a better understanding of diverse agencies of law enactment, and their limits, and together they became more fluent in speaking about state administrative matters.

**Locking electoral promises in housing and land use planning**

Preceding the implementation of Normalisasi, there had been a strategy to engineer the Ciliwung basin within the land-use plans of 2012 and 2014, formulated by the Jakarta administrative office during 2007–12. The two plans were not coherent, having been based on different technical specifications, and they have never become public information at the grassroots level. After studying the plans, Ciliwung Merdeka and some architects had projected the possibility of eviction, but took the situation as an opportunity to produce an on-site relocation concept using the *kampung susun* or stacked *kampung* model. The financial construction scheme was also conceptualized: 50 per cent from the provincial development budget, 30 per cent as a community contribution, and 20 per cent from private investors under state control. This was an attempt to treat land as a meaningful resource for livelihood and social reproduction, and not as a pure asset of the market economy.

However, Ciliwung Merdeka and the organizations alike have a restricted ability and capacity to institutionalize their planning approach. The existing planning system is too stubborn to accommodate such bottom-up initiative. But within the popular political atmosphere of the Reformasi era, Ciliwung Merdeka had managed to nail the insurgent planning agendas to the political platforms of concerned politicians. One of these was Joko Widodo or Jokowi. Formerly he was the mayor of Solo, where he worked for inclusion and participatory development. His popularity rose significantly during the 2012 election campaign in Jakarta. Most of the evicted communities voted to send Jokowi to the Jakarta governor’s seat in 2012 and afterwards to the presidential palace in 2014. His election polls were no accident, as several civil society and grassroots organizations mobilized support for Jokowi’s political platform (Lay, 2017; Savirani and Aspinall, 2017). Ciliwung Merdeka and Urban Poor Consortium – with its grassroots organizations Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota (Urban Poor Networks – JRMK) – were part of this popular movement. They made deals with Jokowi and his team, especially after he was elected governor. Ciliwung Merdeka saw Jokowi’s position as an opportunity for the poor to gain greater control of statutory institutional mechanisms, thus gaining more political space for self-governing *kampungs*. Better leadership might not change the fundamentals of unjust spatial development practices, but could assist *kampungs* to live longer, organize, and engage in planning on their own terms.
On 16 October 2012, a day after taking office, Governor Jokowi made a visit to Bukit Duri. Electoral promises might sound progressive, but they need to be locked into the actual planning institutions. As an alternative to the conventional social housing, kampung susun was advocated. Jokowi promised a kampung revitalization program. He popularized a new slogan for onsite relocation, ‘Digeser bukan digusur’, or ‘Build backward [from the river] and away from eviction’. Buoyed by the faith of his supporters, Jokowi was elected president. The vice-governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok took the governor’s seat. At the expense of community sustainability in kampungs, he opted to execute the acceleration of the Normalisasi. When the campaign promise was broken, the political atmosphere at the grassroots level in Jakarta changed significantly. Ahok, formerly seen at Jokowi’s side, was never elected in his own right. During the gubernatorial election in 2017, the electorate in evicted kampungs directed their votes to other candidates or abstained.

But despite this blow some community groups found a way to go on with the fight to institutionalize their collective will in planning blueprints. The majority worked with the Urban Poor Networks (JRMK). They made a political contract with Ahok’s strongest rival. In return for their votes, Ahok’s eventual successor would have to proceed with the kampung revitalization program. The community group of Kampung Bukit Duri supported this political contract, but Ciliwung Merdeka refrained. Its organizers had lost belief in this method of struggle, but also found it problematic to support a winning candidate whose popularity had been fuelled by a blasphemy campaign against Ahok, a member of Chinese Christian minority groups. Ahok quoted a passage of the Qur’an during his re-election campaign in September 2016 and hardline Islamist groups accused him intending to insult the holy book. Nevertheless, despite engaging with the new governor, JRMK keeps educating the grassroots on the meaning of political contract beyond electoral politics. The political deal was an opportunity to awaken in the poor a conviction that their collective power matters, leading them to push their own development agenda forward when no single political party was standing for the poor in development processes.

Forms of identity politics associated with some fundamentalist Islamic groups escalated in Jakarta during the 2017-election campaign. This kind of politics was supported by mass mobilization from kampungs. However, some research and journalist coverage revealed that in evicted areas, the popularity of Ahok significantly decreased due to his policy implementations, and was only amplified by identity sentiments. Indeed the socio-economic discrepancies fuelled the rise of (Islamist) populism in Jakarta, and

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15 My interview with the director of Ciliwung Merdeka, 24 February 2017.
16 My interview with a coordinator of JRMK, 3 May 2017.
such sentiments of identity have been used by shrewd yet mischievous politicians to gain voters (Wilson, 2015, 2017). Ciliwung Merdeka’s fight in using the judicial channels became a crucial public pedagogy, to show that Ahok and his provincial administration could be brought into court due to his eviction policy, not because of the superficial accusation concerning the blasphemy act.

Indeed, the good results from the judicial channels could only bring actual benefit when being implemented by the executive government – the governor in charge. Ciliwung Merdeka needs to keep working with others within a regime that remains ambiguous. At the time this article was being written, several planners, architects, and other groups of intellectuals managed to push the inclusion of ‘community action plans’ as a key spatial planning procedure and position *kampungs* as a special zone within the land use plan, despite the fact that the latter has only been applied to the *kampungs* where communities entered the political contract. It remains a question how far the struggle within the formal planning processes will be affected by the turbulence of elite politics, because only in this way can planning be made accountable in serving all citizens equitably.

**Conclusion: a (new) public domain and the role of the insurgent planner**

Ciliwung Merdeka has animated planning as a transgressive institution, involving broader social movements and community collective actions as the critical planning agencies to influence the public production of space. It plays the role of insurgent planner in shaping the planning arena through procedural change in order to achieve the substantial change of resource allocations – and vice versa. Its trajectory shows how insurgent planners emerge as organic intellectuals from the citizenry. Community collective memory and spatial practice fuel the acts of the insurgent planner, without overlooking the potential role of technocrat planners as transforming intellectuals (cf. Ng, 2014). The insurgent planner seeks to unite diverse historical trajectories of insurgent planning, not to put spatial practices into a uniform model but to exercise fairer collective decision making at diverse scales of the public domain.

Particularities and localities are the political space from which insurgent planning emerges. However, Ciliwung Merdeka, other organizations, and the organized poor maintain and help replicate their acts in the arena of the public domain through existing public channels. In these channels, an emerging role of public authority continuously validates citizenship and anticipates what it entails. Planning – as an idea or acts – has been central to the identity of the modern state (Holston, 1998, 2008). The insurgent planner ensures that, within the modern state, the norm of inclusivity and spatial justice is well advocated. The state is indeed not simply an empty container that waits eternally to be filled by the aspirations of grassroots (de
Souza, 2006). In there, many competing political interests exist. The political bodies of insurgent planning, nevertheless, actively decide how they enter the statutory arena – for example through the judiciary or electoral systems. Seeing through the existence of multiple public authorities and intense competition among them, the so-called South provides a critical site to see how ‘the state’ is far from being a finished project (see Eilenberg, 2012; Lund, 2008). Within this unfinished ‘project’, the insurgent planner should create its space. A southern version of insurgent planning lies within its efforts to address the state–society relationship from which oppressive systems emerge.

Certainly, it needs a long-term struggle to secure ‘the transgressive character’ of insurgent planning practices – across methods, institutions, scales, and spheres (Miraftab, 2009), without being diluted or hijacked by pro-growth statutory mechanisms and non-democratic political movements (cf. de Souza, 2006). Insurgent planners need to operate within existing statutory agencies, to regenerate the coproduction processes in governing (spatial) resources towards alternative built environments and social relations. In this state of coproduction, the insurgent agencies positively demonstrate how things might improve, instead of positioning themselves merely as ‘outsiders’ to the statutory systems (cf. Mitlin, 2018: 561). In parallel, however, there is a sequential creation of ‘the space of dissensus’ (see Dikeç and Swyngedouw, 2017; Swyngedouw, 2014), in which oppositions against the oppressive, not-democratic neoliberal development regimes can be displayed openly and consolidated. In other words, insurgent planning needs endurance and patience. Imposing the democratic participatory character of insurgent planning is not an option, if it were ever possible. If planning is to take into account the needs and visions of the marginalized, insurgent planning should not reproduce the conventional top-down approach. Moments of insurgency (after Holston, 2008) always need to be reinvented at all scales and spheres, to help institutionalize liberating practices. A powerful version of liberating citizenship can be created only by transforming existing institutions in the grey space, the everyday space of insurgent agencies

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