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## Akuarium Neighborhood Plays The Eviction

Achmad Firas Khudi  
Chiang Mai University

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### ABSTRACT

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The Jakarta government evicted an urban community of Akuarium in 2016, which caused socio-economic and immaterial difficulties. Yet, violent eviction instigated a kind of play in the community. A theory of urban play envisages how the community responds and utilizes failed development projects drawing from the practices of graffiti, car jockeys, and navigation of traffic jams. The research method includes field and internet ethnography. The research uncovers precarious life in the community due to existing poverty and the incident of eviction. Their poverty informs a structural problem of low income. The eviction exacerbates the condition with the erasure of the economy, housing, and cultural life, leading to a repressed mental state among them. Akuarium people enact an urban play as a small tactic responding to various kinds of violence and the difficulty of eviction in the function of survival.

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**Corresponding Author:**

**Achmad Firas Khudi**

Chiang Mai University

Email: [achmadfiraskhudi\\_a@cmu.ac.th](mailto:achmadfiraskhudi_a@cmu.ac.th)

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Jakarta government evicted the urban community of Kampung Akuarium in North Jakarta in 2016 for urban transformation. What happened next is the people faced socio-economic destruction and a repressed mental state. It causes the Akuarium people to become victims of precarious urban life. The urban transformation created a new urban life in Jakarta with progression but marginalized a particular Akuarium people. The current condition shows that urban transformation has simultaneously modernized the city's spaces and the existence of people with access to wealth but neglected people experiencing poverty.

In contrast, urban development has displaced the homes and spaces, the material existence, and the livelihoods of the Akuarium people. Akuarium, whose homes and lives are disrupted by development, has no choice but to navigate the new physical landscapes. The disruption of living areas and homes further responded to resistance and identity despite the material loss. Urban transformation through eviction and gentrification recreated the Akuarium people into an oppressed state and enunciated actions to defend their rights. The two contending situations imply how transformation gives a sense of progression to urban life but displaces and situates the Akuarium people into a marginal position.

The marginalization of the Akuarium people has brought indispensable misery to urban life and resistance against eviction. Kampung Akuarium, an urban squatter in North Jakarta, moved forcibly in 2016 due to the Jakarta provincial government's removal as part of the urban heritage program. The meaning of kampung is associated with a living area or neighborhood in the Indonesian context. Governor of Jakarta Basuki T.P./Ahok executed heritage programs that evicted the space of Akuarium people. It concerns the old town of Jakarta and represents the power and force of urban policy in changing the urban landscape. The eviction of Kampung Akuarium happened on April 11, 2016, through the mobilization of a vast number of personnel from

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the Indonesian army, police, and public order enforcers, which victimized 500 households (Legal Aid Institute-Jakarta, 2017; Setiawan and Aziz, 2017).

Given its long and significant role in their vicinity and urban place of North Jakarta, the Jakarta government and the general public could not simply mention the Akuarium community as an illegal occupant of the area. The history of the Akuarium community started in the 1970s when their elders stayed in the fish laboratory of the Indonesia Institute of Science/LIPI. Akuarium neighborhood was formerly known as the Laboratorium of National Oceanography of LIPI, where there were big aquariums for conserving and examining fish. These giant aquariums led to the community's name until now, even though the name is Indonesianized by changing the font q into k, as Akuarium. The fish market in the southern part has been working with the same function for a long time. There was also a Heksagon market next to it. But, both markets have been destroyed for revitalization now.

Furthermore, there is a related question of rights for the urban community preceding the research objectives. Harms (2016) enlarges how rights become meaningless rhetoric oppressing the marginalized urban in Vietnam. The rights only work for those with connections that work oppress people with less power. Harms' explanation instigates the research that urban eviction led to precarious urban life then could enact intelligence and survival in the Akuarium people. In light of the background, this research draws a closer perspective of the Akuarium neighborhood's life and responses toward eviction. The study examines the Akuarium community with two research questions:

1. What livelihoods of the Akuarium people exist upon the eviction by the Jakarta Provincial Government?
2. How does the community enact urban play or intelligence as part of the resistance towards eviction?

The article mainly contributes to urban sociology and anthropology by dissecting the community's life, movement, and the process of urban eviction. There is an introduction, a literature review, and a research methodology. Three results sections cover the livelihoods of the Akuarium, the displacement among the Akuarium people, and how it's against the ruination of eviction and keeping the neighborhood. In the end part, this research provides a conclusion.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Livelihoods**

Livelihoods often work against and tackle material poverty, which has a more significant meaning for people. Individuals and groups strive to meet various necessities, cope with uncertainty, react to new opportunities, and select different value positions (Staples, 2007). Livelihoods are everyday narratives referring to how people work to make a living while focusing on making it meaningful (Bebbington, 2000). Nevertheless, the definition of livelihoods is incomplete without the economic base in the urban context.

The economic base corresponds to the essential livelihood processes of urban transformation. The base is locally and historically formed, comprising elements that people appropriate, create, share, and use concerning one another. A farmer thinks as base his house, land, and crops. In the Akuarium people, the factory outside their neighborhood, market, and food stall services are the base. Knowledge and skills are also involved in the base, such as the apprenticeship and explicit instruction with the material space they occupy. The base to which persons in a community are connected ensures an identity (Gudeman, 2012). Material accumulations include food, improved land, tools, and equipment supporting present functions.

For the most part, households maintain stocks of food and clothing in varying amounts. Poverty means having no base in this regard. The lack of a base affects urban squatters in most parts of the world. The condition of urban squatters entails a large constellation of urban transformation processes, such as eviction and gentrification, allowing a degree of volatility. The volatile situation happens from the urban form and process that disrupts, dispossesses, and reorganizes according to the reasons and actors capable of moving sufficient force and articulation (Simone, 2015). Das and Randeria (2015) highlight the poor in volatile terms who struggle within the given economic and political structures to ensure they have access to development and secure the economic base while engaging with some arrangements even though fragile within administrative structures. The volatile condition also envisages wild oscillations between the opening and closing opportunities among the urban poor. Such window livelihood opportunity appears in the Akuarium neighborhood upon eviction and gentrification.

### **Urban Play**

What people might respond to violence in urban life is crucial. There is a high possibility for each community to endure a neoliberal form of power with a strategy or a play more than just allowing alternative values. To that end, a scholar recently problematizes urban play that shows graffiti emerging from the class difference. Doreen Lee, an urban anthropologist, coined the urban play twice in her articles on Jakarta, which means a response with art and intelligence to failed urban development projects. Lee (2013) highlights how the creation of graffiti as a wall, mainly drawing without public permission, built upon the existing ruined

infrastructure, e.g., sidewalks, bus stops, storefronts, etc., to shove the public with witty urban stories. Graffiti uncover the difference between the ordered urbanism prepared by the middle classes and the unwanted presence while emphasizing the labor pool outside these exclusive enclaves. Graffiti symbolizes tropical deterioration that the social condition enacts upon surfaces rather than a symbol of a social breakdown in daily context.

Furthermore, the car jockey in the street-based economy and daily traffic indicate urban play. The Jakarta business area applies a three-in-one zone between morning and evening. Each car has to go into there and carry at least three passengers. The car jockeys often appear neat and clean to the professional and privileged class that stops to pick them up. They often negotiate with them the price of their services at the length of the trip (Lee, 2015). Jockey employment is a prominent example of spatial and practical negotiations where the street-based economy accommodates the underclass.

A Jakarta artist Irwan Ahmett filmed a video on navigating the traffic scape in Jakarta using the metaphor of Mousedeer Crossing the Street (Kancil Menyeberang Jalan) from Southeast Asian folktales. The folktale shows the mousedeer as an agile and small animal, often manipulating a fleet of crocodiles to cross the river safely. The mousedeer is personified in traffic encounters of Jakarta citizens. The traffic is challenging due to a garrison of motorbikers ahead of the cars when crossing the zebra cross. Such an encounter implies traffic agents and effects to exhibit that takeover of space does not essentially form aggression or a permanent claim (p. 248). Three figures have scholarly potential to uncover how small practice and mundane urban life imply the meanings of urban play.

In that way, this research extends Lee's above problematizations of an urban play. Graffiti, car jockeys, and crossing traffic in ruined urban infrastructure that corresponds with the Aquarium community's response to eviction represent deeper insight into the realities of a city's social order. It is an exchange between structure and agency through the condition of urban space. The jockey and navigation signify what kind of games we can play in public in terrible traffic (p. 247). Clifford Geertz understands the play and other cultural forms as social texts. Geertz coins deep play upon the cockfight life in Bali. Deep play is a text inscribed with cultural meaning and a meta-social explanation of Balinese life (Lefever, 1988). Lefever (p. 13) also underlines playing the Dozens as a social text in the ghetto community. The social text allows the essence of masculinity, performance values, and a normative code. Playing the Dozens enables youth to avoid boredom concurrently to increase self-esteem and poke fun at failures. They express the realities of the ghetto experience while remaking that experience which represents an inscription of particular social life.

Eviction often reproduces values yet curtails social life. Harms (2012) coins beauty as a control that creates a modern city with beautiful open spaces in urban anthropology debates. Such beautification involves eviction or spatial cleansing of urban populations. Urban programs are often highly fluid and coded positively to resonate deeply with people at different stations in social life, which can signal hopes, desires, and alternative values. Interestingly, the aesthetic possibilities emerge beyond a dichotomy of domination and resistance that Thu Thiêm people of Ho Chi Minh City are angry about being evicted but not about building a new urban zone (p. 737). Thu Thiêm residents are actively engaged in many actions of everyday and overt resistance to top-down development projects (Harms, 2012; Scott, 1985). Herzfeld (2009) argues that a brutal order of eviction works as a kind of terminal switching between the older residents who stakes their neighborhood and kinship. They also feel the threat from those new entrepreneurs who made enormous profits in the case of modern Rome development.

Urban play has a cultural dimension beyond the immediate form of spatial and practicality that opens new meanings of survival and its happening process. Urban play can be seen as a way for people to create and reinforce social bonds, negotiate power dynamics, and express their identities and values. Theoretical significance is in place for research that those responses to failed urban development, e.g., graffiti, a car jockey, and crossing traffic jam, are equal to the reaction of the Aquarium community to eviction. There is a need to comprehend the Aquarium's play upon precarious life and movement within an urban social order.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research uses an ethnography to study the livelihood, urban play, and movement of the Aquarium community. The choice of ethnography grasps the people's experience through fieldwork and internet mode, which is difficult to cover by other methods. "Ethnography is an artistic way to conceive of the business of being human involved with a multiplicity of conceptual structures that knitted into one another" (Kutsche, 1998). An internet-based ethnography employs online observations, interviews, and supplementary informant materials as a research method (Sade-Beck, 2004).

I conducted fieldwork and online observation to create a robust analysis during one year of ethnography. Field ethnography was completed in around one month and a quarter, while internet ethnography lasted approximately eleven months. To this data, I also ran visualization from official documents and literature. The level of analysis is individuals and social phenomena in the Aquarium neighborhood. Their ethnographic information is pseudonym and confidential. The data collection facilitates an intense depiction of what kind of

livelihoods exist and how urban play emerges and works. Besides, the preferred research site comes from a theoretical dimension (Gopaldas, 2016). I chose the Akuarium community based on the above theories.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

##### **Livelihoods of Akuarium: Irregular Worker and Business for Prolonging Life**

Each member of the Akuarium community had their job in the advent, then deteriorated after the eviction. The economic value of the destroyed assets and how people react to the financial loss are the primary concerns of livelihoods. People simultaneously own several economic means, such as food stalls and housing rentals, to fulfill their economic needs. Eviction destroyed the multiple sources of income people kept with the situation in place. Such multilayer livelihood of Akuarium appears more significant through people's stories during my fieldwork which exacerbates the Jakarta province's statement on the economic loss. According to the report by the Jakarta government (2018), eviction has shifted the community's entire economy. The wide range of jobs owned by Akuarium people had losses, proving the financial loss more profoundly on the ground.

The financial loss due to eviction matters more in light of the economic base. One of my interlocutors addressed how she had a problem with the eviction because her economic tools had gone. Before the eviction, Arida sold fried sausages, fritters, and tamagoyaki for kids and youngsters, earning Rp. 300.000 daily. In doing the business, she owned a fryer cab with a price of Rp. 1,5 million but then sold it at Rp. 500.000 after the eviction. The eviction has implicated more great financial difficulties where she sold a lot of stuff to cover unpredicted costs such as moving expenses and renting houses. She traded her air conditioner and a car after her mom lost four rented rooms to cover the expenses. The implication of eviction happened unexpectedly, emphasizing how a community's economic base matters.

The economic base of the Akuarium community entails spatial proximities where crowds generate more income for people's shops. Some owners of small shops were convinced and generalized that eviction made fewer people surrounding the neighborhood area. The fewer people made less income for the owners. A small shop in the Akuarium neighborhood, or *warung* in Indonesian, appears below. Small shop owners believe the old place brought better access for keeping stocks of their goods, cash flowing, and a higher possibility of people visiting the area. More interestingly, those owners said the current neighborhood with more excellent apartments, and the building did not guarantee better buyers for their shops. It is because the new apartment as a proper building limits the crowdedness. The new apartment below has been constructed as compensation for the eviction. People are also lazier to take stairs to reach the shop that is not on the first floor. People who wanted to buy from outside the neighborhood were unlikely to come compared to the old area in the flat ground before the eviction, which is more open to people.

Another shop owner confirmed how the emptier community, only less than one-third of the initial population, makes fewer people visit their shops. Arida even personified that the old area brings a strong wave where people always cross her sausage stalls from many directions before the eviction. Numerous people have a better chance of buying her sausages. The change in spatial conditions had an unexpected impact on people's livelihoods.



**Fig. 1.:** *Warung* or Small Shop in the Akuarium Neighborhood

Space in the form of distance matters when the social housing as immediate reparation is far from their working place. Most Akuarium people rejected the relocation to social housing or *rusunawa* because the location is remote from places they search for income. One *rusunawa* in Rawa Bebek is around 30 kilometers

from the Akuarium neighborhood, where many resettled there after the eviction. What happened here for Akuarium members is a macro representation of the poor in Jakarta. Savirani and Wilson (2018) argue that around 80 percent of rusunawa residents are victims of eviction and forced relocation and occupy approximately 25.000 social housing.

More problematically, the social housing often on the outskirts of Jakarta caused further problems where people needed to borrow money for transport and daily needs from loan sharks piling up their economic burdens. The congestion and limitation of land in Jakarta implicate how the provincial governments address poverty problems with affordable housing, which is not solving their problem. Such spatial dimension matters in determining the livelihoods of the Akuarium community representing the poor population in Jakarta city.

The livelihoods of the Akuarium people appeared more when I became immersed with them by hanging out in many corners of the neighborhood. In Indonesian popular culture, life in Akuarium is similar to many TV series, as in Ojek Pengkolan or Motorbike Taxi in a Junction but even worse and poorer. Unlike in the series, many motorbike taxi drivers can fund their children to go to school or college and throw jokes at each other.

Akuarium people have little money than them and can only throw jokes. Most men I met also smoked extensively, more than their ability to afford food which is common in Indonesian communities. Men hanging around the front gate collect and scavenge things like excess iron from a construction project to resell in the second-hand market. Women usually take care of their kids, whom they know their future will not be much different from theirs. They offer everyday soft loans such as clothes and cooking appliances. One of them, Darina, provides clothes for celebrating Eid al-Fitr to her fellow mothers who would repay in three or four installments. Such precarious life signifies the irregular and volatile livelihoods of the Akuarium neighborhood.

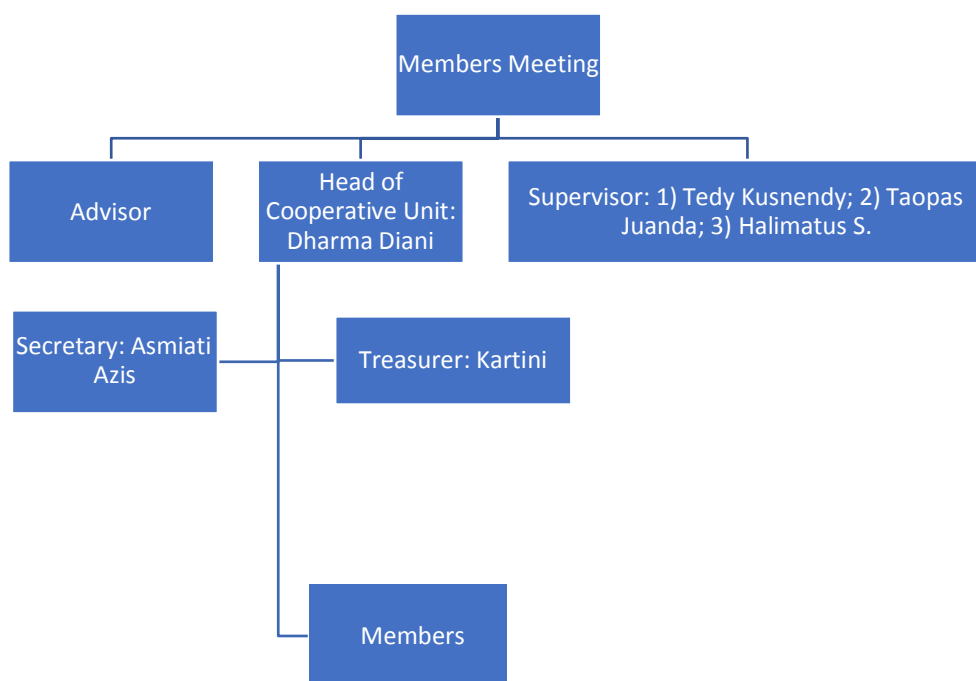


Fig. 2.: Structure of Aquarium Bangkit Mandiri (ABM) Cooperative

One cooperative unit supports livelihoods and tries to solve the precarious life of the Akuarium people, as in the picture above. The highest consensus is at members' cooperative meetings, where each member agrees on a particular issue. The Head of the Cooperative Unit is Dharma Diani, whom people saw have contributed hugely to the struggle against eviction throughout time. During my fieldwork, I witnessed how the cooperative played a significant role as a community administrator in supporting the economy internally and outside the neighborhood. The ABM Cooperative manages the settlement process of vertical kampung through intensive discussion with the Jakarta officials and management of vertical kampung. Akuarium people said the vertical kampung means an old neighborhood with its sociality transformed into vertical buildings instead of its original form in flat land.

In the administration, the cooperative collects a monthly rent of around one hundred thousand rupiahs per unit charged to all people of Akuarium. The money is allocated for water, electricity, and building maintenance. The cooperative uses the overhead cash to save and fund public events such as independence days and eviction commemoration. Apart from taking from people, the ABM cooperative opened its enterprises

commercially. There are five enterprises: rent guesthouses for visitors and workers, laundry, rent space for business, water gallon business, and food catering. These enterprises allow more sources of income for the cooperative yet still support the neighborhood's livelihoods with a minimal amount.

### **The Misery and Movement of the Eviction**

Akuarium community is located in the Penjaringan sub-district, North Jakarta, next to the ruined Heksagon and fish markets. The geographical conditions varied from heritage, fishery, and coastal to industrial areas that affected the Akuarium inhabitants. The eviction in 2016 destroyed those markets and surrounding vicinity that supported the economic means of the people. More importantly, the Akuarium people decreased to only one-seventh of the initial population.

Eviction has brought controversy to the Akuarium community. The urban policy initiated the incident, which the Jakarta Government report called "relocation" to make it more humane. The polemic is that the Jakarta provincial government could not show their land certificate as a basis for removal, according to Rujak Center for Urban Studies (RCUS), an urban NGO that assists the Akuarium community. RCUS informed the Jakarta provincial government only showed the Akuarium land under an inventory list of asset management. Such controversy exercised how the poor command of urban governance has caused a lethal effect on the community through eviction.

The devastating impact of eviction is apparent to the Akuarium community. The Jakarta provincial government (2018) confirmed eviction has significantly worsened the community's economy. The report mentioned the primary economy of people there was opening grocery and dairy stores, renting houses, fishermen, and carpenters. In general, the Akuarium community perceived themselves as the urban poor of Jakarta, proven by various urban social movements they participated. Similarly, outsiders see them as a low-income community. Some people and most officials perceived Akuarium people as urban slums or squatters of Jakarta in a bit derogatory way. One community leader of Akuarium did not like and rejected this naming. After the eviction, enterprises who work are only grocery and dairy stores, cooking gas sellers, and fisherman. Jobs that exist in the Akuarium include driver, porter, and employee. The report (p. 278) believed this changed due to the eviction eliminating land for enterprises. This situation shows a particular livelihood of the community with its structural weakness and disadvantages due to poverty. The Jakarta government, as a perpetrator, realized the eviction they executed had plunged the community into more severe poverty.

Akuarium people did not sleep for a night on April 11, 2016, to secure the incoming eviction the next day. All Akuarium residents have stood by their area precisely at the call for dawn prayer. They were there to halt. Excavators and officials came to demolish houses, while 300 people of Kampung Akuarium prevented them. Males of Akuarium stood to stop eviction but were then arrested. Then, the mothers linked their hands to create a human chain, but the officials of more than 5.000 personnel detained them individually. Chaos happened after this hustle. The officials evicted the entire neighborhood at around 8 a.m morning.

Akuarium people used a range of movements to stop the eviction, while the Jakarta provincial government strived to make it happen. There were around 6.000 apparatuses from Indonesia's national army/TNI, national police/POLRI, and public order enforcers/Satpol PP to evict 500 households (Januardy et al., 2017; Setiawan and Aziz, 2017). Akuarium people called those apparatuses three pillars. The extremely imbalanced power between the people and the official shows how violent the eviction process was for them. Akuarium people kept staying in their place while previously asking for help from Legal Aid Institute/LBH Jakarta, who willingly supported them two weeks before the eviction. The Jakarta government destroyed more than the physical structure but also its social life, which triggered resistance among them.



**Fig. 3.:** Ratna Sarumpaet protests the eviction

LBH Jakarta strengthened the Aquarium position with the prominent figures' influence to organize further. Ratna Sarumpaet, an activist and celebrity, advocated the Aquarium issue productively. She explained the eviction chronologically and disseminated it in printed and electronic media, as in the picture above. Her overnight visit to the area was with friends to gain more support. There are also civil society organizations, e.g., the Rujak Center for Urban Studies and Urban Poor Consortium (UPC). Their involvement pushes more flourishing movements Ratna asked her daughter Atiqah Hasiholan, who has a similar background, to create a donation for tents and bedsheets. Such pieces of equipment were necessary at that time. Atiqah is an icon of LBH Jakarta. Anonymous Informant Kmd considered this organizing significant for a small area like Kampung Aquarium. He emphasized that many environmental activists supported their movement during the incident. The stronger position signifies how they utilize networking and action to fight against eviction.

Reflecting on the movement against eviction, those actors engage in an urban revival in which the community takes a solid basis beneath it. Resistance emerges from each counterpart that helps the Aquarium people's movement. In Lefebvre's term (1996), the movement resembles what oeuvre means in a city, implying the everyday action of human beings to alter and revive the urban life of Aquarium people. The urban revival builds over their grief of eviction victimization. Sense of a victim catapulted them to demand fair treatment without force and their homes back. The community who lose their place turns to feel disturbed, making them unable to dwell in the neighborhood. As shown in the picture below, many Aquarium people saw the neighborhood as a home to gather their children and future generations. The community rejuvenated from tragedy to urban revival with the above actors.



**Fig. 4.:** The Aquarium vicinity before eviction

The sense of victim appeared more when people passed away because of rubble conditions. Twenty-seven elders got various diseases, such as respiratory problems, and died after one year of eviction. This health problem occurred because of the neighborhood's worst and most dirty environment. Additionally, Aquarium people supported younger leaders to escalate change and advocacy. Sense of victim and encouragement of young leaders are essential elements to contend the eviction.

The eviction shattered social life, especially to the extent of little conflict. A quarrel followed between those who stayed and those who took replacement houses. Aquarium women convinced each other not to take the housing from the Jakarta government. The conflict was not last because both sides accepted each explanation and let go. District officials offered residents the replacement in social housing or rumah susun individually. The individual offering caused little conflict among the people. The officials initially proposed Marunda and Cakung social housing, but the people rejected it. In the end, they gave Kapuk social housing with consideration of close distance after making the house vacant from occupants who had not paid. The urban movement by the Aquarium people implied a high survival of countering terror.

There were recreating places and created a neighborhood tasking. The work distribution among people included carries on things that involve women residents. People guarded the area and distributed work to handle the mess upon eviction from 2016 to 2018. There was a guarding in the ruins of their neighborhood against terror apparatuses from the Indonesian army/TNI and the national police, who often came unexpectedly regardless of the time.

A real sense of place was in peril upon the eviction reflecting from the praying site or musalla. The officials who evicted the area did not find musalla before. They realized the Aquarium people were resting during the three days of terror after the eviction. The following day district officials came together with the military to destroy the praying place. The Aquarium people rebuilt the praying site and changed the name from Al-Ikhlas to Al-Jihad. In Islamic terms, jihad means to powerfully strive for something which signals the community's power to resist eviction. Many of them believe the changing name ignites more energy for resistance. The minor conflict signifies their togetherness, whereas the praying place shows belonging to a site.

Furthermore, the eviction in 2016 implies urban politics. Aquarium people had already received various political acts and urban policies from different Governors of Jakarta. One of them made the eviction an apex. Three governors performed variedly to the community, including Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Basuki TP. (Ahok), and Anies B. Governor Jokowi, who later was Indonesian president, had visited the neighborhood twice during political campaigns with a promise to secure land legality in his early Jakarta political career. Yet, the promise never happened (Guntoro, 2020). Eviction in 2016 during Governor Ahok's term was not the first attempt to remove the people. The eviction effort had already appeared around 1996 or 1997. The 2016 eviction was unstoppable and changed the vicinity in Figure 4 before. In contrast,

Governor Anies is now rebuilding the area into a new settlement. Each of Jakarta's governments reigned and tried to change the Aquarium neighborhood.

Such a revival and victimization concretize an urban play. Ordinary inhabitants or leaders of the Aquarium community emerged as active agents countering the eviction with a specific strategy and intelligence. As part of the urban policy, eviction has proved a devastating effect of urban politics ruling Jakarta, depriving the marginalized community of Aquarium. Beyond, there is deep humanism propelling to which the community bonded members together and keeping a sense of place in the neighborhood.

### **Play to Keep Neighborhood**

The incidents of urban play happen in a specific way as means of survival. Katarina is a women leader in the Aquarium community. She met Anies with Prabowo, a political figure who ran for the Indonesian presidency coupled times, and Sandiaga Uno, later the vice governor of Anies. The time was before Anies elected as the governor. Anies cornered her, asking what the Aquarium people would expect if he got elected. Katarina replied with an extensive and sole expectation of returning to their neighborhood and did not hope for money.

More experts championed the eviction, whereas Aquarium people condemned it. Importantly, she had argued about the violent eviction with Bestari Barus as a local parliament member/DPRD of Jakarta Provincial Council. Bestari criticized the Aquarium people for why they were still there at that time. The argument was ironic since the role of Bestari as a local parliament should have probed the Jakarta government for the incident instead of questioning Aquarium as the victim. He was also with his media entourage to scold people throughout the interview. Katarina then cried while bravely answering him during the media interview, "Eviction is a violation of human rights and even worse with the identity revocation. The colonial Dutch yet did not erase people's identities. We were born here with our identity cards. All of you bureaucrats use our tax for your work."

Aquarium members lost their identity cards because Governor Ahok canceled them to make them leave their neighborhood permanently. In the end, Governor Anies, a successor of Ahok, reactivated the cards. Then, Katarina scolded an urban planning expert, Yogi, who supported Governor Ahok about the displacement. Her argument underscored what kind of age you live now, so you prioritize heritage development instead of people's life. Heritage development here means the eviction based on the Old Town preservation program. Various arguments with officials and experts demonstrate a means of survival as part of the Aquarium's play.

The eviction created a social shock. The Jakarta government caused precarity from the eviction, which deteriorated the Aquarium's mental state. Katarina vigorously explained the erasure of their history more than economy and housing upon the incident. In a way, it destroyed friendship and customs. She often did something with friends but entirely changed afterward before the incident. There was a precarious life immediately and homelessness after the removal. The residents put a pin over the destructed area to identify each house they owned. There was Katarina's house which still had a complete and decent floor. She said, "I dug the rubble, and the wall was still half. I refurbished it with wood and a cover into a tent. I lived there for two years after the eviction before the shelter finished." Living in a tent was very rough for her. People yelled at each other that their roofs, made of plastic cover, were occasionally displaced when heavy rain came. Indonesians call this kind of house a gubuk or shack in English, as in the picture below.





**Fig. 5.:** Shack of the Aquarium Community (Setiawan and Aziz, 2017)

In a shack, living as an Aquarium was adverse. There was inadequate electricity and water. They just connected illegally to an electricity tap and bought the carried water from the seller. To deal with unstable electricity, they use the old mode with kerosene to light their area, making them all body black and smokey. People used wood for cooking food. Some rats bit their babies' feet. She reminisced how she often cried telling this story a while ago but is more resilient now. Then, she continued that it was like a dream that they could pass a hard time. Such a precarious life shocked the overall community.

Beyond that adversity, the history of survival from eviction elucidates more about women's play since a long time ago. President Soeharto and his party, Golkar, intended to occupy Kampung Aquarium through the same eviction mode between 1996 and 1997, according to Anonymous Interview with Kmd on July 2021. Katarina addressed that past efforts failed because mothers brought appliances, mobilized small mobs, and were nude during that time. Mothers opened their clothes with only underwear covering the breasts and sexual organs.

The dramatic events followed with taunting and chanting of appliances allowing to distract the apparatuses. The loose apparel also implied a gaze of "oh kasian nih" or "oh so pity." Besides pity, Diana, a former Aquarium community leader, assured that the opening clothes symbolize *kualat* or bad luck as a little curse in Indonesian culture. *Kualat* works because the apparatuses see women's organs. Their defense mechanism caused the apparatus's pity and cursed them for stopping the eviction. Such a defense mechanism signifies the protection of the built environment. These small tactics successfully stopped the eviction but failed in 2016. Apparatuses employing women officers made opening clothes did not work in 2016 to a certain extent. The small tactics proved a kind of urban play at work in the past and now in the community. Among generations have been transmitting the tactics across time as a survival strategy.

Force of the Jakarta government instigates a small play about movement and resistance among the Aquarium people. The small urban play coexists for two reasons. The appropriation of space using eviction violated the Aquarium people and recreated them into active agents with their renewed culture of the marginalized urban people. Then, the people who think and feel they are victims cause a survival response. The Aquarium community conducted urban play incidentally, with small mob action and survival purposes, which differs from other urban plays, such as car-jockey, graffiti, and traffic, which are routinized for a longer time. Such urban play supports previous research that Bayat (2015) argues that the urban poor of the Middle East tend to involve in concrete, locally meaningful, and manageable struggles under the articulation of rights terms during the Arab Spring revolution. Also, the urban poor possess social existence with autonomy, flexibility, and pragmatism based on survival and self-development because of structural disadvantages (Bayat, 2007; Wilson, 2019).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Eviction leading to severer poverty and mental condition have signified precarious life among the Akuarium community. Livelihoods in a low-income status as a structural problem deteriorate more in eviction time. The incident erased the various streams of income people leading to the destruction of the neighborhood's economic base. As the mastermind, Jakarta's government believed eviction abolished land for community enterprises. Moreover, eviction disrupted the economic base before and after the event. It includes income, building, citizenship, and market as much as spatial dimensions. The spatiality covers vicinities and crowdedness, which are fundamental factors of people's economy. The Jakarta provincial government wrote off citizenship by revoking the identity card of the Akuarium people. The implication of eviction happened unexpectedly for the community's economic base. Beyond such material conditions, eviction allows the Akuarium people to induce a survival strategy.

The disappearance of the economy and housing overarch social life, including the Akuarium community's history. The problems lead to the mental state of the Akuarium community over this kind of disappearance, which signifies precariousness. The mental state of the community has been repressed throughout the incident in which urban play took part. Urban play emerges from here as a means of survival from the difficulty of eviction as a failed urban development project. Akuarium people enact an urban play as a small tactic to a variety of violence. Such a strategy is a material form that has been passed across generations.

In this research, the urban play has been particularizing in Akuarium poor community's resistance through spaces. Urban play among Akuarium people is a claim of space without aggression and a last-resort weapon to sustain community life. It proves that resistance through spatial practice has been an archetype in Akuarium. Resistance is part of the democratic response in urban play. The urban play thus underlies a bounded process of social relations and the city space to contend the forced eviction. The social relation is rooted in their dwelling to home and destroyed social life. The Akuarium members' resistance has been transmitted across generations, such as chanting appliances, mobilizing small mobs, and being nude during the eviction effort. The dramatic events distract the apparatuses, which signify the claim of space without aggression. Urban play is a material form in terms of biopower. The power in a specific time and space causes the response of particular sociality as the Akuarium people have exercised in the urban play

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