

The Seedbeds of Active Citizenship?

Community Gardens in Kampung Tugu Selatan, Jakarta

Prathiwi Widyatmi Putri¹

¹ Prathiwi Widyatmi Putri, CENTROPOLIS, Urban Lab and Research, Tarumanagara University Gedung Utama Lantai 15 Kampus I Jl. Letjen. S. Parman No. 1, Grogol Jakarta Barat 11440, Indonesia

DOI: 10.23791/441722

Abstract: This article seeks to contribute to the scholarly documentation on Jakarta's spatial transformation. It does so by discussing one of the kampungs, settlements that could be seen as marginalised due to a loose association between the communities and urban citizenship. In kampungs, the idea of 'state' as the key actor to ensure universal and equal access to basic infrastructure services has eroded. This article situates such settlements under the terminology of 'grey settlements,' following Yiftachel's 'gray spaces' (2009). The grey settlements of Jakarta have been disintegrated from the formal infrastructure provision system, but to a certain extent they have also been integrated with many state-led political institutional processes. Such ambiguity brings advantages and disadvantages to different actors. This article specifically looks at the collective efforts to develop community gardens despite limited infrastructure conditions. The case study exemplifies the phenomena in which good initiatives emerge from crises. Such phenomena also call for a new conceptualisation of citizenship.

Keywords: citizenship, community gardens, social innovation, neighbourhood infrastructure

[Submitted as Research Note: 21 May 2015, Acceptance of the revised manuscript: 5 June 2015]

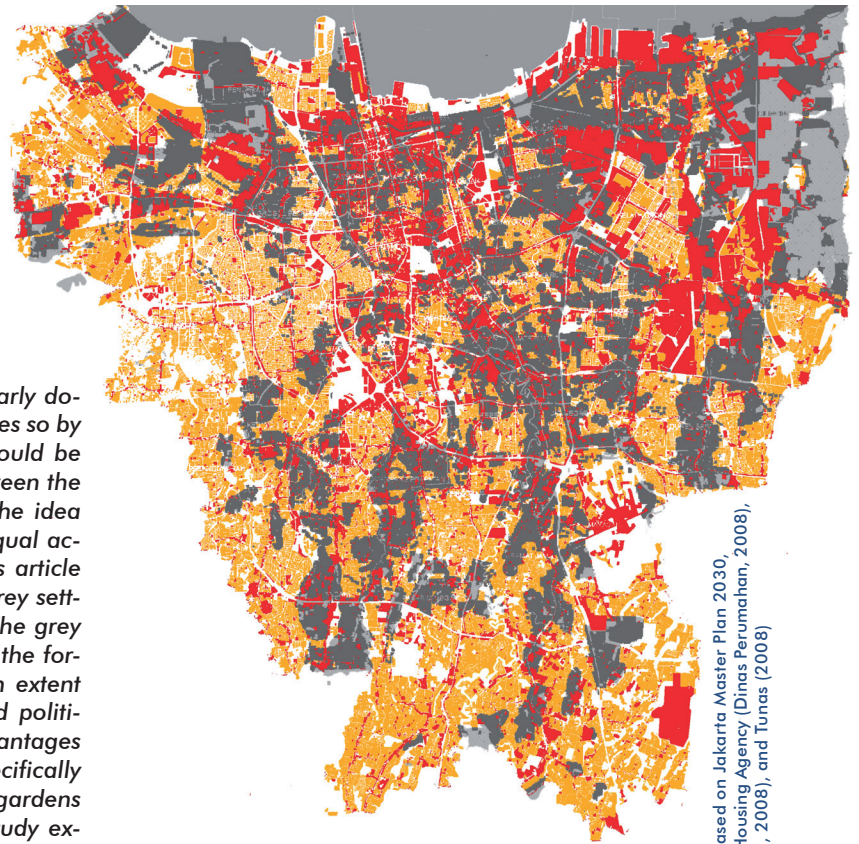


Figure 1: Jakarta's Spatial Fragmentation

- Kampungs that are categorised as slums by the Jakarta provincial government (data 2008)
- Cleared slums (vacant areas in Master Plan 2030)
- Planned settlements and improved kampungs
- Industries, offices, commercial functions and high-rise apartments

Source: redrawn by author based on Jakarta Master Plan 2030, data and maps from Jakarta Housing Agency (Dinas Perumahan, 2008), Jakarta Statistic Agency (BPS, 2008), and Tunas (2008)

Jakarta has poor environmental sanitation conditions as the management of its solid waste, wastewater collection and treatment systems are low. Moreover green open space is lacking, especially in areas with informal settlements. These factors all together reduce Jakarta's spatial quality and continuously harm public health. While in private housing estates most of the middle-class households can enjoy premium services of water, sanitation and leisure facilities, it remains a great challenge to meet such needs for lower-income community groups. The main reason is that the capacity of state service provision system might improve but with much slower pace compared to the increase of population growth and expansion of sprawl.

Responding to increasing environmental issues, some lower-income communities have been undergoing collective actions. This article exemplifies such actions and discusses the impacts. It shows how marginalised community groups could turn their deprived socio-ecological conditions into opportunities for improving urban spatial quality. It is increasingly difficult to ignore that such actions have been complementing state initiatives in development, but instead of solely being a matter for fulfilling short-term needs, such coexistence should also be effective to improve urban governance as a whole and open up a way for an active citizenship (see Allen et al., 2006; Moulart et al., 2010a).

This article is drawn on a case of a kampung in Jakarta. Following this introduction, a section explains what a kampung is and how this article situates its socio-ecological conditions. It then discusses a development of community gardens in Kampung Tugu Selatan. The last section further discusses the kampung experience to reflect on urban citizenship. As part of a two-year empirical work in Jakarta for a doctoral research, this case study is written mainly based on the author's field visit in May 2011, in which some group discussions with community members were undertaken.



Figure 2: A community garden in RW 2, Kampung Tugu Selatan

Urban Kampung: the Grey Settlements of Jakarta

The *kampung* is one type of ‘informal settlement’ built by communities as active urban settlements, like the *favela* in Brazil, *barrio* in Venezuela, *cal-lampa* in Chile, *katchi abadis* in Pakistan or *colonia proletaria* in Mexico (see Hasan et al., 1999; Ward, 1976). But, there is no single definition of kampung in Jakarta, a city with a population of over ten million. In colonial times, the indigenous word ‘kampung’ was used to label non-European and non-Chinese settlements. Today, a kampung is a socio-spatial entity embedding an economic production and settlement system that encompasses a broad range of informal income generating activities. However, it is not merely a spatial manifestation of the ‘informal economy’. Kampung are neighbourhoods where blue-collar workers from the formal sector and workers of the informal sector live together and their co-existence has been supporting the economy of the city as a whole. Moreover, many small business activities in kampung are part of larger business operations and often the local entrepreneurs are highly dependent on bigger economic players.

Kampung can fall under the categorisation of ‘grey spaces,’ a term

coined by Yiftachel (2009). In such spaces, communities are only partially included in the urban polity, not integrated but not eliminated; their existence is socio-politically important but their living characteristics do not always comply with the idealised norms of urban life set by the government and the private sector. The territories of grey spaces are maintained ‘from above’ by a “politics of unrecognition” accompanied by marginalising indifference’ (Ibid., 2009, pp. 89-92). But these are also spaces that are formed ‘from below,’ involving governance modes that incorporate several non-formal institutions for mediation and negotiation (see Chatterjee, 2004, pp. 53-78; Simone, 2012). Hence, a kampung is not a passive physical container. It is a form of dynamic socio-spatial organization in which different spatial strategies from different actors are continuously being contested (see Massey, 2005). In kampung, social networks of each actor are not isolated in such localities. They are linked with wider territorial dynamics (see also Van Dyck & Van den Broeck, 2013).

No one knows (nor may ever know) the exact number of people living in kampung or the total area of kampung in Jakarta although the govern-

ment of Jakarta has data of the total area and spatial distribution of slums. In 2008, the Public Housing Agency of Jakarta, *Dinas Perumahan*, reported the presence of around five thousand hectares of slums, forming almost 12 per cent of the total housing area in the city (Dinas-Perumahan, 2008). ‘Slum’ has been used by the state as a term to refer to the physical quality of settlements that are lagging behind in certain health and architectural standards, but this categorisation does not represent the real characteristics of a ‘kampung’. There is other data about the spatial distribution of poverty (e.g. Mercy-Corps, 2008), but these also do not explain the characteristics of ‘kampung’ in a comprehensive way. Figure 1 on page 9 shows a sketch of kampung spatial distribution within the spatial fragmentation of Jakarta.

The labelling of kampung as grey settlements in this paper has more than a metaphorical value; grey also describes the bio-physical condition. Kampung can be termed ‘grey settlements’ for their continuously deteriorating sanitary conditions – lack of access to water supply, blocked drainages, unmanaged solid waste and untreated wastewater – as well as the lack of open green spaces.



Source: Author, 2011

Figure 3: A community garden in RW 3, Kampung Tugu Selatan

Community Gardens in Kampung Tugu Selatan

Kampung Tugu Selatan is located in North Jakarta Municipality, in Tugu Selatan Sub-district (or *Kelurahan*). A sub-district is the lowest state administrative level that consists of two levels of neighbourhood units, the larger Rukun Warga (RW), and the smallest one called Rukun Tetangga (RT). Tugu Selatan Sub-district consists of six units of RW, of which five form the Kampung Tugu Selatan while one is part of a large gated housing estate named Kelapa Gading.

The presence of the two neighbourhood units is legally regulated as they have been part of the controlled political sphere established by the state since the Japanese colonial era (see Kusno, 2006); these units, together with sub-district and district, are mentioned in every citizen's official address. Although their presence is regulated by law, RW and RT have a certain degree of autonomy and the involvement of community members in their daily activities is voluntary-based (see Dwianto, 2003; Kusno, 2006). How these neighbourhood units operate depend on how the (preceding) socio-political configurations have been (trans)forming at the very local levels (see Dwianto, 2003; Logsdon, 1978).

Compared to some other kampungs in Jakarta, Kampung Tugu Selatan is relatively young. According to one community leader, even in the 1980s, there were still empty lands in this neighbourhood; in the early 1990's many households who mostly had lived in other parts of Jakarta began to occupy this area after purchasing lands from the local Betawi families (an interview with a community leader). The kampung of Tugu Selatan does not have a traditional name, which is typical for the kampungs which began to densify from the 1980s onwards. Hence, communities refer to the RW number and the name of the Kelurahan (sub-district).

The community in Kampung Tugu Selatan suffered from the extreme flooding that hit Jakarta in 2002. After being categorised as a 'slum' community, the Kampung Tugu Selatan was included in the 2005 to 2008 'Program Perbaikan Kampung Terpadu' (Integrated Program for Kampung Improvement – a variant of the Kampung Improvement Program first introduced in 1969) administered by the Public Housing Agency of North Jakarta Municipality. Many officials have confirmed that this neighbourhood has been greatly upgraded, and has continued improving even after the programme was concluded.

One tangible improvement is the

presence of community gardens that produce various types of herbs, vegetables, fruits and fish for local consumption (see Figure 2). Towards the end of 2009, the governor of DKI Jakarta made an official visit to a programme called 'Rumah Sehat' (Healthy House). When the visiting team passed through a vacant plot in RW 2 that had been used for solid waste dumping, it was suggested that this land could be developed as a community garden. Around a year later, the community started constantly mobilising local labour power to deal with the large volume of garbage and make space for cultivation. However, after several attempts using simple tools, the works did not bring satisfying results. The community members finally decided that it would require too much time and energy to remove all layers of solid waste; instead, they added a new layer of soil on top of the garbage pile. Work on this project began in January 2011 and, by the author's visit in May 2011, the land had been turned into a beautiful green open space that has also been used for community gathering. Within a relatively short-term period, the community managed to organise collective efforts to develop the gardens.

Apparently it was the crises caused by regular flooding in Jakarta that encour-



Figure 4: Green alleys in Tugu Selatan

raged the community to address their solid waste management issues. Using the vacant land for a community garden has been effective in preventing garbage dumping in Kampung Tugu Selatan. The community garden model has been replicated in other units of RW (see Figure 3). RW 2 even has another communal garden also created on previously unused land. Other activities also address the problems of solid waste management, for example the project of 'one composter for every ten houses,' and some women's groups which produce crafts from plastic waste.

Tugu Selatan has been touted as a successful example of the most recent version of Kampung Improvement Program (hereafter KIP) in Jakarta; it is the pride of both the local government and community members. Nevertheless, there was nothing particularly extraordinary about the four-year KIP in Tugu Selatan. In many other places, including in Kampung Kojan where the modular septic tanks were introduced, similar interventions have also been implemented, notably to build drains and roads, as well as wells to promote artificial groundwater recharge and to reduce surface runoff. Earlier generations of KIP, notably those carried out from 1969 to 1979, also delivered this kind of physical development, but various particularities specific to Tugu Selatan led to on-going development practice. One of the local characteristics is a higher social cohesiveness of the community groups in the Kampung Tugu Selatan compared with two other kampongs in Jakarta as researched by the author during the same period. Community members were motivated to organise

contributions among themselves and to seek assistance from others to keep pursuing a better living environment. Such characteristics have become the foundation for what can be called 'socially innovative actions' in development; these are actions with an immediate goal of fulfilling the basic needs of local communities, but also a long-term goal of institutional innovation involving cultural emancipation, improved social relations and better decision-making processes (Moulaert & Nussbaumer, 2005). The land is actually owned privately, and an agreement was reached that allowed for its public use. While most of the construction materials were provided by community members, seeds and young plantations were donated by the national government.

Community members and leaders were highly motivated throughout the four-year KIP project, during which an organisation called 'Masyarakat Peduli Lingkungan' (hereafter MPL) was formed in the kampung, and later partnered the sub-district government on some other development initiatives. MPL's leader encouraged community members to create a common vision of their neighbourhoods, defining ecotourism activities within the kampung. Apparently, it is this vision that encouraged community residents to continue playing an active part in development processes. Developing the community garden strengthened the feeling of belonging to a shared community.

This community includes many pensioners who actively dedicate themselves to community activities. As former blue-collar workers or military personnel, they are the most educated inhabitants within their age group. From the

author's observation, they seem to be quite influential within the local political constellation. Some of them own rooms that they rent out to factory workers working in the surrounding industrial sites. The kampung is dominated by houses with rental rooms. The presence of many neighbourhood green spaces makes this type of worker housing appear more comfortable. Some alleys in Kampung Tugu Selatan are also decorated with greeneries (see Figure 4).

Apart from the social composition of the community that allow many collective initiatives from within the community, on-going environmental quality improvement in Kampung Tugu Selatan is also driven by many other joint initiatives from the government, private sector and NGOs channelled to Tugu Selatan Sub-district. The national government has even acknowledged the kampung's contribution to restoring green spaces to the city. Consequently, the initial success attracted other initiatives. A project funded by a paint company enabled the community to create murals along the main alley (see Figure 5), and this artistic project has also lifted the pride of the inhabitants.

Despite all of these visible improvements, Kampung Tugu Selatan has no proper wastewater management system. Moreover, Kampung Tugu Selatan has to face an additional problem: drains are often blocked due to, according to the community leader, it being located a higher altitude. These neighbourhoods are thus at risk of flooding during naturally occurring calamities. This is a serious problem requiring a larger-scale approach to water management that is beyond the capability



Source: Author, 2011

Figure 5: Murals along a green alley in Tugu Selatan, panacea for blocked drainages?

of the community and the scope of neighbourhood planning.

Cultivating an Active Citizenship?

Perhaps the community dynamics in Kampung Tugu Selatan represent the very basic idea of citizenship as a mark of belonging and commitment to a specific place (see Desforges et al., 2005). An active meaning of community is embedded in such concept of place-based citizenship; community members are enablers of citizenship rights (political, social, and basic needs) while recognising and bearing citizens' responsibilities (see also Hofmann, 2011; Moulaert et al., 2010b). The concept of an active community rejects the 'conservative' definition of 'community' as a group based on the politics of identity such as religion, ideology, profession or ethnicity (Moulaert et al., 2010b). In fact, as shown in many case studies, innovative collective actions have emerged within socio-culturally heterogeneous neighbourhoods ('spatialised urban communities') and from mechanisms of crisis and recovery (Moulaert et al., 2010a; Van Dyck & Van den Broeck, 2013).

While there are limited basic services from the state, different governing practices emerge performing citizenship that has been re-scaled within a more local context, allowing the more contemporary conceptualisation of 'active citizenship' in accordance with the recent transition in governmentality to give more space to community participation (see Desforges et al., 2005; Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014). In the Kampung there were certain mechanisms to set rights and obligations

during the development of community gardens and the process of defining 'needs' has accommodated people aspirations.

It is often the case that the government already set certain forms of infrastructure development, whether it provides better pavement, water supply or drainage. Within such top-down approach, many urgent needs according to community members are often left behind. In the case of the Kampung Tugu Selatan, it was the community themselves who formulated the needs and assess their capacity. From the problem of solid waste, creativity has emerged to proceed an integrated solution at the very local scale, to also addresses the problem of household food resource and the lack of open space.

Indeed, the meaning of place-based citizenship should not be reduced in such localities. As we have seen above, there are many problems that need solutions on a larger scale which means that such citizenship also needs to be meaningful in advocating local needs at the metropolitan level. The processes of advocating local problems to be part of the planning agenda at the metropolitan scale also constitute the processes to redefine what a kampung is and in particular to envision the community identity in Kampung Tugu Selatan. Certainly many grey institutions and procedures within the existing development processes in Jakarta need further clarifications for communities to hold commitments internally as well as from district governments and other stakeholders together so that community as groups could reframe their short-term and

long-term goals in developing their neighbourhoods.

The success of community gardens in Kampung Tugu Selatan not only lifts the group's identity and confidence but also the level of ownership. It is certainly increasing the bargaining power of the community over decision making processes at the metropolitan level. The gardens also function as green open space that if replicated in other areas would form the green lung of the city and improve the spatial quality of the city as a whole. Forced evictions of kampung communities have been going on in Jakarta from time to time and this has been going on to give more room for private-sector-led spatial development strategies (see Harjoko, 2009). Like in other contexts within the region (see also for example Talocci & Boano, 2015), many communities performing different forms of informalities have become the subjects of evictions as they live in central areas of the city. Their presence at the heart of the city gives proof to the durability of different networks of productive-reproductive activities supporting the economy of the city as a whole (see Simone, 2010; Simone, 2012). Kampung communities provide cheap housing and services for workers, and often also different domestic helps for the middle class living in the surrounding housing estates (see again Figure 1, the spatial distribution of kampungs in Jakarta among commercial areas and planned housing estates). The story of the community gardens has lengthened the list of contributions from the kampung communities to the city.

This article has shown that the idea of place-based citizenship is promising

for enabling community participation in development, but it remains a great challenge to create space for transformative participation in which citizens' empowerment could take place and communities should not be seen as clients or consumers relying on decisions of powerful others in solving greater environmental problems affecting their daily environments (see also Allen et al., 2006; Hickey & Mohan, 2005). While there are potentials and challenges beyond the Kampung scale, progressive NGOs and civil society organisations are needed to partner with the community for enhancing their local characteristics while securing their longer term development goals.

Acknowledgement

The author thanks Dr. Ramalis Sobandi (Ministry of Public Works) and Dr. Teti Argo (Institut Teknologi Bandung) for having made the field work possible.

Conclusion

This research note has presented a single case study which provides both empirical and conceptual contributions. It shows the heterogeneous condition of urban Jakarta and its spatial fragmentation. Further, it zooms in on the local dynamics of one of its kampungs. As kampungs are spread over the metropolitan area, addressing kampungs as units of collective actions seems to be an effective approach to improve Jakarta's spatial quality as a whole. Situating the kampung within the dynamics of urban governance opens up scholarly debates to reflect on issues of citizenship


in Jakarta. This article helps ground the broad concept of citizenship within a local context by discussing the actual meaning of active community involvement in development. What remains important to debate is the role of the state for long-term development processes and calibrating active community participations in larger-scale development initiatives.

References

- Allen, A., J. Davila and P. Hofmann. (2006). *The peri-urban water poor: citizens or consumers?* *Environment and Urbanization*, 18(2), 333-351.
- Chatterjee, P. (2004). *The Politics of the Governed. Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Desforges, L., R. Jones and M. Woods. (2005). *New Geographies of Citizenship*. *Citizenship Studies*, 9(5), 439-451.
- Dinas-Perumahan. (2008). *The Spatial Distribution of Slums*. Unpublished presentation document. Received during interview 2010. Jakarta: Jakarta Housing Agency (Dinas Perumahan Provinsi DKI Jakarta).
- Dwianto, R.D. (2003). *An Existing Form of Urban Locality Groups in Jakarta: Reexamining RT/RW for the post-New Order Era. Representing Local Places and Raising Voices from Below - Japanese Contributions to the History of Geographical Thought* 8(August), 41-60
- Ghose, R. and M. Pettygrove. (2014). *Urban Community Gardens as Spaces of Citizenship*. *Antipode*, 46(4), 1092-1112.
- Harjoko, T.Y. (2009). *Urban Kampung: Its Genesis and Transformation into Metropolis, with particular reference to Penggilingan in Jakarta*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.
- Hasan, A., M. Younus and S.A. Zaidi. (1999). *Understanding Karachi: Planning and Reform for the Future*. Karachi: City Press
- Hickey, S. and G. Mohan. (2005). *Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development*. *Development and Change*, 36(2), 237-262.
- Hofmann, P. (2011). *Falling through the net: access to water and sanitation by the peri-urban poor*. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable*

- Development*, 3(1), 40-55.
- Kusno, A. (2006). *Guardian of Memories: Gardu in Urban Java*. *Indonesia* 81(April), 95-149.
- Logsdon, M.G. (1978). *Traditional Decision Making in Urban Neighbourhoods*. *Indonesia*, 26, 95-110.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Mercy-Corps. (2008). *Urban Bulletin No. 3. Urban Mapping*. Jakarta: Mercy Corps.
- Moulaert, F., F. Martinelli, E. Swyngedouw and S. Gonzales. (2010a). *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community Development and Social Innovation*. London: Routledge: Francis and Taylor.
- Moulaert, F., F. Martinelli, E. Swyngedouw and S. Gonzales. (2010b). *Social Innovation and Community Development: Concepts, Theories and Challenges*. In F. Moulaert, F. Martinelli, E. Swyngedouw and S. Gonzales (Eds.), *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community Development and Social Innovation*. London: Routledge: Francis and Taylor Group.
- Moulaert, F. and J. Nussbaumer. (2005). *Defining the Social Economy and its Governance at the Neighbourhood Level: Methodological Reflection*. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 2071-2088.
- Simone, A. (2010). *On Intersections, Anticipations and Provisional Publics: Remaking District Life in Jakarta*. *Urban Geography*, 31(3), 285-308.
- Simone, A. (2012). *Securing the Majority: Living through Uncertainty in Jakarta*. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36(2), 315-335.
- Talocci, G. and C. Boano. (2015). *The politics of urban displacement practices in Phnom Penh. Reflections from Borei Santepheap Pi and Oudong Moi*. *Pacific Geographies*, 43 (Jan. / Feb.), 15-20.
- Van Dyck, B. and P. Van den Broeck. (2013). *Social innovation: a territorial process*. In F. Moulaert, D. MacCallum, A. Mehmood and A. Hamdouch (Eds.), *The International Handbook on Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 131-141.
- Ward, P.M. (1976). *The Squatter Settlement as Slum or Housing Solution: Evidence from Mexico City*. *Land Economics*, 52(3), 330-346.
- Yiftachel, O. (2009). *Theoretical Notes on 'Gray Cities': the Coming of Urban Apartheid?* *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 88-100.

Corresponding author: Prathiwi [pwidyatmi@yahoo.com] is an Indonesian scholar whose research interests are urban informality, spatial development in transition, post-disaster reconstruction and urban infrastructure development. She obtained her doctoral degree in engineering science from KU Leuven and is a member of the research network of Planning and Development in Faculty of Engineering, KU Leuven. She has built a 10-year career in academic research and development consultancy work.



MEGA CITY
TP. Hồ Chí Minh

<Advertisement>
<available via amazon>

Book series PAZIFIK FORUM of The Association of Pacific Studies
Volume 15

Waibel, M. & H. Hilbert (eds.) (2015)
TP. Hồ Chí Minh: MEGA City.
Sách ảnh / Photo Book, 2nd updated edition
PAZIFIK FORUM, Volume 15
Fine Art Publishing House
Hanoi / Vietnam
208 pages
ISBN: 978-604-78-2038-2

officially endorsed by:

- Ho Chi Minh City University of Architecture
- University of Social Sciences and Humanities
- Department of Construction (DoC)
- Vietnamese-German University (VGU)
- Southern Institute of Spatial Planning (SISP)
- Association of Pacific Studies (APSA)
- Saigoneer