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# Environmental activists' hysteresis as a driving force for establishing environmental actions against urban forest privatization in Bandung, Indonesia

**Meredian Alam**
Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam

## Abstract

Despite the huge and growing environmental movement to protect urban forests in Indonesia, the tensions between environmental activists' past engagements with nature and the emerging environmental problems are under-studied. The inner contradiction between the intensive nature of the connections and experiences that the actor maintains and the recent external threat to the environment is the key energizer of an environmental movement. Through Pierre Bourdieu's seminal concept of hysteresis, this article explores how activists' previous experiences with nature suffer disjuncture caused by the threat of urban forest privatization occurring in their neighborhood. Drawn from in-depth interviews with the co-founders of an environmental movement organization, the activist narratives in this article reveal that the development of their current struggles was driven by feelings of disappointment, anxiety, anger and a fear of losing the urban forest. The urban forest, for them, not only constitutes a physical space, but serves social and spiritual purposes, represents local identity and is the basis for everyday life.

## Keywords

Activists, environmental actions, hysteresis, privatization, urban forest

## Introduction

Environmental activists embody environmental beliefs and nurture a strong commitment to the environment. Environmental activists are 'people who intentionally engage in the most difficult ecological behaviors' (Séguin et al., 1998: 631). The conflict between the

**Corresponding author:**
Meredian Alam, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Gadong, Bandar Seri Begawan, 1410, Brunei Darussalam.
Email: mere.alam@gmail.com

values of environmental conservation, which they place above everything in their lives, and the exploitation of nature by economic interests, underlies their struggle (Velicu, 2020). The key objective of the present article is to explore activists' experience of inner turmoil in response to the growing threat of environmental exploitation using Pierre Bourdieu's seminal concept, so called *hysteresis*: 'the ways in which habitus may outline the conditions of its genesis and come out with the demands of present conditions' (Bourdieu, 1997: 159).

This article concerns the socio-spatial discrepancy between environmental activists' experiences with nature in their young adulthood and their current situation, living among environmental problems that threaten their public spaces. The key argument here departs from the previous seminal ideas that environmentalists' identity emerges through a juxtaposition of critical self-reflexivity (Adkins, 2001; Kohl and McCutcheon, 2015; Leonard, 2012). Instead, it invokes the activists' close alliances with nature and emotional bonding with nature, and examines the clash between these emotions and the destruction occurring in the environment (Bell and York, 2012; Dempsey and Robertson, 2012). In most cases, the environmental activists have nurtured such emotional connections since early adolescence (Alcock et al., 2020; Duron-Ramos et al., 2020; Howell and Allen, 2019; Jensen and Olsen, 2019; Otto et al., 2019; Rosa and Collado, 2019; Taye et al., 2019). This situation is conjoined with that of the wilderness and environmentalist experiences. Lines' (2006) studies into environmental activists point out that for activists, there is a connection between nature and the self. A sense of social emotion is embedded in an ongoing process; individuals establish strong connections with nature, usually combined with other virtuous elements, such as visceral, romantic, spiritual and scientific sensibilities (Benziman, 2013; Chen and Chai, 2010; Greenhough and Roe, 2011; Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019). This means that while simultaneously embracing and enjoying nature, they are progressively making sense of natural events. The activists' knowledge of nature grows, and they understand that there is a clash between their environmental ideology and the current destruction (Lines, 2006: 68). In addition to this assertion, previous studies have claimed that frequent experience with nature during childhood and youth becomes a cradle for individuals' environmentalism and a powerful driving force provoking particular environmental protests (Broom, 2017; Collado and Evans, 2019; Colléony et al., 2019; Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019; Kuo et al., 2019; Rosa et al., 2018).

As Kashima et al. (2014) assert, an environmental identity takes root when a person embraces beliefs about nature in themselves. In many cases, playing in areas of nature during childhood and enjoying outdoor sports activities over the course of young adulthood creates emotional closeness with ecosystems (Hovardas and Poirazidis, 2006; Witt, 2013). This kind of experience may foster a sense of contemplation, transcendence and relationality in experiencing nature (Van den Noortgaete and De Tavernier, 2014). Other elements within oneself are social identity and praxis, which reflect biocentric and ecological consciousness (Ingalsbee, 1996). Using Bourdieu's seminal concept of hysteresis, this article examines how urban environmental activists experience a gap or emotional disjuncture between their lifelong experiences and appreciation of nature with the recent plans to commercialize an urban forest in Indonesia.

This article is structured as follows: the second section introduces hysteresis as the article's theoretical framework; the third section discusses the methodology employed to

analyze and collect the data; the research findings are presented in the fourth section, elaborating activists' experiences with nature and their broader long-standing attachments to nature; and the fifth section discusses these findings, while the sixth presents some conclusions.

## Hysteresis as a concept

In the present article public space is an objective condition which has long been inhabited or used for particular activities, whether social, cultural, or economic, and provokes certain bonds within individuals or groups of actors who occupy it. More than a sense of ownership, individuals or groups build a 'citizenship of space' (Anjaria, 2009: 392), in which they consider themselves to be the caretakers of the inhabited space and inseparable parts of it. In this space are formed not only cognitive structures, but also social structures, in the form of extended group activities and opportunities for reinforcing actor-to-actor relations, recreating the social fabric, fostering social alliances, and building mutual identities manifested in similarities of taste, like-mindedness and in-group inclusivity. Such attachments are referred to as 'social dispositions' (Brandts et al., 2009: 59). A consolidated social disposition is the outcome of intensive and frequent interaction among people and the exercise of power, rather than being about actors being involved with the physical space. The emerging externalities of new parties aiming to alter or refurbish a physical space without obtaining consent from its inhabitants can destabilize these social dispositions, resulting in a disjuncture of conditions or a mismatch between actors' embodied beliefs and fast-changing temporalities.

This kind of 'mismatch', following Bourdieu (1997), is called hysteresis, happening at both the personal and group levels. Bourdieu discovered hysteresis in his investigation into the Algerian peasant community. The economic conditions at that time were being increasingly liberalized over the course of late colonial modernity in the country, which was a shock to the peasant groups, who were notably unable to adapt to economic restructure (Bourdieu, 1979). Disruptions occurred among peasant society, sparking huge riots, protests and ongoing contentious struggles. For the peasants with insufficient capital to move successfully into the new economic habitus, an introduction to a more capitalist economy was an unprecedented disruption to their everyday life (Bourdieu, 1966). Bourdieu recognized that the collision between permeating structures of economic and social dispositions had raised the level of socio-emotional strain, leading to hysteresis (Bourdieu, 2000). He argued that hysteresis is a clash between social dispositions in an existing society with challenging opportunities, and that there is 'a structural lag between opportunities and the disposition to grasp them, which is the cause of missed opportunities' (Bourdieu, 1977: 83). There is a collective mentality in which individuals must cope with witnessing a gap in the form of disparities between present conditions and those in the past. Bourdieu illustrates such a condition by describing a group of peasants in Algeria who suddenly behaved like warriors, ready to fight. This vignette elucidates that the actual social structures that emerge are 'the ways in which habitus may outline the conditions of its genesis and come out with the demands of present conditions' (Bourdieu, 1997: 159).

In this context, we cannot claim that the society or individuals are merely anti-change. More than that, they are actually beset by inertia, or the structure of the cognitive space

that is not ready for the rapid changes. Such inertia may also transform into a blocking system, preventing them from adapting due to their disposition and the past experiences that have shaped their long-sustained collective behavior and spaces. Investment in taste and belief integral to past experiences persists in the midst of fast-changing times and places. In line with the perspective of temporalities, the suffering and uncertainties people sense also add to the effect of hysteresis, namely the separation from broader social groups: 'people's experiences often result in hysteresis effects and a split between habitus and the members' (Barlösius, 2014: 39). Supporting Bourdieu's argument on hysteresis, Barlösius translates individual causes of crises into the categories of praxis-cognitions and meaning-making inability to process and evaluate historical, but also 'individual crises, according to previously formed categories of perception, appreciation and comprehension that are linked to one's social origins' (Barlösius, 2014: 37). The temporalities determine the severity of hysteresis and its effects. The severity also depends on the type of externalities, stimuli, events, incidents and individual resources: therefore, reactive actions such as post-hysteresis can manifest in asynchronous and synchronous forms. The question then becomes, how will these two actions be formulated and what are the terms and situations that condition their realization?

'Synchronized actions' (Nowak et al., 2020: 88) manifest in constructive ways, involving a set of types of capital to enable their implementation. The impacts or outcomes produced in this reaction are transformative and non-violent. Hysteresis, in this process, is realized by individuals as benign precedents of politico-social shifts in which, even though they go against existing dispositions, changes are responded to through an 'amicable agreement'. Bourdieu (2000) asserted that if the disposition changes in a different direction from the existing social conditions, but the actors negotiate attitudes and the changed proposals are approved by broader social norms among the social groups, then the outcome of the transformation will lead to its having a constructive impact. Conversely, asynchronous action may permeate when the emerging externalities restructure the dispositions and communities are continuously very resistant to it or reject it. For Bourdieu (1990), such asynchronous action exposes individuals or groups to inertia: 'due to this inertia in the dispositions, groups tend to persist in their ways' (p. 62). Other scholars have supported the notion of this phenomenon by suggesting that previous dispositions in which the individuals have been occupied and to which they have been adjusted for a long time will cause 'contentious resistance' (Guichaoua, 2012; Hardy, 2008; Swartz, 1997). Contentious resistance is found in many social movement studies and may take the form of activism, but generally, scholars refer to activism as acts involving infrastructure destruction, riots (Hung, 2013; Philipps, 2016; Snow et al., 2007; Thörn et al., 2016); arson (Barnhardt, 2014; Loadenthal, 2013) and rebellion (Andreas, 2007; Goodwin, 1997), which in most cases may take many years to normalize.

## *Hysteresis in environmental movements*

In the context of environmental protests, hysteresis stems from the disparity between activists' pro-environmental values and the actual conditions or objective environment around them. Hysteresis stimulates activists' motivations to establish social protest, enabling them to recognize opposing values in their new position (Ivanou and Flores, 2018;

Zysiak, 2019). This can be observed in environmental protests where activists struggle to maintain environmental sustainability.

Hysteresis is not widely used as a frame of research; however, the nuances of its implementation have been examined in several studies. One study on youth environmental consciousness (Nilan, 2017) employs hysteresis to a great extent to elaborate on Indonesian activists' struggles in responding and reacting to the proliferation of garbage in their university premises and surroundings. During their field investigation in Depok, South Jakarta, Nilan and Wibawanto (2015) discovered that burning rubbish is an everyday phenomenon – and this has prompted young activists' constant hysteresis against it. Moreover, in the city, littering is seen as habitual among residents. It can take years for the government to abolish such a detrimental practice, and the community's concerted efforts to undo such habits have also remained unsuccessful in the city to date (Nilan and Wibawanto, 2015). This kind of situation tends to spark the ecological habitus of environmental activists. By placing the maintained eco-habitus in opposition to people's poor attitudes toward protecting a clean environment, one activist staunchly demonstrated her hysteresis:

> When I get angry with them, I feel like, what are you doing? Recently where I live it's [littering] been happening on a grand scale . . . they have no sense of the impact. They do not feel it is directly related to them. People do not really care about it. When they do something, either they do not know the impact, or have no sense of the impact even though they know about it. (Nilan, 2017: 377)

Embodying eco-habitus within the field of environmental struggle, and thus demonstrating her focus on a clean environment, the activist claimed that concerns about the effects of littering and a duty toward preserving nature have been contradicting the actual situation surrounding her at present. Here, it is clear that the juxtaposition of well-embodied nature-conservation values and the poor condition of waste management has led to great disappointment for them as urban environmental activists. Nilan's fieldwork at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, also presented evidence of the hysteresis situation. The engineering students she interviewed during her fieldwork criticized their fellow students for following the practices of the past and throwing garbage in undesignated bins (Nilan, 2017: 378). This criticism points to an environmental consciousness the students themselves had inculcated. This consciousness stands in contrast to the unchallenged negative social practices inherent in individuals' garbage disposal practices. Here, a crucial point to note is that hysteresis on personal or individual levels occurs as a result of active yet critical engagement with the activists' environmental beliefs, which is in direct conflict with the actual conditions of garbage handling.

Environmental consciousness also occurs in the collective realm, where hysteresis in environmental movements can arise when there is a conflict between organizational values and broader existing, constrained structures. Participation in activism for a cause instills self-empowering values in activists; therefore, they are ready to take environmental action. Alam et al.'s (2019) study on youth's participation in the environmental protest confirms the participation of young activists in Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) facilitates their ability to criticize and prepare for pro-environmental justice at the

national level through the Greenpeace movement (Alam et al., 2019). After completing NVDA training, young activists voiced their protest against forest commercialization in the Bandung metropolitan city of Indonesia. NVDA, as a pre-arena of struggle, taught them how to deal with journalists, security forces and authorities in terms of protests and maintain their ecological lifestyle, such as through the conservation of land and preservation of tree species in cities (Alam et al., 2019). Forest commercialization is a focal point of contention in terms of well-managed environments and conservation values for the activists. The commercialization of forests, they collectively claim, clearly violates the 'green' philosophy and also completely disregards the principles of environmental conservation (Alam and Nilan, 2018). At this point, hysteresis resurfaces due to the disparity between the environmental principles that activists maintain and the contradictory government initiative of forest commercialization. This collective hysteresis, as such, is a vital basis for environmental organizations to fight those who harm the environment (see also Nilan, 2020). Urban movements, in the form of direct protests, vernacular musical concerts and environmental injustice forums, reflect the grassroots collective. However, the war against urban injustice will not come into effect if there is no underlying hysteresis at both the individual and the collective levels (see Crawford and McKee, 2018). In Indonesia, for instance, a groundwater accessibility crisis was exacerbated by the construction of a hotel. This ignited collective anger among environmental activists and the general public (Suharko, 2020). As for all social circles of networks (e.g., musicians, scientists and like-minded community members), Suharko (2020) asserts that activists consolidated the facts and findings that had caused the water availability issue in urban housing. At that stage, environmental knowledge was the basis for cognitive praxis (or the practice of activism based on the rationality of facts), which created communal hysteresis, whereby the knowledge available caused activists to be more critical towards the government and the private sector. As in Nilan's (2017) emphasis on engaging Pierre Bourdieu's idea of hysteresis, the rational gap coexists 'between a new situation associated with field change and agents whose habitus leaves them unable or unwilling to recognize the value of a new position' (p. 376).

As critically elucidated above, hysteresis can manifest in the geo-local politics of everyday environmental problems in developing countries. The hysteresis itself revolves around the processual responses of actors who embody robust pro-environmental consciousness. In the same vein, hysteresis-influenced reactions cannot be necessarily referred to as negative compulsions as they are most often discussed in psychology. Instead, in the setting of the sociology of environmental movements, hysteresis is a productive disjuncture in the sense that it profoundly situates itself in the grassroots arena to call for the immediate institutionalization of pro-environment initiatives. As explored in the present article, initiators of environmental organization movements, through hysteresis, have pressured the government and relevant stakeholders to abolish the forest commercialization plan and restore forest ecosystem support in cities.

In this section, I have reviewed the concept of hysteresis, its operational definitions, and the probable actions that individuals will undertake in the aftermath of experiencing hysteresis. This research, involving activists who are co-founders of urban forest environmental movements, will now examine whether hysteresis temporarily directs them to build synchronous or asynchronous actions as innovative reactions to forest privatization.

## Methodology

This study was part of a broader one aiming to investigate how young activists aged 18–25 are involved in the movement to save Babakan Siliwangi urban forests in Bandung, Indonesia between November 2014 and May 2015. Overall, the author conducted 81 interviews with 27 co-founders and members of the environmental campaign Backsilmove. To recruit all the respondents, the leaders provided the author the contact number of the respondents and their name on Facebook. The author's interest lies in previous environmental movement studies which examine the way movement organization leaders and/or founders establish a stronger driving force to initiate and mobilize a protest (Arnold et al., 2009; Henry, 2006; Wu, 2013; Xie, 2011). So, the key interests of the present study are how co-founders feel the pressure of the reality of the urban forest privatization plan and how they subsequently manifest their fears and emotional resistance through the environmental movement. Therefore, this study focuses its unit analysis only on individuals (Staggenborg, 2015), namely on the five co-founders. By using qualitative inquiry, the author can explore the perspectives and subjectivity (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005; Stage and Manning, 2003) of the co-founder/activists in more depth. With this purposive sampling (Merriam, 1998), the author was able to build a rapport with activists so that they were willing to share more detailed stories. As this research explores individual beliefs, and seeks depth in the respondents' stories or narratives, it was crucial for the author to build rapport with the activists. With this achieved, the author easily arranged meetings with the respondents, who were the co-founders of the Forest Movement Organization (MFO). A couple of meetings were held with each of them before conducting the in-depth interviews to establish interpersonal trust with the activists. To ensure transparency during data collection, the author informed the activists of the goals and the agenda of the fieldwork activities.

As elaborated above, hysteresis emerges as an inner conflict in given conditions. This inner opposition comes to the surface as part of the subjectivity of the individual who opposes the objective conditions around them. To explore the hysteresic moments and actions that determined the establishment of MFO, the present study employed Significant Life Experiences (SLE) as a methodology (Chawla, 1998). In adopting this method, Chawla (1998: 17) makes the following recommendations for conducting in-depth interviews: (1) emphasizing responsible environmental action rather than merely levels of concern and activism; (2) making use of consistent questions, categories of analysis, and criterion measures across studies – integrating research on autobiographical memory; (3) adding new research approaches (naturalistic experiments, observation, reactions to environmental stories and dilemmas, longitudinal designs); (4) looking for cultural differences; (5) noticing individual differences. In the present study, the SLE is undertaken by asking respondents to relate life experiences and subjectivities that are considered transformative and have had the strongest influence in building their activism. Through this approach, the MFO activists were asked to talk in detail about their thoughts and fears when they heard the news that Babakan Siliwangi Forest was to be privatized and turned into a complex of restaurants and hotels by a local private company and the government of Bandung between 2007 and 2013. In addition, they were also asked to describe in detail the various life experiences that made these fears arise, and their

relevant actions as activists to defeat the planned privatization. All of the respondents are university-educated, aged 22–30 years old, and knowledgeable about the history of environmental problems in Bandung cities. In their everyday life, they use the Babakan Siliwangi urban forest for peer socialization and as a laboratory to learn and explore indigenous plants.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the five activists, who are the co-founders of the movement organization, aged between 25 and 30. The interviews lasted one to two hours for each activist, taking place in a cafe selected by them. The respondents' choice of a cafe as a meeting place reveals the new style of consumption of educated middle-class Indonesians. Unlike the reform activists of the New Order Regime under President Suharto, which occupied the premises of the university campus as an arena of struggle (Honna, 1999), today's millennial middle-class meet up in a trendy coffee shop because it represents their modernity (Hendriyani and Chan, 2018). Before the interviews, as part of ethical considerations, the author was obligated to seek activists' consent to use their names and locations. They agreed to this, consented to have their voices recorded and agreed that the results of the study might be published. The participants' narratives were then transcribed, coded, and read through to conduct a thematic analysis. The author employed NVivo qualitative software to identify the emergent themes.

## Findings

The activists' accounts reveal that hysteresis encourages activists to battle for urban forests against privatization due to the discrepancy between their long-held and embodied socio-cultural attachments to the forest and the current environmental problems the forest is facing. The diversity of narratives and subjectivities in the following accounts reflect disappointment, longing, a feeling of missing out on nature, and collective conviction. In other words, the activists were experiencing temporal and spatial anxiety.

### *Hysteresis as moments of reminiscing emotional bonding*

As they revealed in the following narratives, their spatial anxiety arose not immediately, but after a long duration of engagement with the space they had occupied for everyday socializing and informal activities, including regular walks in the forest, rendezvous, resting, convivial engagement with other groups and various other social interactions within the space.

For instance, the hysteresic moment for Connie happened because she considered the urban forest to be a second room, which would carry her emotional bonding: 'The location was not only a playground and hangout for us [young people], but there were many large trees that I could hug, as I was exhausted after doing all-day activities at the university.' As an activist, here she demonstrates the practice of 'deep ecology' (Næss and Jickling, 2000: 48), where her actions reflect the unification of humans and nature. Furthermore, the emotional releases offered in the forest strengthened her bond with nature, as she said: 'When I'm tired, I stay in the forest. It gives me relief very quickly. My soul can escape the burdens of everyday life.' The urban forest, as an emotional space for this activist, invokes an unbridled unity of nature and humanity. She animates

a 'spell of the sensuous' (Abram, 1996: 131), which is a transcendental notion to reveal the existence of living biodiversity – in this case the trees – as if embodied in a human body. At this level, the actor positions herself as equal to nature.

In contrast, for Warren, the sense of attachment with the forest is embedded within him owing to his long years of social interaction with other actors from other social groups. Warren explained how his relationships with local artists who inhabit the forest reinforce his convictions:

> In this forest, there is an art studio and a painting workshop. The artists working over there are just like friends and second parents to me. Once a week, I hang out there and chat casually with them and listen to their complaints – for example, why their paintings now [December 2014] rarely sell. Shortly after hearing that this forest was going to be claimed by the Bandung government in alliance with a private company, I became so furious. Then I assembled friends from Greenpeace Bandung to plan the best social movement to protest against it.

Warren feels a deep sympathy for this forest because of his convivial interactions with the artists. The close bonding with them arises when everyday engagement is manifested in emotional exchanges with the artists. Such important connections were the foundation of his idea to gather like-minded friends from Greenpeace Bandung to establish the movement. Warren is also aware of the history of the forest as a meaningful and effective way for young people to learn about the city's past:

> Young people like to visit there to interact with artists. They learn something new related to the development of Bandung painting since the 1980s. You can imagine, if the art workshop and the artists were kicked out by the government, young people would lose the only space for learning about Bandung in the past. Everywhere, what business pursues is money and money. They only know money and luxury. For them, art, like paintings, is nothing. But a painting is an extension of human breath, you know. It is not alive but millions of memories are contained in there. Therefore, we must defend [the forest] until it is returned to the Bandung government

As a native of Bandung, Warren's narrative persistently advocates for the existing cultural values of art workshops as an integral experiential learning space for young people in recounting the history of Bandung. As a lived space that is sustained through everyday engagements and convivial casual exchanges with the artists, the urban forest has imbued this activist with a robust sense of moral responsibility to save it. His hysteresic reaction was one of constructive anger, which provoked him to instigate a social movement.

Other activists, such as Rudolf, discuss their actor-to-actor subjectivities:

> In this urban forest, I regularly hang out with friends at that bamboo hut coffee shop [he pointed to the location during the interview]. Over there, we always have a cup of coffee whilst finishing our [university] assignments. We play games on our laptops. The cafe owner is like a second mother to me. She often gives me advice: 'Hey, don't forget to take a good rest after studying hard. Don't get too tired.' When I heard there would be a hotel constructed right there, I cried. This heart takes a lot of pain!

The hysteresic reaction manifested in deep sorrow occurs because of the emotional ties between the activist and intermediary actor (the coffee shop owner), which play a

significant role in setting out a sense of belonging for the young people, through the cafe being a space for personal expression. Within it, the intermediary actors in the urban space play social roles and create new roles and rules in their everyday interactions. This, however, depends greatly on the strength of the existing power relations. In this situation, the cafe owner is a vendor, but more than that, she implicitly consolidates her role as an emotional catalyst for the said activist's identity. 'Egalitarian positioning' (Jaffe and Berger, 1994: 34) was developed between Rudolf and her through their frequent engagement. She serves the coffee to him and imbues the encounter with messages of wisdom about life; this is something that is rarely experienced in the age of late modernity. This interaction also points to an alternative social script in which the activists are advised to disassociate themselves for a while from the frenetic modernity of the urban public space – in late modernity, young people are under pressure to pursue financial advantage through higher education. Besides boosting cultural and emotional engagements with the forest, the coffee shop owner's service and conversation points to affective engagement, which is capable of reinvigorating individuals' sense of engagement with the living areas they inhabit. Further, the social-cultural attachment to physical space is not only created by individuals using the infrastructures for the purposes of their social activities. In a broader sense, the intermediary actors, as in this activist's narrative, contribute to and co-create the vibrancy of the space itself.

## *Hysteresis as memorable geographical attachment to the forest*

Growing up and being raised in a place embodies geographical attachment to that place. One of the activists, Poppy, said:

> A feeling of loss arose when I heard that there was a plan to shut the forest. It brought me to tears. This forest is the treasure of the city of Bandung and belonged to the residents of Bandung. If this forest had been lost, I would have lost half my life. And, if they really want to build a hotel and restaurant, I will definitely stand against it in the front row [in the social movement].

Her deep emotional engagement with this forest radicalized her into becoming a front-line activist who would staunchly defend the urban forest. When she expressed the deep inner fear she felt when she heard about the enclosure of the urban forest, saying she felt she would have lost half her life as an immediate reaction to the news, this is more than just a metaphor. It reflects the 'affectionate *hysteresis*' of the activist, owing to the overwhelming feeling of near-hopelessness as a reaction to the loss of her valued life space.

For activists from outside Bandung, the city is a second home, as Rudolf asserts:

> This city is like my second home. I grew up in Kendari until I graduated upper secondary school. After that, I came to Bandung to study computer science in Bandung. Having been here for six years, I feel Bandung is like my home. Forming friendships with people from Bandung made my life like an actual Bandung resident's. Even though my Sundanese language is far from fluent, my best friend always speaks to me in Sundanese. This is a privilege for me, as they already regard me like an actual Sundanese. It makes me happy because they have accepted me.

An intact sense of 'homeplace' (Mowl, 2000: 190) is clearly manifested in Rudolf's experience of dealing with cultural diversity in Bandung and how his everyday subjectivity of being culturally accepted and enculturated awakened a sense of belonging to the urban forest. Hysteresic attitudes to the privatization of the urban forest in such subjectivity lie in the cultural process of becoming. Becoming, as this activist experienced it, manifested in a personal awareness of being a non-native Bandung resident yet also having the identity of being 'a local'. This is constructed through convivial engagement in peer-to-peer egalitarian relationships.

## Synthesis: Hysteresis as driving force and conscious identity

The narratives from the activists above demonstrate that the urban forest has invigorated the activists' attachment identity through the process of critiquing the impact of urban forest privatization, and has been exercised and progressively used in the everyday lives of the activists. These notions critically reinforce the argument that the manifestation of the urban forest's socially engaging location is multifaceted. This may depend on the life-trajectories and agencies of the actors themselves. The strong moral, mental, cultural and social ties to lived spaces create the effects of hysteresis, in the form of anger, non-acceptance, fears, anxieties, contentions, emotional crises, and other forms of emotive actions (Barrett, 2018; Cant, 2018; Courtney, 2017; Sacharin et al., 2012). As stated in the above analysis, the diversity of activists' subjective experiences implies that each individual has agentic ways of exercising their cultural and emotional turmoil in response to the privatization of the green public spaces they have enlivened and embraced for years.

For Connie, 'transcendental consciousness' (Bruneau, 2012: 60) is ingrained in her life. The urban forest is not only embraced as a living physical space, but in a deeper and more subtle insight, her union with nature revolutionizes her emotions. She is a young woman in late modernity, in which every day is filled with various economic and social ambitions. Against this, the urban forest has been reimagined as a place for assembling collective activism. At the same time, when the urban forest presents real benefits for her reflection and relaxation, there is a new element that manifests itself, namely immersion in nature; this is relatively rare for the urban millennial generation in Indonesia. The urban forest is where Connie regains her mental energy. Her act of hugging trees in the urban forest is an example of how she 'befriended' the forest to overcome the burdens of her personal life. The plan to commercialize the urban forest threatened it and consequently, her hysteretic response points to suffering she envisions to be probable in the future.

Meanwhile, in Warren's case, his sense of loving the forest was inscribed through convivial involvement with specific social groups, which strengthened his emphatic embodiment of the history of Bandung as a whole. As a regular visitor to the art workshop, he formed a sense of belonging to the art community in the urban forest through conversations with the artists. His knowledge of and experience with the artists apparently deepened his love for the urban forest. His subjective experiences with those artists resonated an 'ethic of place' (Smith, 2001: 13). In this notion, his subjective experiences may be discerned – that loving nature is not only limited to embracing and preserving

biodiversity (animals, plants, and the like), but also it is biodiversity's voices that are represented and produced by the urban forest citizen, and the socio-cultural performativity of these actors. The anger and non-acceptance, as a form of hysteretic response to the potential loss of the urban forest and the breakup of the strong socio-cultural ties between nature and its residents, show that Warren is experiencing 'positional suffering' (Atkinson, 2013: 13), a situation in which a person implicitly reveals his/her heated opposition to the damage that is being done to the place they have inhabited for a long period of time.

'Affective consciousness' (Honderich, 2003: 10) came through in Poppy's experience. Her narrative recounts her desire to sacrifice herself as a 'persistent activist' (Downton and Wehr, 1998). Affective consciousness, as Poppy expressed it above, refers to a sense of ownership of material objects outside of assets such as water, air, and other natural elements, nurtured by a sense of embodiment of the individual towards the object. The severe ecosystem destruction has the potential to shake this emotional bond, and this is evinced in her experiences. In the same vein, there is a discrepancy between what she believes in and the politics of urban forest commercialization – or a 'dialectic disjuncture' (Wardle, 2002: 495). The plan to sacrifice herself as an activist is a symmetric temporal rationality as an action to prevent the sense of loss.

Rudolf presented interpersonal relationships with the coffee shop owner as a precursor for his bonding to this urban forest. He positioned the coffee shop as a sub-core of the 'lived space', providing a site for relaxation in the middle of the hustle and bustle of pursuing his studies in Bandung. The coffee shop-based interactions resonated with a newfound 'organic integration' (Müller, 1994: 74) in the midst of the dearth of unique organic social systems in the urban society. Modernity has radically transformed society from organic to mechanistic. In the organic system, people may share their feelings as integral parts of their everyday lives, but the rapid growth of neoliberalism and a higher education system that endorses capitalism has excluded people from the relationship with nature to which they belong. Rudolf's subjectivity represents this phenomenon. His reaction to the loss of the urban forest is ultimately due to the fear of being disenfranchised from his budding friendships and the long-engendered intercultural involvement of actors who are from different backgrounds. Rudolf's hysteresis is in reference to trans-cultural engagement in his experience as a non-native Bandung resident. His immersion with local friends informs his strong sense of being accepted and has added to his emotional connection with the urban forest.

## Conclusions

This article offers new insights into the process of Indonesian young people becoming environmental activists. Their past experiences in sustaining active engagements with the ecosystem, and their childhood activities in nature are developmental trajectories that strengthen their internal impulse to prevent urban forest privatization. Their narratives allude to the fact that there is a disjuncture between the past and the present conditions they experience. This circumstance is what Bourdieu refers to as hysteresis. In a Bourdieusian lens, they suffer hysteresis due to miseries (Bourdieu, 1979: 19). This phenomenon persists when the social dispositions in the form of past experiences are so close to them and ultimately collide with the present unexpected situation (Bourdieu,

1977). In the case of these young people, it is exemplified in the plan to destroy the ecosystem carried out by corporations. Furthermore, in Bourdieu's perspective, these environmental activists thrive to save the urban forest from a private company's 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1997: 23) that threatens their 'green' public space. For them, we learn that everyday subjectivities provide logic for establishing and leading the environmental struggle.

In conclusion, the informants' accounts here illustrate how the synthesis of young people's self-immersions with past experiences in nature, actively participating in the natural conservation movement, and socializing with artists who live in urban forests may be establishing a critical ecological collective that seeks to create a long-term sustainable relationship between humans and nature. The present study explicates that this contemporary modern time is a crucial moment to recognize and elevate the potential power of young people in creating new environmental movements. Through this study, future research on youth-led environmental activism in developing countries needs to be conducted by engaging the power of discourse behind their motivation and social skills.

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## ORCID iD

Meredian Alam https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7585-7568

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## Author biography

Meredian Alam is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He was formerly involved in the Australian Research Council Discovery Project 'Fostering pro-environment consciousness and practice: environmentalism, environmentality and environmental education in Indonesia' from 2014 to 2019.

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