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The Neglected Effects of Gender-based Violence towards Jakarta's Urban Walkability

Cities and Urban Development



Foreword and Acknowledgements

2020 was a year like no other as the pandemic changed many aspects of our lives. In a sense, that made early 2021 an ideal time to ask the question: how would you address some of the biggest challenges in Asia in the coming decade? In January 2021, the Asia Business Council joined hands with Nikkei Asia and the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford to launch the Asia's Challenge 2030 Global Essay Competition, open to students aged 18-22 anywhere in the world.

Given the many obstacles facing young people pursuing their studies during a global pandemic, we did not know how many essays we would receive. Yet we were impressed by thoughtful submissions from universities across Asia and as far afield as California and London. We pored over essays on topics ranging from artificial intelligence and aquaculture to smart cities and virus sequencing and learned a lot in the process.

The essays reflect a generation that is asking hard questions about the challenges facing Asian societies and optimistic about the prospects for creating a better world through new modes of doing business and innovative approaches to policymaking.

Young people from Asia are increasingly globally aware. They want policymakers to adopt international best practices in public health and environmental protection, especially in areas like sustainable finance and mental health awareness. But they reject the uncritical adoption of Western models, from urban design to economic development. Many call for a celebration of their unique national and regional identities, whether through locally inspired architectural designs or the increased representation of indigenous perspectives.

Participants in the Economy, Trade, and Finance category want to improve existing economic models so that a balance is struck between economic growth and a fairer, more sustainable, and more stable world.

In the Public Health and the Natural Environment category, respondents called for holistic approaches to health. Concerns about mental wellness reflect the pressures brought about by increasingly competitive academic and professional environments, while essays about communications and interpersonal relationships demonstrate the desire for a more intentional focus on modeling healthy relationships. Still other submissions addressed the existential crisis posed by climate change and the complicated web of interrelated challenges, from plastic waste to fossil fuel use. Proposed solutions range from changes in consumer behavior to an entirely new model of development.

In the Cities and Urban Development category, the essays we received reflected a desire for smarter, more walkable, climate resilient cities, and urban environments that reflect their unique local character. Whether as consumers, as employees, or as entrepreneurs themselves, this younger generation will demand that businesses and governments adopt sustainable practices and modes of operation that benefit their communities.

This global essay competition would not have been possible without the support of the former and current Chairmen of the Asia Business Council, Lim Boon Heng of Temasek and Daniel Tsai of Fubon Group. We are also indebted to Vice-chairman Tak Niinami of Suntory Group and Council Trustee Nazir Razak of Ikhlas Capital, who made key introductions to Nikkei Asia and the Blavatnik School.

Special thanks must also go to Shigasaburo Okumura and Daisuke Akazawa, Editor-in-chief and Chief Producer of Nikkei Asia, and Ngaire Woods and Luna Sidhu, Founding Dean and Director of Development of the Blavatnik School, for making this competition possible.

We would also like to thank our judges who generously volunteered their time and energy.

Economy, Trade, and Finance category:

- Nobuyoshi John Ehara, Co-founder, Unison Capital
- Emily Jones, Associate Professor, Blavatnik School of Government
- Katsuhiko Hara, Chief Desk Editor, Nikkei Asia

Public Health and the Natural Environment category:

- George Tahija, Principal, PT Austindo Nusantara Jaya Tbk
- Maya Tudor, Associate Professor, Blavatnik School of Government
- Futoshi Kuwamoto, Business & Market News Editor, Nikkei Asia

Cities and Urban Development category:

- Zhang Xin, Founder and CEO, SOHO China
- Sir Paul Collier, Professor, Blavatnik School of Government
- Shin Nakayama, News Editor, Nikkei Asia

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Ashleigh Au of SOHO China Scholarships and Ruth Collier of Oxford University in publicizing the contest.

There is no doubt that this generation will be profoundly shaped by the experience of living through the world-altering events of 2020 during their formative years. But most essays took the longer view instead of focusing solely on the pandemic, looking ahead to the challenges of the next decade and beyond. Policymakers and business leaders around the world should take note of their ideas as this young generation comes of age and begins to lead local and international development in multiple fields.



Pauline Yeung
Program Director
Asia Business Council



Colleen Howe
Program Associate
Asia Business Council

Award-winning Essays

Economy, Trade, and Finance

Krati Gupta (India)

Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law

The Three Pillar Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Responsible Financing:
Addressing Asia's Challenges in the "Decade of Action"

Chloris Jiaqi Kang (Singapore)

National University of Singapore

Private Money for the Public Good –
Unlocking Private Equity for Asia's Sustainable Finance

Henry Michael Mayhew (United Kingdom)

University College London

Asian Central Bank Mandates: What about Equality?

Public Health and the Natural Environment

Hanun Thalia (Indonesia)

Universitas Indonesia

KomU as a Strategy to Improve Family Communications

Yao Yuanchen (China)

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Meeting the Challenge of Plastic Waste Recycling in Japan and China

Suzu Yokoyama (Japan)

Tsuda University

Tackling Unrealistic Beauty Standards in Japan and South Korea

Cities and Urban Development

Matthew Flores (Philippines)

Ateneo de Manila University

Indigenous Cities: Reframing Modernity and Our Cities

Rya Jetha (United States)

Pomona College

Reinventing the Asian Megacity: Absorbing Climate Change with Sponge Design

Ranita Ma Tsz Yu (Hong Kong SAR)

Chinese University of Hong Kong

From a City-scale Beauty Pageant to a Continent-wide Diversified Gallery

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Introduction

The bustling capital city of Jakarta, Indonesia is known for its rapidly developing urban mobility with the recent launch of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), and many more public transportation mega-projects under construction. While adding new ways of commuting, there is one simple mode of transportation that can holistically strengthen a city and its citizens: walking. Jeff Speck, a prolific American city designer, advocates the concept of walkability as a step towards solving the environmental, health, and economic challenges of a city. The benchmarks established by Speck are reflected in "Jakarta Walkable 2022," a vision initiated by the non-profit organization Institute for Transportation Development Policy (ITDP) and the Regional Road Offices of Jakarta, a government agency. This initiative is a response to the unfavorable circumstances pedestrians continue to face, including but not limited to poor sidewalk conditions, the improper usage of sidewalks, and a lack of road safety. These conditions have resulted in citizens walking an average of just 3,513 steps a day and have placed the city at a walkability rating of 48, which is considered not walkable.

With the vast amount of resources and data available to guide action towards improving walking conditions, a void of local research remains when it comes to one of the biggest overlooked factors contributing to the pressing state of urban walkability--sexual violence against women. The Coalition for Safe Public Spaces (2019) collected data from more than 62,000 participants and found that 3 out of 5 women have been sexually violated in a public space. 28.2% of these incidents happened while walking on public streets. When women make up 49% of the population but are 13 times more likely to experience sexual harassment and violence in public spaces, this gender-based factor limits the potential for greater city-wide walkability. This essay presents achievable solutions to boost Jakarta's walkability by mitigating the vulnerability of women pedestrians.

Present Urgency for Walking

The General Theory of Walkability as pioneered by Jeff Speck introduces four conditions for a city to be considered walkable. Firstly, useful, which indicates that most aspects of daily life are close at hand and well-organized. Secondly, safe, which means that streets should be designed not only to be safe but also feel safe for pedestrians. Thirdly, comfortable, which envisions urban streets as "outdoor living rooms" where buildings and landscapes attract pedestrians. Lastly, interesting, which means sidewalks are lined by unique buildings with friendly faces to incorporate a sense of humanity into the urban design. While Speck organizes a rather abstract theoretical framework, the Victoria Transport Policy Institute states four concrete indicators of walkability including the quality of pedestrian paths, connectivity of

pedestrian paths, safety, and lastly, density in conjunction with accessibility. Based on these two foundations of walkability, the present reality of walking in Jakarta still clearly does not satisfy the conditions and indicators of a walkable city.

According to the latest official statistics, only 560 of 6,956 kilometers of roads in Jakarta are equipped with sidewalks, resulting in merely 8% of Jakarta being walkable (excluding bridges). This disproportion affects pedestrian safety. Unfortunately, one pedestrian dies every 6 days in Jakarta. Regarding physical health, with 3,513 steps a day being the national average, obesity impacts more than 40% of Jakarta citizens. However, walking might not be the healthiest option with air pollution levels reaching as high as 125 micron grams per cubic meter, which far surpasses the safe limit of 10-25 micron grams. These are macro-level disadvantages that affect the walkability of Jakarta. In addition, from a pedestrian standpoint, there are micro-level issues that directly affect walking in Jakarta. City natives Tanan, Wibowo, and Tinumbia measured walkability in selected urban areas very similar to the conditions of Jakarta. The researchers found that pedestrians mostly demanded sidewalk repairs, increased cleanliness, wider sidewalks, and supporting facilities, namely trees and benches, for comfort.

These macro- and micro- level factors are all considered in the formation of the “Jakarta Walkable 2022” plan that aims to realize the four characteristics of a walkable city. The first characteristic is completeness, which involves the effective construction of walkways and crossings, access to transit, complementary uses, access to food, and access to public spaces. The second characteristic is safety, which involves speed, lighting, bollards, driveway density, pedestrian refuges, sidewalk extensions, and curbs. The third characteristic is comfort, which includes the structuring of shades, shelters, active frontage, permeable frontage, seating, plants, waste bins, and landscaping. Lastly, the fourth characteristic is humane design, which involves tactile features, wayfinding, signage, and ramps. Although gender was briefly, and only descriptively, mentioned in discussing the fourth characteristic, this list of reformative measures still fails to recognize the prevalence of violence against women in Jakarta that trickles down to affect walkability. Comprehensive data from a gender lens can be significantly supplemented to bring about change and advance equality.

Addressing Violence

To address gender-based violence as a threat to urban walkability is to question whether the current and future state of walkability can truly benefit women. Even if the visionary goals of “Jakarta Walkable 2022” are fulfilled, can women enjoy the new facilities when gender-based violence is still publicly rampant? In the process of moving from one city location to another, women encounter barriers and constraints that result in routine, almost automatic, personal adjustments to ensure our safety. In Jakarta, the norm for women has always been to take a different route, get home earlier, or splurge on a taxi to meet our security needs. It should never be forgotten that security is a basic and fundamental human right. Thus, in the case of women pedestrians in Jakarta, there is a massive lack of protective and preventive measures in place that would allow for fearless walking. The Coalition for Safe Public Spaces recorded the types of sexual violence often experienced by women in public spaces,

such as catcalling, comments on women's bodies, touching, sexist comments, aggressive disruption of personal space, groping, vulgar gestures, stalking, exhibition of genitals, and more. Loukaitou-Sideris conducted a qualitative study that found a consistent fearful attitude in women toward public spaces. The study proves that fear of sexual violence in public spaces leads to behavioural adjustments made by women that eventually affect their urban mobility. Women's reluctance to walk affects the effectiveness of city walkability initiatives. Additionally, the research done by Stanford that found Indonesians walk an average 3,513 steps per day also stated that the activity inequality is caused by a nationwide gender gap, where women are less active than men.

Solution for Women's Walkability

For Jakarta, the solution has once been proposed by the former Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. This proposal came as no surprise, since the former Governor was known for utilizing innovations for Jakarta's urban infrastructure. The former Governor aimed to implement a digital data system specifically engineered to alleviate sexual violence against women, Safetipin. This advanced social technology works to create safer and more inclusive cities for women by collecting data from three mobile phone applications. The data acquired are in the form of safety audits by users rating the lighting, openness, visibility, people, security, walking path, transport, gender balance, and feeling of a certain area. Safetipin is already available in the Indonesian language, yet since the election of the current governor, the Safetipin proposal has not seen any further progress.

By putting a readily available innovation into action, Safetipin can give us the necessary data to identify which particular areas need to be renovated for the safety of women. Some indicators, such as lighting, openness, and visibility, intersect with the characteristics in the "Jakarta Walkable 2022" vision, but other indicators, namely gender, feeling, and security, can positively diversify the goals of "Jakarta Walkable 2022." Safetipin's safety audits have the advantage of interpreting the social usage and gender diversity of a certain area, which can aid interventions to improve the area's walkability. Safety audits can be further applied to street design, policy making, and ultimately to achieve a walkable city where women are not bound to gender-based limitations.

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