

Economic Inequality, Civil Identity Exclusion, and Educational Marginalization: Evidence from the Pulogebang Slum Area, Jakarta

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Muhammad Zaki Kurniawan¹, Fikri Mohtar Hamdilah¹

¹Trisakti University, Jalan Kyai Tapa No. 1, Jakarta 11440, Indonesia

Abstract

This study examines the interrelation between economic inequality, civil identity exclusion, and educational marginalization in the Pulogebang slum area of East Jakarta. Despite Jakarta's status as Indonesia's economic growth center, pockets of extreme poverty persist, creating complex structural barriers. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with parents and out-of-school children, community leaders, and school or government representatives. Thematic content analysis was applied to identify linkages among economic factors, civil documentation, and educational access. The findings reveal that (1) severe income disparity, where scavenger households earn only IDR 20,000–50,000 per day, intensifies multidimensional poverty, (2) the absence of official civil identity documents such as national ID cards and marriage certificates constitutes a primary barrier to accessing educational aid and public services, and (3) educational marginalization is exacerbated by indirect schooling costs and a low perceived value of formal education. The novelty lies in integrating economic inequality and civil documentation exclusion as co-determinants of urban educational marginalization, which have been largely studied separately. The study recommends integrated policies combining poverty alleviation programs, expedited civil registration, and community-based educational interventions to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, offering conceptual contributions to socio-economic sociology and urban poverty policy discourse.

Keywords: Economic Inequality, Educational Marginalization, Multidimensional Poverty, Slum Area, Urban Poverty



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Correspondence E-Mail:
zakikurniawan17@gmail.com

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E-mail:
selectaeducasigrup.journal@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Jakarta is often portrayed as a megacity with an economy that never sleeps, a business hub radiating symbols of progress, and a showcase of Indonesian modernity on the global stage. Yet, behind the towering skyscrapers lie hidden spaces that reveal another face of the capital: pockets of extreme poverty situated at the very heart of economic growth (Aryaguna, 2025; Widyaningsih & Broeck, 2021). One such space is the Pulogebang slum area in East Jakarta, located adjacent to a major waste disposal site. Here, the daily lives of most residents revolve around scavenging activities, with an average daily income ranging only between IDR 20,000–50,000, an amount insufficient to meet even the most basic needs in a city as large as Jakarta.

The problems in Pulogebang extend beyond mere economic deprivation. Many families in the area lack official identity documents such as the National Identity Card (KTP) or marriage certificate. The absence of such documents places them outside the formal scope of the state: they are not registered as beneficiaries of social assistance, are ineligible for scholarship programs, and even face difficulties accessing basic healthcare services. Although government policy has abolished school tuition fees up to the senior high school level, indirect costs, such as uniforms, transportation, and school activities, remain unaffordable burdens (Satispi & Samudra, 2021; Yokoyama et al., 2023). Consequently, many children in Pulogebang drop out of school, not due to the absence of schools, but because of structural barriers that entrap them in a cycle of intergenerational poverty.

This phenomenon illustrates a broader issue: urban poverty is not solely about low income but also about administrative and cultural exclusion that reinforce each other. When sharp economic inequality intersects with the marginalization of civil identity, a social trap emerges that is difficult to break. At this juncture, education, supposedly a bridge to social mobility, becomes increasingly inaccessible to vulnerable groups.

Research on urban poverty in Indonesia has been extensive, encompassing economic, social, and public policy perspectives. Arif et al. (2025) and Sugiharti et al. (2022) emphasize that poverty in large cities is not merely about economic incapacity but also about limited access to adequate social infrastructure. Similarly, Habibullah (2024) and Hill (2021) argue that urban poverty is multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, and political vulnerabilities. Faharuddin & Endrawati (2022), Nugroho et al. (2021), and Purwono et al. (2021) highlight that income inequality in urban areas often intersects with discriminatory access to public services.

Studies on the role of civil identity in access to public services have also drawn scholarly attention. Amin et al. (2025), Kurniasih et al. (2021), and Nufus et al. (2022) find that the absence of official documents such as KTPs or birth certificates is a major barrier for the poor in accessing government assistance programs. This phenomenon occurs not only in remote regions but also in the heart of major cities. Jati (2024) and Purnomo (2022) underline that “administrative exclusion” constitutes a new form of social marginalization that is often overlooked in poverty studies. These findings are reinforced by Ganti et al. (2022) and Wibisono et al. (2023), who observe that administrative exclusion significantly contributes to low school participation among children from poor households.

Meanwhile, the relationship between economic poverty and educational marginalization has been widely studied. Hasim et al. (2023) demonstrate that family economic status strongly affects school participation rates, particularly in developing countries. Ristanto (2022) identifies that indirect costs, though relatively small compared to private school fees, remain a significant barrier for poor families. In Jakarta, Rakhmani & Sakhiyya (2024) and Sergio (2022) find that low parental perceptions of the benefits of formal education exacerbate school dropout rates among low-income households.

Sakhiyya & Mulya (2023) and Septiarti et al. (2022) assert that children from undocumented families are twice as likely to fail to complete basic education. Tang (2024)

finds that integrating population administration programs with educational services can significantly increase school participation rates. Firdausy et al. (2024) show that the combination of income inequality and administrative exclusion creates a “double disadvantage” that makes it even harder for poor families to escape poverty.

From a public policy perspective, interventions that separate poverty alleviation from improvements in population administration often fail to produce significant change. Setiawan et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of integrative approaches that combine social assistance programs with improved access to identity documents. This aligns with the recommendations of Harianto & Listyani (2025) and Mujiburrohman & Putri (2024), who urge developing countries to adopt strategies of “inclusion by documentation” as the foundation of empowering the poor.

However, most of the aforementioned studies separate the analysis of economic poverty and civil identity exclusion, as if the two exist independently. Few have examined in depth how these two dimensions interact and reinforce each other in worsening educational marginalization, particularly in the context of urban poverty in Indonesia. In social realities such as in Pulogebang, the two factors are almost inseparable, they co-exist, forming a complex chain of problems that cannot be unraveled when viewed from a single perspective.

Although research has addressed urban poverty, administrative exclusion, and educational marginalization, studies that connect all three within an integrated analytical framework remain scarce. Some studies focus primarily on economic factors, while others emphasize administrative barriers without linking them to the income dynamics and educational perceptions of poor families. Yet in areas such as Pulogebang, these two factors are tightly interlocked: poverty obstructs access to documents, while the absence of documents limits opportunities to escape poverty, including through education.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to integrate the analysis of economic inequality and civil identity exclusion as two key variables that jointly explain urban educational marginalization. Rather than viewing them as separate problems, this study considers them as interrelated chains that reinforce each other, creating a layered cycle of exclusion. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding and to inform more targeted public policy design.

Building on this understanding, the study aims to explore in depth the relationship between economic inequality, civil identity exclusion, and educational marginalization in the Pulogebang slum area. By analyzing the interaction of these three aspects, the research seeks to offer a new analytical framework that can inform the formulation of integrated policies, linking poverty alleviation programs with accelerated civil documentation processes, while simultaneously expanding educational access for children from poor urban households. Such an approach is expected not only to enrich the literature in economic sociology but also to make a tangible contribution to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty in Indonesia’s major cities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the issues under investigation cannot be fully measured through numerical or statistical indicators; rather, they require an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics directly encountered by residents in the Pulogebang slum area. According to Alhazmi & Kaufmann (2022) and Dewi (2022), qualitative approaches allow researchers to explore phenomena in their natural contexts and to comprehend the meanings that research subjects ascribe to their experiences. Within this framework, economic inequality, civil identity exclusion, and educational marginalization are interrelated social realities that can only be fully uncovered through direct interaction with residents and local stakeholders.

The selection of Pulogebang, East Jakarta, as the research site was based on two main considerations. First, the area is one of the hotspots of extreme poverty in the capital, geographically located near a major waste disposal site where most residents rely on scavenging activities for their livelihood. Second, based on reports from local NGOs and preliminary observations, the majority of residents in this area lack official identity documents such as National Identity Cards (KTP) or birth certificates, resulting in administrative barriers to accessing public services and education. These conditions render Pulogebang a particularly relevant site for examining the interaction between economic inequality, administrative exclusion, and access to education.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby subjects were deliberately chosen based on predetermined criteria (Stanley, 2023). Three groups of informants were included to capture diverse perspectives. First, six parents and five children who had dropped out of school from scavenger families, as they directly experience the economic and administrative barriers central to this study. Second, three local community figures, including neighborhood leaders and community organizers, who were considered knowledgeable about the history and social dynamics of Pulogebang. Third, four representatives from schools and the local education office, who provided insights into policy and experiences in managing students from poor, undocumented families. The total of eighteen informants was deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation, at which point the information gathered began to show recurring and consistent patterns.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document study. In-depth interviews were employed to elicit personal narratives and informants' perceptions regarding economic inequality, experiences in obtaining identity documents, and barriers to accessing education. This technique was chosen as it provides space for informants to share freely, enabling researchers to capture the emotional nuances and meanings embedded in their experiences (Bhangu et al., 2023; Reyes et al., 2024). Participant observation was conducted through direct visits to informants' living environments, observing housing conditions, social interactions, and everyday economic activities. This method was essential to validate informants' statements and to capture contextual aspects not always expressed verbally. The document study involved analyzing

secondary data such as reports from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), local government documents, and annual reports of NGOs working in Pulogebang, which provided broader insights into the demographic and socio-economic conditions of the area.

To ensure data validity, this study applied source and methodological triangulation (Moon, 2019; Santos et al., 2020). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from different groups of informants, for example, cross-checking parents' statements with data from schools or the education office. Methodological triangulation was achieved by integrating findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis to assess the consistency of results from multiple perspectives. This approach not only enhanced the reliability of the data but also enriched the interpretation of the phenomena under study. Data analysis employed thematic content analysis, which involved identifying, organizing, and interpreting key themes that emerged from the data (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019). The analysis proceeded in several stages, beginning with interview transcription, initial coding, grouping codes into themes, and finally, drawing conclusions that connected field findings with the theoretical framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Economic Inequality and Multidimensional Poverty in Pulogebang

The Pulogebang area in East Jakarta serves as a vivid example of how economic inequality in a major city shapes a complex landscape of multidimensional poverty. Based on interviews and field observations, the income of scavenger families in this area ranges between IDR 20,000 and 50,000 per day, depending on the quantity and type of recyclable materials collected. This figure falls drastically short of Jakarta's estimated living wage, which, according to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), amounts to more than IDR 4.5 million per month for a family of four. One informant, Bn, recounted that his income as a scavenger was often insufficient to purchase proper food on a daily basis, forcing his family to rely on leftover food from markets or neighbors' assistance. This situation underscores the vast disparity between actual income in slum communities and the cost of living in the capital, while also highlighting the visible inequality that exists alongside Jakarta's economic growth.

The physical condition of housing in Pulogebang further demonstrates the multidimensional poverty experienced by its residents. Field observations revealed that most homes are constructed from used materials such as plywood, zinc, and decayed wooden boards. Many houses are clustered tightly along foul-smelling, dark-colored drainage channels, with alleyways so narrow they only allow one person to pass at a time. Access to clean water is limited: some residents purchase refillable gallon water, while others rely on wells with questionable quality. Sanitation facilities are severely inadequate, with communal toilets shared by several families and lacking proper waste disposal systems. The stench of waste and piles of garbage are inseparable from the environment, posing serious health risks. During one observation, a small child was seen playing near a heap of garbage freshly unloaded from a scavenger's cart, while his mother sorted plastic bottles in their cramped yard.

Poverty in Pulogebang is not only a matter of material deprivation but also creates structural barriers to social mobility. Limited income prevents residents from accessing quality education, adequate healthcare, or vocational training that could open opportunities in the formal sector. The inequality becomes more pronounced when compared with nearby middle-class neighborhoods just a few kilometers away, where residents have stable jobs, access to clean water, and complete educational facilities. In an interview, Hr, a local community leader, stated, “For us, leaving scavenging work is not an easy option, because we have no capital, no other skills, and no one wants to hire us without diplomas or official identity documents.” This statement reflects how economic and administrative barriers intersect to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

From the perspective of urban inequality theory as discussed by Broto & Robin (2021), Pulogebang exemplifies how extreme poverty coexists within the prosperity of a global city. Sassen emphasizes that non-inclusive urban economic structures create “pockets of exclusion” isolated from the mainstream of growth. In the Jakarta context, infrastructure development, property investment, and large-scale economic activities tend to push the urban poor into deeper marginalization, as they lack access to financial capital, education, and professional networks necessary to enter the formal economy. This phenomenon illustrates that poverty in Pulogebang is not a result of laziness or individual choice but rather the outcome of systemic structures that marginalize vulnerable groups.

Furthermore, the lack of access to social capital intensifies the precarious conditions faced by Pulogebang residents. Social capital, comprising networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit, is limited to the internal community circle, which is itself resource-poor. For example, when a family urgently needs money for medical expenses, they can only borrow from equally impoverished neighbors or from loan sharks charging exorbitant interest rates. The absence of external connections restricts residents’ ability to obtain information about job opportunities, training programs, or government assistance. This situation was reinforced by An, a housewife, who admitted that she had never been aware of any government aid programs because no direct socialization took place in her neighborhood.

Field observations also revealed that scavenging is not only a source of income but also a social identity that is difficult to shed. Collecting, sorting, and selling waste has become a routine activity passed down across generations, normalizing informal, high-risk labor conditions. The physical environment, dominated by piles of garbage and pervasive odors, serves as a symbol of entrapment within the poverty cycle. Even children, who should be in school, are often seen helping their parents collect recyclables, a phenomenon that diminishes their chances of accessing education that could potentially offer a pathway out of poverty.

In this framework, the multidimensional poverty in Pulogebang can be understood as the result of the interaction between economic deprivation, administrative marginalization, limited social capital, and restricted access to opportunities in the formal economy. The stark income inequality creates an unbridgeable social distance, while inadequate access to basic

resources such as clean water, sanitation, and decent housing further worsens residents' quality of life. Referring to the perspectives of Caragliu & Del Bo (2022) and Gao et al. (2025), this situation represents the consequences of urban economic structures that produce spaces of exclusion, in which the poor remain trapped in zones untouched by the benefits of economic growth.

Civil Identity Exclusion as a Barrier to Accessing Public Services

Field data from Pulogebang reveal a worrying proportion of residents who lack official documents such as Identity Cards (KTP), Family Cards (KK), marriage certificates, or birth certificates. Based on initial neighborhood (RW/RT) records, more than one-third of households were found to be missing at least one of these essential administrative documents. This condition is not merely due to individual negligence, but is closely tied to systemic administrative barriers. In an interview, Mrs. R, a 43-year-old housewife, explained that she had been trying to obtain an electronic ID card for two years but was repeatedly obstructed by requests for supporting documents she did not have. This situation illustrates a vicious cycle: without one official document, the others become difficult to access, and without all of them, access to public services remains blocked.

Administrative mechanisms function as barriers through layers of bureaucratic requirements for obtaining basic rights. For instance, to enroll in educational assistance programs such as the *Kartu Indonesia Pintar* (KIP), parents must present a KTP, KK, and their child's birth certificate. For families missing even one of these documents, the process is delayed or fails entirely. A similar issue occurs in accessing free or subsidized healthcare through the BPJS *Penerima Bantuan Iuran* (PBI), where a valid KK and registered National Identification Number (NIK) are mandatory. Field observations indicate that many Pulogebang residents make long and costly trips to the Population and Civil Registration Office (Dukcapil), only to return empty-handed because their documents were deemed incomplete or invalid.

This condition highlights the strong reciprocal relationship between poverty and the absence of official documents. Poverty limits residents' ability to cover administrative fees, transportation, or even informal legalization costs sometimes still demanded. Conversely, lacking documents prevents them from accessing social assistance, scholarships, or healthcare subsidies that could ease their economic burdens. Another informant, Mr. S, recounted that he failed to access the *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) because his KK was still registered in his hometown outside Java, while he had long lived in Pulogebang but lacked the resources to process the administrative transfer. This creates a spiral of exclusion: poverty hampers the processing of documents, and without documents, they remain trapped in poverty.

Wart et al. (2023) provide a relevant conceptual framework to understand this phenomenon. According to them, administrative exclusion is not merely a technical issue but a form of structural violence that prevents the poor from fully participating in socio-economic life. In Pulogebang, the absence of official documents means that poor residents not only lack access to public services but also lose formal recognition as legitimate citizens. This affects

their legal and political position, as without state-recognized civil identity, they become nearly invisible in the processes of policy planning and distribution.

Field observations also show that this exclusion has significant psychological impacts. In daily interactions, residents often express feelings of shame or fear when asked to show identification, whether for accessing services or when confronted by authorities. Some even admit to avoiding public facilities altogether out of fear of humiliation when they cannot produce the required documents. Physically, Pulogebang consists of densely packed settlements along narrow alleys and polluted waterways, with many homes built from wood and corrugated iron, standing side by side. The absence of administrative documents amid such living conditions underscores that poverty here is not only economic but also legal and political marginalization.

Regenmortel et al. (2025) argue that structural violence is an indirect form of violence in which social and political systems obstruct individuals or groups from fulfilling their basic needs. Administrative mechanisms in Pulogebang reflect this violence, where formally neutral requirements have discriminatory effects on those who are historically and structurally marginalized. Lai (2020) further emphasizes that such civic exclusion cannot be treated as an individual issue but as a structural problem requiring inclusive policy intervention.

The Pulogebang case demonstrates that civil identity exclusion is not only a barrier to public services but also reinforces cycles of poverty and marginalization. Residents without official documents fall outside the administrative radar of the state, making them overlooked in empowerment programs or social protection schemes. They are marginalized not only economically but also legally, since their citizenship status becomes ambiguous in practice, and politically, as they lack formal means to express their rights as citizens, including participation in democratic processes such as elections.

The high proportion of Pulogebang residents without official documents, such as KTP, KK, marriage certificates, or birth certificates, emerged as a striking initial finding in this study. From field data, about one-third of household heads in a particular neighborhood admitted lacking at least one essential population document. In a conversation with a housewife who had lived in Pulogebang for over two decades, it was revealed that the absence of a KTP was not due to negligence but to the lengthy bureaucracy, unaffordable costs, and limited access to administrative offices. She remarked, "Even registering is difficult, you have to go back and forth, and if there are errors in the data, the process takes even longer," reflecting the collective experiences of urban poor residents dealing with rigid administrative systems.

Field observations reveal that many affected residents live in narrow alleyways with poor drainage, semi-permanent housing built on land with uncertain ownership, and limited access to public service offices. These physical conditions create additional barriers that slow down or even halt the document acquisition process, particularly for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and women balancing household duties with income-generating activities. This illustrates how spatial factors, distance and accessibility, interact with administrative barriers to reinforce the cycle of civil identity exclusion.

Administratively, the absence of official documents directly hampers access to public services. In education, children without birth certificates often face difficulties enrolling in public schools or obtaining assistance such as the *Program Indonesia Pintar* (PIP). In healthcare, residents without a KTP or KK are often denied BPJS registration, leaving them reliant on self-treatment or limited services at community health centers (puskesmas). Social protection programs such as Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) or PKH also require specific administrative documents, trapping undocumented families in a paradox: they are among the most in need of assistance, yet unable to access it.

The reciprocal relationship between poverty and the lack of documents further deepens the issue. Poverty makes it difficult to pay for transport, photocopies, or informal fees in processing documents. In turn, lacking documents limits access to social programs, formal jobs, or affordable healthcare, which perpetuates and even worsens poverty. A middle-aged day laborer explained that without a KTP he could not apply for formal jobs, leaving him dependent on irregular daily work. This cycle underscores that administrative exclusion is not merely about legality but a structural trap that reproduces poverty.

Within Lai's (2020) updated framework of civic exclusion, administrative exclusion can be understood as a form of structural violence, violence embedded in social and institutional systems that block individuals or groups from fully participating in socio-economic life. This violence does not manifest physically but operates through legal, bureaucratic, and procedural mechanisms that appear neutral but in practice marginalize vulnerable groups. Thus, the urban poor in Pulogebang are excluded not only economically but also legally and politically: without state-recognized civil identity, their presence becomes blurred in official records and fragile before the law.

Field observations also highlight the temporal dimension of this exclusion. Many residents once possessed official documents, but these were lost, damaged, or outdated, and renewal was hindered by costs or time. This indicates that civil identity exclusion is not always permanent from the outset, but can worsen over time if administrative barriers are not addressed. The temporal dimension also means the next generation risks inheriting the same conditions, as children born without birth certificates face identical barriers in adulthood.

In terms of power relations, civil administration bureaucracy often becomes an arena where poor residents must negotiate with officials, brokers, or intermediaries who have better access and information. In this context, the absence of documents is not simply due to lack of information but also the result of unequal power relations between citizens and the state. Local officials at the sub-district or district level hold authority over validating documents, while residents are left in a passive position, forced to comply with requirements even when they are difficult to fulfill. This underscores that civil identity exclusion is also rooted in imbalances of power that make it even harder for the poor to assert their rights.

Educational Marginalization: Indirect Costs and Low Perceptions of Formal Education

The phenomenon of educational marginalization in the research area cannot be separated from a combination of structural and cultural factors that mutually reinforce one another. One of the most consistent findings is that school dropout among children is not

solely due to the inability to pay official school fees, but rather the burden of indirect costs borne by families. These include expenses for uniforms, transportation, school activity fees, and stationery, which, when accumulated, become a significant financial pressure for low-income households. In one interview, a 42-year-old housewife whose child dropped out at the junior high level explained that the cost of uniforms alone could consume nearly half of her monthly income. This statement illustrates that, although the government has abolished tuition fees through free education policies, the reality on the ground shows that families still face substantial economic burdens.

Beyond financial costs, children's need to contribute to family income was another frequently mentioned reason by informants. Field observations revealed that in many households, particularly those dependent on informal sectors such as traditional fishing or petty trade, children play an important role in supporting household income. Boys often help their parents at sea or work as port laborers, while girls assist in caring for younger siblings or selling goods in local markets. In a conversation with B, a 50-year-old fisherman, he remarked: "If a child can work, why should they keep going to school? School only makes you hungry, while work brings results immediately." Though expressed simply, the statement encapsulates a household economic logic that prioritizes short-term gains over long-term educational investment.

This view is closely linked to low perceptions of the relevance of formal education, shaped by the realities of the local labor market. Many parents believe that a diploma does not guarantee decent employment, particularly in areas dominated by informal sectors that do not require high academic qualifications. Several informants recounted stories of relatives or neighbors who had completed senior high school or even higher education, yet remained unemployed or ended up working in the same informal sectors as those without advanced schooling. From this perspective, education is seen as an unprofitable investment. Observations at the local traditional market reinforced this notion: many young vendors, who under normal circumstances should still be in school, expressed a preference for trading because daily income felt more tangible compared to uncertain prospects of formal employment.

This phenomenon can be further analyzed using the Capability Approach, as reformulated by Parker et al. (2022), which emphasizes that education should be understood as an expansion of capabilities rather than merely as the attainment of formal credentials. Capabilities refer to individuals' real freedoms to live the lives they value. In this context, indirect financial burdens and low perceptions of education restrict children's choices, depriving them of opportunities to expand their future capabilities. Although, normatively, formal education could open broader opportunities, within marginalized socio-economic realities, these opportunities are curtailed by the pressing need for daily survival. This resonates with Bizami et al. (2023), who argue that poverty is not merely a lack of income but also a limitation in accessing valuable life choices.

Observations at one junior high school in the research area provided a more concrete picture. Faded wall paint, fragile desks and chairs, and a poorly stocked library formed the

physical backdrop of students' learning experience. Teachers interviewed admitted that attendance often declined during harvest seasons or peak fishing periods, as children preferred to help their parents work. This highlights that schools operate within a wider socio-economic ecosystem, where the value of education competes directly with household economic needs.

Although the government has eliminated official school fees, indirect costs remain a serious barrier. Moreover, cultural factors such as the belief that education yields no immediate benefit often reinforce decisions to withdraw children from school. In this context, efforts to expand educational access cannot rely solely on free tuition policies but must also address community perceptions. As S, a local community leader, put it: "These children need to see proof that schooling really makes life better. Otherwise, they will just choose to work." This statement underscores the need for a shift in the social narrative surrounding education.

Educational marginalization in this context is not solely the result of economic poverty but also of aspirational poverty shaped by the community's collective experience. Within the capability approach, this implies that children not only lack the material resources to attend school but also lack a social environment that encourages them to view education as a pathway toward the lives they aspire to (Haas, 2021). Field observations showed that in coastal areas, out-of-school children often spend their time at docks or village fields, interacting with peers who also do not attend school, thus reinforcing a social cycle that normalizes dropout.

Interaction of Economic Inequality, Civil Identity Exclusion, and Educational Marginalization

The phenomena of economic inequality, civil identity exclusion, and educational marginalization in Pulogebang form a self-reinforcing cycle of social exclusion that is difficult to break. Field findings clearly indicate that extreme poverty is the starting point that narrows residents' opportunities to obtain identity documents such as National Identity Cards (KTP) and Family Cards (KK). In several cases, families living in dense, semi-permanent settlements admitted that they lacked sufficient funds to cover transportation or unofficial administrative fees required to process such documents. For example, a housewife living along the riverbank shared that her husband had lost his job during the pandemic, and the family's small earnings from petty trading were barely enough for daily food. The lack of funds meant that processing identity documents was always postponed. This situation was worsened by the settlement's distance from the sub-district office, requiring residents to sacrifice daily work time to process documents. Field observations confirmed these conditions, houses with deteriorating plywood walls, narrow alleys dampened by river seepage, and barefoot children playing on the roadside, all revealing the scarcity of resources.

The absence of identity documents has serious consequences. Without a KTP or KK, residents cannot access social assistance programs such as Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) or government education aid. Several residents reported having attempted to apply for aid, only to be rejected because they were not listed in the population administration system. This creates a new layer of exclusion: those already poor economically are now also poor

administratively. Field data showed that children from undocumented families face dual barriers, not only excluded from educational assistance but also unable to enroll in public schools. In some cases, they could only attend non-formal schools or rely on free courses provided by volunteers, which were not always available and often inconsistent in quality. Observations at a non-formal school in the area revealed modest facilities: cracked plastic chairs, worn-out chalkboards, and donated textbooks in poor condition, further illustrating the limited access to education among children affected by administrative exclusion.

Without documents and aid, education becomes increasingly inaccessible. Parents without steady income or working irregular jobs often prioritize basic needs such as food and rent over school-related expenses like transportation or uniforms. Some parents interviewed admitted feeling guilty but said, “As long as the children can eat, that is what matters most,” reflecting the difficult trade-offs in their daily lives. This aligns with findings from structural poverty studies which note that household economic vulnerability strongly shapes access to education. Education, ideally a pathway out of poverty, thus becomes an unaffordable luxury for those caught in dual exclusion: economic and administrative.

As a result, poverty in Pulogebang is cumulative and layered, consistent with the framework of structural inequality which emphasizes that disparities do not occur in isolation but are interconnected and mutually reinforcing over time. Economic deprivation leads to administrative exclusion; administrative exclusion intensifies barriers to aid; the absence of aid worsens educational access; and limited education, in turn, sustains intergenerational poverty. Observations over several months in the area revealed recurring patterns: children from undocumented poor families tended to help their parents in markets, collect recyclables, or care for siblings at home instead of attending school regularly. This is not merely a matter of individual choice but the outcome of interrelated structural barriers.

This model of the social exclusion cycle, visualized in the final manuscript, shows that poverty, civil identity exclusion, and educational marginalization in Pulogebang form a vicious circle that cannot be broken without interventions addressing all dimensions simultaneously. Interventions focused solely on economic aid without improving access to identity documents, for instance, will struggle to be sustainable. Likewise, free education programs that fail to address administrative barriers will still leave some children outside the system. This analysis underscores that breaking the cycle of social exclusion requires public policies integrating economic, administrative, and educational dimensions simultaneously.

It is important to note that such an integrated approach remains rare in urban poverty studies in Indonesia. Most research tends to treat the issues separately, examining economic poverty, population administration, or education in isolation. Yet, as seen in Pulogebang, these three dimensions are deeply interconnected and together constitute a cyclical mechanism of exclusion. By combining them in a single analysis, this study provides a more comprehensive perspective and stresses that poverty alleviation policies must be rooted in an understanding of these interdimensional interactions.

This context highlights the relevance of the cumulative disadvantage theory proposed by Melo et al. (2021), which posits that initial misfortunes (such as extreme poverty) trigger a

cascade of further disadvantages across different aspects of life, widening inequality over time. In Pulogebang, the initial disadvantage is poverty, which then triggers administrative exclusion, blocks access to aid, and narrows educational opportunities. This cycle not only prolongs poverty but also transmits it across generations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the interplay of economic inequality, civil identity exclusion, and educational marginalization in Pulogebang's slum areas forms a structural cycle that mutually reinforces itself, making social mobility for poor families increasingly difficult. Extreme income disparities not only reduce households' capacity to cover educational needs but are also intertwined with the absence of official identity documents, which restrict access to state assistance, scholarships, and other public services that should be citizens' rights. Under these conditions, formal education is perceived as less relevant compared to immediate economic needs, exacerbating dropout rates and perpetuating intergenerational poverty. The novelty of this study lies in integrating economic inequality and civil documentation exclusion as simultaneous determinants driving educational marginalization in urban contexts. Accordingly, addressing these challenges requires policy interventions that combine poverty alleviation with accelerated population administration processes and strengthened community-based education, in order to sustainably break the cycle of socio-economic exclusion.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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