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The Spatial Conflicts in Public Spaces In Bandung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to identify the phenomenon of spatial conflicts that occur in public spaces in Bandung and their causal factors. The method used in this research is by observing the phenomenon that occurs in some cases of the city, especially in the public spaces that have a spatial conflict. This research aims to give an explanation (explanatory research) and it managed qualitatively. Based on the results of an empirical study, it is known that spatial conflicts that occur in Bandung consist of : 1) The spatial conflicts caused by private control to public spaces through temporary intervention that occur in a pedestrian ways, streets, open spaces, green belts and drainages. 2) The spatial conflicts caused by private control to public spaces through permanent intervention that occur in a pedestrian ways, streets and open spaces. 3) The spatial conflicts caused by public control to private spaces. The causal factors of the spatial conflict consist of : 1) Consensus or agreement of the dominant group; 2) Area development (organic vs planned); 3) The physical layout of the area that unable to minimize the no man's land; 4) Territorial boundaries are not clearly distinguish the public-private domain; 5) perceptions and perspectives of society; and 6) Regulation on the use of public spaces.

KEY WORDS : public space, spatial conflict, intervention, consensus

INTRODUCTION

Public space is a shared space where the users do not have any control over the space individually [1,2,3]. Public space can be used by everyone, either from inside or outside territory and they will have a common territory. On the contrary, private space is the space that occupied by a user who has control of it. That control gives an opportunity for people to establish their territory. The division of urban space into the public and private space is a physical manifestation of the relationship between private and public spheres in the society [4]. Urban space is divided into domains by various rules, spatial boundaries and symbols to set a boundaries between us and them [5,6].

At first, Bandung was planned by the colonial by following the principles of good architecture. But then Indonesia has experienced a ruler turnover and also political, social and economic change, so that many changes in controlling public spaces. As a result, the private-public domain began unclear. Urban morphology which tends to grow organically lead to the disorganized city and determined by the act of public or the design of developer. The result is a poor urban tissue [7] and a low-quality public space. The society start to adapt. Those who do not get along will attempt to change and do a spatial control to the environment. [8]

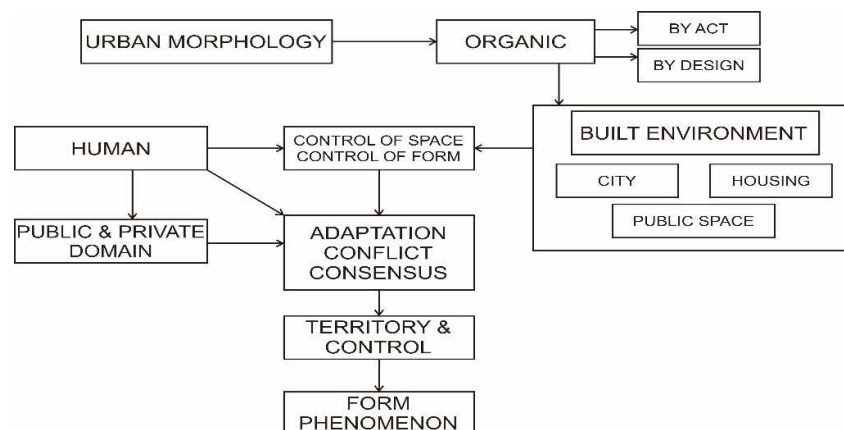


Figure 1 : Flow Diagram of Form Phenomenon

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Although there is no written law, public space in the real condition has a organization that manages and controls its growth. There are actors in it who play a role in claiming territorial ownership. Based on that, the important thing that needs to be highlighted is the control from society in a public space that eventually leads to create a consensus.

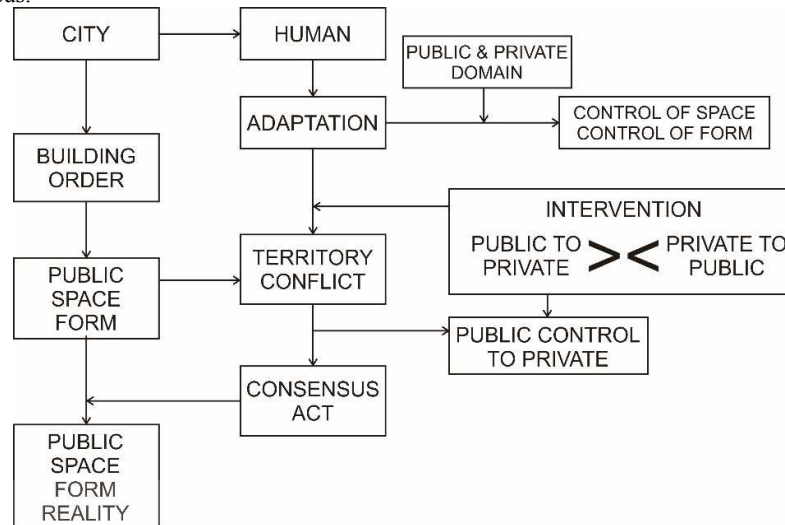


Figure 2 : Flow Diagram of Consensus and Its Impact to Public Space Form Reality

Intervention in public spaces is done as if it is self-organized and there is no governing law. A high sense of belonging in the society starts growing and the society feel like they have a rights to control the public spaces. The conflicts not only caused by private control to public spaces, but also on the contrary, the public control to private spaces. Both of these controls affect the dynamics of public space as a shaper of the city. This problem is the subject of this research, which then led to the research problem statement : How is the spatial conflicts in public spaces that occur in Bandung and what are their causal factors?

The objectives of this research are to identify the phenomenon of spatial conflicts that occur in public spaces in Bandung and their causal factors. The benefits of this research are to contributing the new knowledge in architecture about spatial conflicts in public spaces and their causal factors, and also as an input for all stakeholders associated with the public spaces design, especially the spatial regulators, architects and designers.

CASE STUDY AND METHODS

The Case Study

The cases in this research are the public spaces in Bandung, Indonesia. The location is not focused to one specific area but spread throughout Bandung including residential area, commercial area, public facility and social facility where there is a spatial conflict in its public space.

The Method

The method used in this research is by observing the phenomenon that occurs in some cases of the city, especially in the public spaces that have a spatial conflict. Because this research aims to give an explanation (explanatory research), so the method used in this research is through inductive reasoning, which derives general conclusion from a single case [9,10,11]. This research is managed qualitatively, in which the empirical data collected through observation and interview will be presented as they are and without any control or intervention to them. The cases selection done purposively by observing around the city to find a suitable cases to the research [12,13]. This research has the following steps : 1) Identification of spatial conflicts that occur in public spaces in Bandung. At this step, the results of an empirical study will be presented as they are. 2) The factors that cause a spatial conflicts in public spaces in Bandung. At this step, the theoretical realm will be confronted with the empirical realm to get a comprehension.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research is classified into two parts according to the steps of research that have been mentioned above, that is : firstly, the spatial conflicts in public spaces and secondly, their causal factors.

The Spatial Conflicts in Public Spaces Phenomenon in Bandung

The spatial conflicts in public spaces can be distinguished into two categories, that is permanent (done in an unlimited time and in the same public space) and temporary (done alternately or occasionally and done in the same or different public space). Therefore, there are three problems related to the spatial conflicts, namely : 1) The spatial conflicts caused by private control to public spaces through temporary intervention. This is the most common spatial conflicts in urban area. 2) The spatial conflicts caused by private control to public spaces through permanent intervention. 3) The spatial conflicts caused by public control to private spaces.

The Spatial Conflicts Caused by Private Control to Public Spaces Through Temporary Intervention

The first spatial conflict, that is the spatial conflicts caused by private control to public spaces through temporary intervention, often occur in a pedestrian ways, streets, open spaces, green belts and drainages. The conflict in a pedestrian ways is generally caused by a multiplier effect around activity center that generates a great attraction. A case in point : A sports field can trigger the existence of street food carts surrounding it. Those street food carts take place in public domain so that the pedestrian's rights was taken.



Figure 3 : Private Control To The Pedestrian Way Around Sports Field And City Park Through Temporary Intervention

The conflicts that occur in the street is generally caused by consensus or agreement of certain dominant group that persuasively influences the society. Therefore, although there are certain groups in society who do not agree, they will still accept that consensus. A case in point is the street in residential area which its circulation pattern has been changed by certain group of residents because of safety factor by installing street portal. The residents should not have the rights because that street is not only used by the residents but also by a non-residents.



Figure 4 : Private Control To The Street in Residential Area Through Temporary Intervention

Other common conflict is a conflict in open spaces. Urban open space was originally planned as the lung for the city, greening, water infiltration, social activities, sports, and relaxation for the people. Meanwhile, there are certain people who think that as long as the function has not changed, which is still as greening, then the open spaces can be used to sell the plants. Therefore, the plant sellers began to sell their products in the open space which led to the loss of the functions of that open space as social activities, sports, and relaxation. There's even more negative effect such as the growth of non-permanent houses as a seller's dwelling place.



Figure 5 : Private Control To The Open Space Through Temporary Intervention

The conflict in the green belt, the space between the river and the built area that serves as a water infiltration, is often occurs in urban area especially in residential area. In our society, the tendency to occupy that area usually done by the lower class who do not have a place to live, but it turns out that this is also done by the middle class who use that area as their garage. This reality is happening without public consensus but done by individuals and not for the common interest.



Figure 6 : Private Control To The Green Belt (a) and Drainage (b) Through Temporary Intervention

Spatial conflicts that occur on the drainage generally caused by society's perception which assume that the space above the drainage is a no man's land. They feel that they have the rights to build a non-permanent building for their businesses. In fact, the city drainages were built to carries rainwater to the lower ground and generally planned to be an open channel flow to make it easier to controlled.

The Spatial Conflicts Caused by Private Control to Public Spaces Through Permanent Intervention

The second spatial conflict, that is the spatial conflicts caused by private control to public spaces through a permanent intervention, closely related to the realm of architecture because these conflicts are generally caused by the building design and layout which intervenes the public spaces. This conflicts occur in pedestrian ways, streets and open spaces. The conflict in the pedestrian way often occurs in multi-storey area, both residential and mixed-use building, such as the shophouses, flats and apartments. The division of the private-public domain has not been clearly understood by the residents and there is no governing law, so the residents also feel entitled to permanently change the things that should belong to public such as a pedestrian way in front of the shop. Pedestrian way was originally designed to have the same height and material, but then it was modified by the shop owner into a ramp so that the vehicle can be in and out easily. Some of them even expanded their shop to the front porch. As a result, pedestrians do not feel comfortable walking on this area.



Figure 7 : Private Control To The Pedestrian Way In Front of The Shophouse Through Permanent Intervention

The Spatial conflicts on the streets through permanent intervention are often found in the urban kampong. Façade expansion that intervenes public spaces (the street or alley) is generally occurs at high-density settlements with an unclear building orientation. Sometimes the facade, the back and the side of the building is facing the same alley. Territorial boundaries and plot ownership can't be seen clearly so that the public-private domain becomes blurred. A building code such as Building Coverage Ratio (BCR) and building density are difficult to enforced in the urban kampong that grows organically like this. The width of the alley is narrowed because of control from one of the residents, followed by other residents until the end of the alley, is this a public consensus for the common interest?



Figure 8 : Private Control To The Streets In Urban Kampong Through Permanent Intervention

The street, which is the circulation of vehicles, is clearly belong to public and no one has the right to change it, but the private control remains occur by changing the material as a territorial demarcation of certain building. One of the cases is a residential mosque in the picture below. Asphalt pavement is covered with paving block as a territorial demarcation of the mosque. The street closed with a portal and then becomes the mosque's yard. Another case is a consensus between the government and the private to build a pedestrian bridge above the street which is used as a commercial area. There is no one who feels disadvantaged, both street users and pedestrians. The pedestrians even feel more comfortable and secure to walking between the building through that bridge.



Figure 9 : Private Control To The Streets In Front of The Mosque (a) and Commercial Area (b) Through Permanent Intervention

The open space in urban areas was originally planned for social activities, aesthetic and environment, but the need for a land often forces government to changes these functions into other functions. One of them is as a worship facility. The reality shows that some open spaces in the city were changed into mosques and this change was made by the people who incorporated to a foundation. Government as an institution that grants a permit can not reject this permission even if it is illegal or against spatial plan and regulation. This is because of the government's reluctance to things that related to religious worship. Other spatial conflict in open spaces also occurs in high-density residential area that has an unclear property boundaries. This makes the side of the building exceeding the plot boundaries and uses some part of the open space.



Figure 10 : Private Control To The Open Spaces Into The Mosque (a) and House (b) Through Permanent Intervention

The Spatial Conflicts Caused by Public Control to Private Spaces

Public-private domain sometimes becomes unclear when there is an intervention from the government. This occurs in a commercial area which is a row of buildings. Private territorial boundaries on this area claimed for public interest, so that the private rights on its territory been taken. In the picture below can be seen the pedestrian way in front of the shops. The shop owner actually still own the top area for residential use. But in this area occurs an unclear domain, whether it is public or private domain, while the street food owner feel has the rights to sell here.



Figure 11 : Public Control To The Private Space in Commercial Area

The Causal Factors of Spatial Conflicts in Public Spaces

Based on the observation of the spatial conflicts phenomenon in public spaces in Bandung, it is concluded that several factors that led to that conflicts are :

- a. Consensus; This is closely related to the culture of a particular neighborhood or community. Intervention often occurs because there is an agreement from the dominant groups. Although there is no written law, public space in the real condition has a organization that manages and controls its growth. There are actors in it who play a role in claiming territorial ownership. The society and government sometimes can not do anything because of a certain reluctance of certain public interest, especially if it related to religious activities.
- b. Area Development (Organic vs Planned); In the area that grown organically, where there is no proper planning in determining the plot boundaries and private-public domain, people have a high sense of belonging so that the interventions are often occur in the public spaces. It is also influenced by the level of sense of community. In a neighborhood with higher levels of sense of community, such as in the organic area like urban kampong, tolerance level of the use of public space for private interests is certainly higher than in individualistic neighborhood.
- c. The Physical Layout of the Area; The physical layout should be able to create an area with a minimum 'no man's land'. The existence of a 'no man's land' such as an unused dead-end street and a green belt can gives a perception to the society that this area is not owned by anyone, so that they feel like they have the rights to use it. It starts with building temporarily, then doing a further intervention permanently. Followed by others who also feel allowed to build in that area.
- d. Territorial Boundaries; Related to the previous point, in addition to physical layout, territorial boundaries of space should be made as clear as possible so that they can deliver a non verbal communication on this public-private domain boundaries to the public Architectural space should have a strong character of public. This is similar with the opinion from LeFebvre, a place should have a symbol that can gives a sign and it should be easy to read and accepted by others. That symbol or territorial boundaries not only used as a tool to get privacy but also to stabilize social relations.
- e. Perceptions and Perspectives of Society; Related to the previous point, a good physical layout and clear territorial boundaries are not fully minimize the spatial conflicts because there is other thing that affect them, that is the society's perception. The process of that spatial perception, cognition and behavior are influenced by the competency of individuals and groups, as well as the structure of the environment. The society's perception of the meaning of symbols and the boundaries of what can and can not do will vary. A space can be seen as a private space for those who can not enter, but can be seen as public space for those who can easily enter. This difference in perception is then become a challenge for a designers. A designers should be able to understand human behavior before designing an environment in order to get a good communication between the human and environment. Poor understanding of the essential relationship of the spatial organization and the social life is a major obstacle in making a good design.
- f. Regulation; There is no law or regulation that explicitly regulate the public-private domain in urban area, what are the rights of public-private and punishment in case of infringement. Law and regulation related to the use of public space in Bandung is limited to the arrangement of food street carts (Regional Regulation of Bandung City Number 4 Year 2011) and law related to the disturbance of business activities in a residential area (The Act Number 1 Year 2011 on Housing and Residential Area and Regulation of Minister of Home Affairs Number 27 Year 2009 on Guidelines of Nuisance Permit in Regions). Without a strict regulations, it will be difficult for the authorities to take an action on the violations that occur.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research was that there are several spatial conflicts in public spaces in Bandung and mainly caused by the control and territorial claim by public and private that intervenes each domain. Therefore, the public spaces should be well planned in accordance with the dynamics of local community life. The phenomenon shows that the need of public space is unfulfilled so that these interventions emerge. Public space interventions often occur and take private rights but usually no one takes an action for it. This is caused by the consensus of the dominant group and certain collective interest. As a result, there are many public spaces that violate the regulations, norms and architecture principles, where the boundaries that should be embodied physically by the architect are still not implemented. In addition, there's still no related regulations on spatial conflicts in public space and it requires further thought for the architects and the city planners.

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