



INTERPLAY AS A MECHANISM IN CONSTRUCTING ARCHITECTURE: SPATIAL NEGOTIATION IN PUBLIC SPACE OF KOTA TUA JAKARTA

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengeksplorasi pemahaman interplay dalam arsitektur sebagai metode perancangan arsitektur yang menegosiasi sistem order dalam membentuk ruang baru. Ruang publik hadir dengan berbagai sistem order yang kemudian hadir secara dominan maupun melalui perlawanan (resisting). Walaupun demikian, studi ini berargumen bahwa kemungkinan baru konstruksi ruang hadir melalui bentuk praktik kreatif seperti permainan yang menghadirkan interaksi antar order. Interplay dapat dimaknai sebagai dialektika dinamis antar dua sistem order atau lebih yang memungkinkan negosiasi spasial. Tujuan studi ini adalah untuk menelusuri mekanisme interplay, sehingga dapat menghasilkan kemungkinan-kemungkinan ruang baru dalam konstruksi arsitektur. Penelusuran mekanisme interplay dilakukan dengan melihat studi kasus berbagai area ruang publik di kawasan Kota Tua Jakarta. Ruang publik dipilih karena terdapat keberagaman sistem order yang hadir dan saling berinteraksi. Hasil penelusuran tersebut menyimpulkan enam bentuk interplay dialog antar sistem order yang terjadi di ruang publik: permanent-temporal, dynamic-static, formal-informal, dark-light, old-new, dan attract-distract. Setiap interplay melibatkan operasi spasial overlapping, occupying, spacing, adapting, dan appropriation. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tersebut, studi ini menawarkan arsitektur interplay sebagai metode desain yang menegosiasi batas-batas dan dikotomi antar sistem order, serta mendorong produksi ruang yang lebih inklusif dan dinamis.

Kata Kunci: interplay; sistem order; everyday creativity; negosiasi spasial; produksi ruang.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the understanding of interplay in architecture as a method of architectural design that negotiates two or more systems of order to generate new possibilities in spatial construction. Public space exists with various order systems that exist in a dominant or resistant way. However, this study argues that new space may exist through creative practice of play that enable interaction between orders. Interplay can be interpreted as a dynamic dialectic between systems of order that enable the construction of new spaces through spatial negotiation. This study explores interplay mechanisms to develop new architectural possibilities. The research was conducted through a case study of public spaces in Kota Tua Jakarta. This case study is selected due to the diverse and interacting systems of order present in the site. The study identifies six types of interplay in the public space: permanent-temporal, dynamic-static, formal-informal, dark-light, old-new, and attract-distract. Each interplay involves spatial operations of overlapping, occupying, spacing, adapting, and appropriation. By employing such approach, this paper offers architecture driven by interplay as a design method that negotiates the boundaries and dichotomies between systems of order, while also encouraging the production of more inclusive and dynamic spaces.

Keywords: interplay; system of order; everyday creativity; spatial negotiation, space production.

INTRODUCTION

This study proposes interplay as an architectural design method based on negotiation between two or more systems of order to generate new spatial possibilities. Interplay is understood as a dialectical mechanism through which different systems of order interact and renegotiate their borders, creating alternative spatial configurations. Interplay enables the creative emergence of spaces in response to interacting systems of order (Certeau et al., 1984; Doucet & Frichot, 2018; Lefebvre, 1991).

In social contexts, the system functions as a mechanism of control favoring certain groups (Certeau et al., 1984; Lefebvre, 1991), producing space aligned with dominant interests. Discussion of interplay become relevant as architecture, however, must be able to accommodate the complexities and contradictions that reflect the diversity of human experiences (Venturi, 1977). Space, therefore, is not only shaped by power but also by resistance (Lefebvre, 1991), realized through practices of antidisziplin and everyday creativity (Certeau et al., 1984).

When space is driven by the dominant order, oppositional spaces naturally arise to meet unmet needs-leading to antidisiplinary spatial practices (Certeau et al., 1984). These resistant practices evolve into new orders, interacting with others to enable new spatial constructions. This study proposes the idea of interplay to address such interactions.

In the Indonesian urban context, particularly within dense and historically layered cities, public spaces frequently demonstrate the coexistence of multiple systems of order that interact through everyday practices. Spatial configurations are often not entirely predetermined but emerge through continuous negotiation between formal planning frameworks and informal uses. For instance, formally designed elements such as circulation paths, platforms, or architectural structures are often reinterpreted through temporary occupations, social activities, and economic practices that respond to users' immediate needs. These conditions indicate that spatial production operates through a hybrid process; partly structured by dominant orders and partly shaped by spontaneous, tactical action. Such dynamics reveal that interplay is not merely a theoretical construct, but an observable mechanism in which formal and informal, permanent and temporal, as well as

static and dynamic systems of order interact and continuously renegotiate spatial boundaries.

This study examines public spaces in Kota Tua Jakarta, Indonesia as the basis of exploring the interplay mechanism. Public space is selected as the case study due to its openness and the potential presence of diverse and interacting systems of order in the area. This study aims to explore the interplay mechanisms in architecture, with the intention that understanding these mechanisms will offer new possibilities for spatial design. Ultimately, it contributes to a renewed understanding of architectural space production through everyday creativity.

System of Order and Resistance as the Basis of Space Production

The system of order is a fundamental principle in architecture that brings visual, functional, and social order (Forty, 2004; Le Corbusier, 1986). There are various forms of dominant order based on Forty (2004), which includes: order as the attainment of beauty, order as the representation of the ranks of society, order as the avoidance of chaos, and order as a means of control. In social space, the dominating orders operates as a mechanism of control and domination, producing spaces that benefit certain groups (Certeau et al., 1984; Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre (1991) stresses that space is not neutral but is produced and reproduced by dominant powers-reflecting economic, political, and ideological structures. Baudrillard (2000) adds that functionality often serves the logic of the system itself, creating an illusion of consumer control while directing consumption patterns.

Space is never static; it evolves through the dynamic between structure and action (Lefebvre, 1991). Within this dynamic, the system of order plays a key role-since the way space is produced is intrinsically tied to how it performs. On the other hand, Lefebvre (1991) sees resistance as already inherent within space, challenging systems of order that dominate and control everyday life. Dominant orders, he argues, restrict how space is consumed, limiting individual agencies. Certeau (1984) expands this by framing hidden form production as a mode of resistance. Through everyday creativity, individuals use tactics to counter systemic constraints and meet unmet need (Certeau et al., 1984).



Space, therefore, is not merely the result of domination, but also of resistance (Lefebvre, 1991) through the practice of antidiscipline and everyday creativity (Certeau et al., 1984). Through such practices, individuals exploit gaps within the system of order to generate new spatial possibilities within architecture (Doucet & Frichot, 2018). As such, disjunctions in architecture open new opportunities for design and spatial innovation (Tschumi, 1999).

Antidiscipline functions as resistance of spatial control (Certeau et al., 1984, 2014), enabling negotiation with imposed norms (Alam et al., 2022). It is used by individuals and marginalized groups to reinterpret space and create more inclusive environments. Rather than rejecting order outright, it seeks to transcend limitations and generate new spatial meanings (Certeau et al., 1984; Guadalupi, 2019), enabling adaptive and participatory design.

De Certeau, as cited in Harani et al., (2023), distinguishes between strategies-used by dominant systems-and tactics-improvised actions by individuals responding to context. Over time, recurring tactics can evolve into new patterns or even a new order (Certeau et al., 1984). Resistance, then, is not mere opposition but an active, ongoing process of production space, balancing control and freedom, strategy and tactic, domination and creativity.

Interplay: Creative Interactions between System of Order

In resisting system of order, everyday creativity is crucial to understanding how space is shaped not only by dominant structures but also by tactical daily actions. Within this context, playing is seen as a form of everyday creativity (Certeau et al., 1984). Playing reflects how space is experienced and reinterpreted (Certeau et al., 1984), enabling new spatial possibilities (Papangelis et al., 2020), transforming environments into dynamic fields of exploration. Playing informs how individuals move, interact, and perceive space (Evans & Saker, 2019). As a tactical act, playing challenges systems of order through flexibility, improvisation, and the re-appropriation of controlled spaces.

Interplay therefore focuses on how existing play systems often interact and negotiate borders simultaneously. The everyday creativity of play explains how space is produced through dialectical negotiation between order and its counter-

system, enabling creative adaptation and spatial possibilities. Interplay is not a fixed condition, but a continuous process. Venturi (1977) highlights its relevance in complex and contradictory architecture, while Tschumi (1999) notes that interplay between space and activity allows spatial border to shift-bodily movements, for instance, reshape space through lived action. As a dialectic, interplay enables the construction of new space through negotiation between systems of order. Each system has distinct borders, and interaction arises when these borders meet and adjust.

According to Gehl et al., (1987), spatial interaction is supported by conditions such as absence of barriers, proximity, slow movement, and face-to-face encounters. In interplay, these interactions are mediated through interface borders that define each order. Dovey et al., (2018) highlights that interfaces can be arranged into five types based on physical and visual access: impermeable, direct-transparent, direct-opaque, setback-transparent, and setback-opaque. These variations regulate how systems of order interact spatially, enabling interplay and supporting the creation of new spatial configurations.

Based on this theoretical framework, this study aims to explore how interplay operates as a mechanism of spatial negotiation between dominant and resistant systems of order in public space. The research question addressed is how do interactions between systems of order generate new spatial possibilities through interplay mechanisms? Accordingly, this study seeks to identify and examine the mechanisms of interplay that emerge from everyday spatial practices, and to understand how these mechanisms contribute to the production of space in architecture.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine mechanisms of interplay in public space of Kota Tua Jakarta, Indonesia-chosen for its diverse and interacting systems of order.

A qualitative approach is employed as the study seeks to understand spatial phenomena that emerge through everyday practices, interactions, and negotiations, which cannot be fully captured through quantitative measurement. Interplay as a dynamic and context-dependent process requires in-depth interpretation of spatial use,

user behavior, and informal adaptations. Therefore, a case study method allows for a detailed investigation of how such mechanisms unfold within a specific socio-spatial context. Data was collected through observation and photographic documentation to capture spatial conditions, user activities, and the presence order. These data will be analyzed to determine how everyday creativity contributes to construction of space.

The interplay exploration in Kota Tua Jakarta was conducted at four locations (see Figure 4) which consist of urban platform 1 (area 1), urban platform 2 (area 2), old buildings (area 3), and the corridors between the old buildings (area 4).

LOKASI PENELURUSAN

KAWASAN KOTA TUA JAKARTA



Figure 1. Location of the interplay investigation in public spaces in Kota Tua Jakarta

The process begins by identifying coexisting systems of order at each site. Interplay is seen as a dialectical negotiation between two or more orders that produces new spatial possibilities. In the next step, opposing or resistant orders are identified and reclassified under Forty's typology. Their presence reveals the potential for interplay.

The final step of the investigation is to analyze how the interplay mechanism takes place. This analysis seeks to reveal how spatial negotiation between competing systems of order leads to the emergence of new multipurpose programming.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the exploration of interplay in Kota Tua Jakarta, six types of interplay of dominant and resistant orders were identified, comprising of permanent-temporal, dynamic-static, formal-informal,

dark-light, attract-distract, and old-new. The following paragraph expands more on such interplay.

Interplay Between Permanent and Temporal order

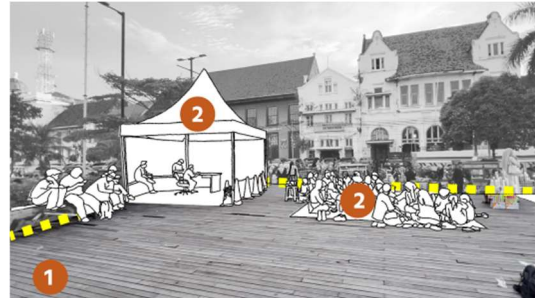


Figure 2. Permanent order (1) and Temporal order (2)

In area 1 (see Figure 2), an interplay between permanent and temporal order was found in a single urban space location. Permanent order becomes the dominant order, demonstrated by the presence of urban platforms as circulation and transit spaces. The permanent order, reflecting order as the avoidance of chaos (Forty, 2004). The urban platforms provide clear spatial border through materialization and organized user movement patterns.

On the contrary, temporal order arises from the use of security tents and mats by certain groups. Although temporary, these elements affirm a form of social structure, in line with order as the representation of the ranks of society. The presence of tents and mats introduces points of social occupation that disrupt the constant order of the transitional space.

The interaction between the systems of order shows an interplay mechanism in the form of overlapping, occupying, and spacing. The border of the two systems of order overlap spaces is tactically taken over, and the distance between elements creates negotiation spaces. This combination results in multipurpose spaces formed through the shifting of borders and functions between the systems of order. This reveals that spatial boundaries are not rigid but are constantly renegotiated through temporary occupations. The presence of temporal elements challenges the dominance of permanent structures, demonstrating how informal practices can redefine spatial hierarchy and function.

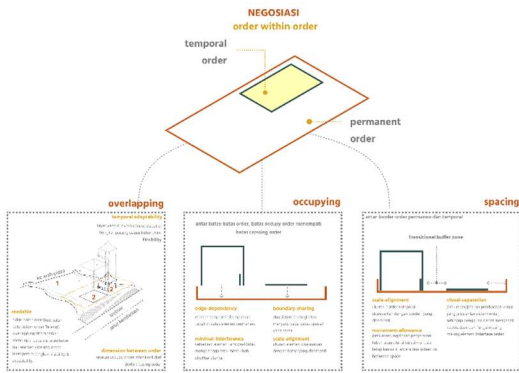


Figure 3. Diagram mechanism of interplay between permanent order (1) and temporal order (2)

Interplay Between Dynamic and Static Order

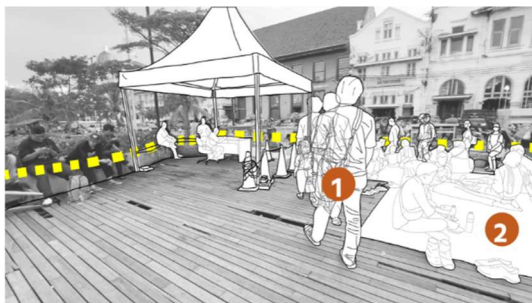


Figure 4. Dynamic order (1) and Static order (2)

In area 1 (see Figure 4), an interplay between dynamic and static order was found in a single urban space location. Dynamic order reflects the dominant order, characterized by the flat, symmetrical, and unobstructed surfaces that support orderly movement. Meanwhile, static order reflects the resistance order represented with mats serving as borders that create enclosed social spaces and determine who can access and control those spaces. This static order reflects the Forty (2004) understanding order as demonstrating system of ranks in society.

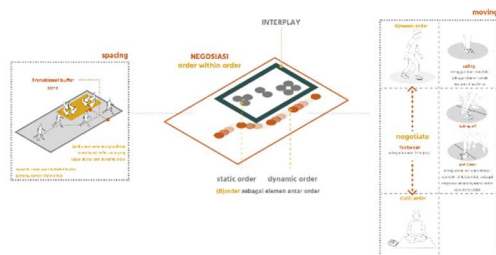


Figure 5. Diagram mechanism of interplay between dynamic order (1) and static order (2)

The interaction between the systems dynamic and static of order demonstrates interplay through spacing and movement. Spacing is evident when the dynamic path adjusts its direction and distance in relation to the presence of the mat, creating a shared space without disturbing each other. Meanwhile, the mechanism of moving involves physical actions, such as removing footwear and adjusting behavior when crossing or entering the static order area. This interplay creates a multipurpose space, where movement and stillness coexist within borders that are situationally negotiated. This indicates that spatial negotiation does not merely occur through physical boundaries, but also through behavioral adaptation of users, where movement patterns adjust in response to temporary spatial claims.

Interplay Between Formal Function and Informal Function Order



Figure 6. Formal order (1) and Informal order

In area 1 (see Figure 6), an interplay between formal function order represented by the stairs on the urban platform, and informal function order, consisting of spontaneous activities such as selling, sitting, and eating drinking. The stairs are designed geometrically for a single vertical function—representing order as the avoidance of chaos (Forty, 2004), with borders defined by differences height and the dimensions of the steps.

On the contrary, an informal function order uses elements such as mats, chairs, and product displays as social borders that form community activity zones, reflecting order as the representation of the ranks of society (Forty, 2004). These informal borders exist above or around the formal structures, indicating a negotiation of space both functionally and socially.

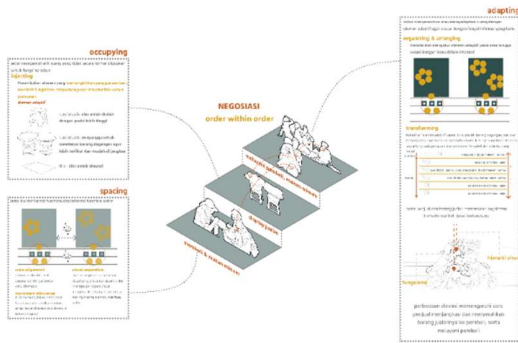


Figure 7. Diagram mechanism of interplay between formal function order (1) and informal function order (2)

The interaction between these two systems occurs through interplay mechanism of occupying, spacing, and adapting. This indicates that the elements of formal order do not strictly determine spatial use but instead provide a framework that can be reinterpreted through informal practices. Such adaptation reflects Occupying happens when informal elements utilize the stair space for other activities. Spacing is seen in the arrangement of informal elements so that they do not interfere with the stairs function. Meanwhile, adapting shows how informal activities adjust to the formal structure, creating a flexible and multipurpose tiered space without permanently altering the physical form.

Interplay Between Dark and Light Order

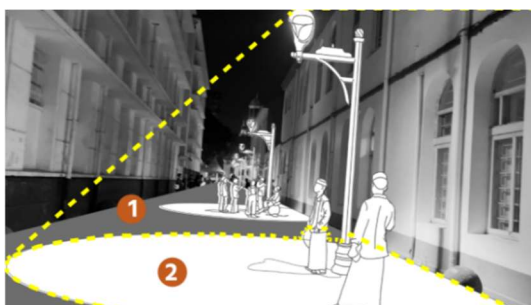


Figure 8. Dark order (1) and Light order (2)

In area 4 (see Figure 8), an interplay between dark—areas with minimal light that tend to be hidden and non-dominant—and light order, which are bright areas that are visually clear, easily accessible, and attract user activities. Dark order functions as an alternative space used for informal activities outside supervision, while light order articulates open orderly spaces that support social engagement. Both represent order as the avoidance of chaos (Forty, 2004), in two different spatial approaches.

The interaction between the two systems produces a multipurpose transitional space, where the borders of dark and light overlap and create visual contrasts that facilitate various forms of occupation. This space is neither bright nor dark; rather, it becomes threshold zone that supports activities such as waiting, solitude, or informal gatherings.

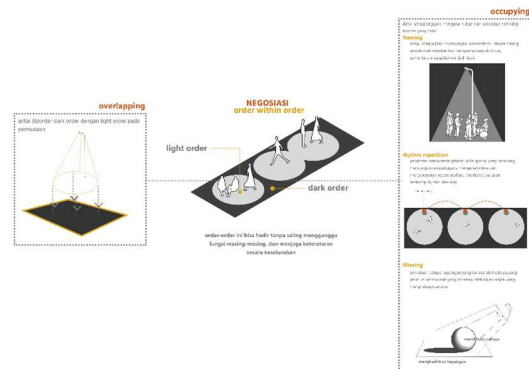


Figure 9. Diagram mechanism of interplay between dark order (1) and light order (2)

The interplay mechanism that occurs includes overlapping at the contrast areas between light and dark. In addition, there is a mechanism of occupying, where users exploit the ambiguity of light for everyday creative activities. Their presence of this contrast not only activates space visually but also opens potential for more fluid and unexpected social interaction.

Interplay Between Attract and Distract order

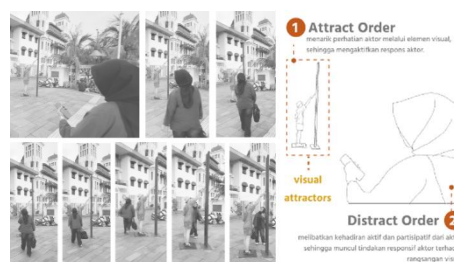


Figure 10. Attract order (1) and Distract order

In area 2 (see Figure 10), an interplay between attract—namely, dominant visual elements that capture users' attention—and distract order which refers to spontaneous and participatory activities that divert attention from the main visual order. Attract order reflects order as the attainment of beauty (Forty, 2004), where visual aesthetics are designed to guide users' perception and movement. The border of this order is the



visual elements themselves, such as installations, signage, or photo spots.

On the contrary, distract order arises from activities that are temporary, fluid, and unplanned—such as social interactions or the use of platform floors as activity spaces—which can be classified as order as the representation of the ranks of society (Forty, 2004). The border of distract order is the surface where activities take place, creating social engagement that is detached from formal visual order.

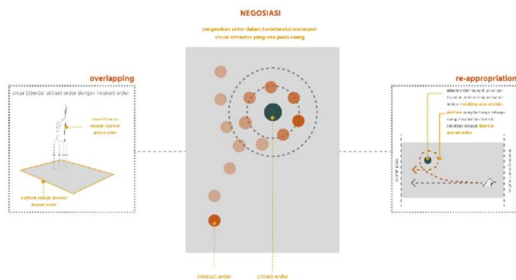


Figure 11. Diagram mechanism of interplay between attract order (1) and distract order (2)

The interplay between the two systems of order creates a multipurpose space, where users' attention is divided between visually highlighted elements and vibrant social dynamics. The negotiation mechanisms that occur overlap, when visually appealing boundaries intersect with areas of occupation, and re-appropriation, when users respond to the space creatively and spontaneously to create new meanings, shifting the role of the space from merely aesthetic to an active and unpredictable social space.

Interplay Between Old and New order



Figure 12. Old order (1) and New order

In area 3 (see Figure 12), there is an interplay between old order, represented by old buildings with formal, symmetrical, and large-scale architectural structures; and

temporal order, which is the presence of the retail kiosk and semi-permanent buying and selling activities. Old order reflects visual order, proportion, and unity of architectural elements. Meanwhile, new order can be seen in the way space is reused by certain social groups to meet economic and community needs.

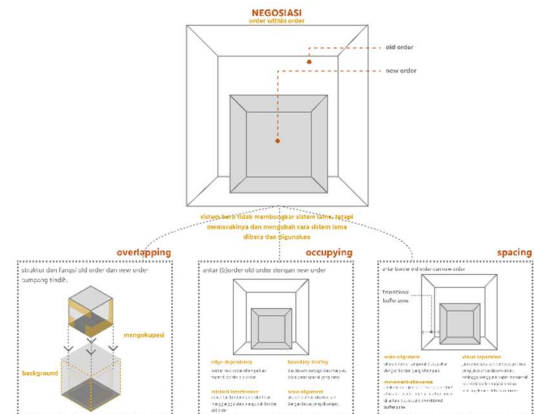


Figure 13. Diagram mechanism of interplay between old order (1) and new order (2)

The interplay between the two produces a multipurpose space that does not negate each other but rather complements each other. The emerging interplay mechanisms are overlapping, when the kiosk boundaries occupy the space of the old architecture, occupying. In addition, interplay also happens when new elements take over part of the old space for new functions; and spacing, where the distance between the old and new elements creates transitional space. This interaction shows how space gradually transforms through the negotiation between physical heritage and the dynamics of contemporary needs.

Discussion

The findings show that the public space in Kota Tua Jakarta demonstrate interacting and interplay of systems that constantly renegotiate their borders. Six identified types of interplay are found in this study, comprising of permanent-temporal, dynamic-static, formal-informal, dark-light, attract-distract, and old-new order interplay. This study analyse how these negotiations occur spontaneously and tactically in response to users' real needs.

This supports Lefebvre (1991) and De Certeau (1984), view that space is produced not only by dominant powers and formal strategies, but also through resistance via everyday creative actions. However, this

study extends their position by showing that such practices do not merely reassert dominant structures but actively reorganize spatial systems. Interplay, in this context, operates as a form of everyday creativity and antidiscipline, through which users challenge and reconfigure rigid spatial orders by occupying, adapting, and reinterpreting space. This argument is consistent with recent studies showing that informal actors negotiate and appropriate space through adaptive strategies such as visibility, mobility, and spatial occupation, often resulting in hybrid spatial conditions that blur the boundaries between formal and informal systems (Bestari & Fuad, 2021).

Moreover, the findings reveal that interplay operates through spatial mechanisms: overlapping, occupying, spacing, adapting, and re-appropriation. These mechanisms show that spatial borders between systems of order simultaneously emerge in dynamic interaction to each other. This reinforces and extends relational approaches to space, where space is continuously constructed through actor-environment relations (Fuad & Yatmo, 2017), while also aligning with recent arguments that urban space operates as an interconnected system structured by everyday practices and actor-based operations (Harani et al., 2023). As a result of the dynamic interaction, space continuously changes and becomes multipurpose rather than fixed or single-function.

Therefore, interplay offers a new lens for production of space: one that values negotiation over imposition. The idea of interplay sees architecture not to eliminate conflict, but as a platform for co-existence, adaptation, and diversity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This research shows that the interplay between order systems in public spaces in the Kota Tua Jakarta is a dialectical process that allows for the emergence of new urban spaces that are flexible, adaptive, and multipurpose. Reading this dialectical process enables six types of interplay to emerge, from permanent-temporal, dynamic-static, formal-informal, dark-light, attract-distract, and old-new. Based on these interplay types, it is evident that space is not only shaped by formal planning but also by

tactical actions carried out by space users in their daily lives.

This finding reinforces that system of order is not something rigid, but rather a field of negotiation that continuously interacts between resisting and dominating through spatial mechanisms: overlapping, occupying, spacing, adapting, and re-appropriation. This study offers another perspective, that order is not rigid, but rather interacts and negotiates to each other through creative interplay. This process fills the gaps between intersecting systems of order and forms space in a participatory manner. In this context, interplay serves as both an analytical framework and a design approach that opens up new possibilities for spatial production.

Recommendations

This study is limited in the way its investigation to architectural interplay is only particular to the context of public space in Kota Tua Jakarta. Further research is needed to explore interplay in other contexts of public space, to uncover alternative types of interplay and broaden the understanding of how spatial negotiation unfolds across diverse environments.

This study contributes to architectural discourse by framing order not as rigid, but as negotiable through everyday creativity. Viewing production of space through the mechanism of interplay highlights a design approach that values complexity, contradiction, and spontaneity; not as disruptions, but as drivers of inclusive and adaptive space-making.

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