Tactical Urbanism: Visual Place-making in Kartini Sub-district, Sawah Besar, Jakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Local government infrastructure plays an essential role in the densely populated settlement. The Kartini Sub-district serves as a communication platform to disseminate information and carry out any other community empowerment program. However, the condition of these infrastructures appears to be inadequate, which subsequently does not attract the interest of locals. Through a descriptive-analysis method based on images, data acquired, and literature study, this paper proposes tactical urbanism as an alternative to support government programs in empowering its residents by amplifying the presence of local government infrastructures. This paper explores the importance of tactical urbanism in the form of visual place-making in each existing infrastructure provided by local government, particularly in densely populated settlement Kartini Sub-district.

Keywords: Place-making, Tactical Urbanism, Visual, Place-making, Infrastructure, Densely Populated Settlement

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the pilot program for urban kampung [1], Kartini Sub-district has several infrastructures provided by the government to serve and accommodate education and socialization activities to take place. It is done to improve the locals' quality of life in the future. Some of the programs are food resilience, disaster resilience, and environmental health program [2].

In this sense, the infrastructure serves as an object and plays an essential role as a source of information and communication platform between the local government and the locals. But, unfortunately, apart from their limited quantity and uneven distribution, these infrastructures tend to go unnoticed because of their inadequate conditions and similarities with their surroundings. Consequently, they do not draw the attention and enthusiasm of locals.

Emphasizing visual elements on the source of information is highly important (in this case, local government infrastructures). It is because human is 90% visual creature which processes visual elements 60.000 times faster than text. As a result, human absorbs visually aided information quickly [3]. Tactical urbanism (TU) through visual place-making in this matter can serve as a quick response or a short-term action with a long-lasting impact. This study aims not only to unravel mentioned challenges but also can be used both as a reference for further studies and as a prototype for other densely populated settlements. It also resonates with the first two previous studies as follows:

Table 1. Prior Researches

Title	Source	Conclusion
Tactical Urbanism: A Method of Community Empowerment in Cairo Neighbourhoods by A. Elshater	World Sustainable Building 2014 Barcelona Conference, Vol. 3, Barcelona [4]	Public participation can play a role in the TU approach. TU should respect the local cultural context.
Towards a Framework for Facilitating the Implementation of Tactical Urbanism Practices: Assessment Criteria in the Place-making Approach in Iran by A. Lak and S. Z. Kheibari	Geoforum, vol. 115 [5]	TU is claimed as a useful approach for place-making. TU allows residents to take part in the production of public spaces, particularly on a smaller scale. The framework for implementing and assessing TU projects is needed to familiarize urban planners, designers, and local authorities with TU.

There is no prior research regarding Kartini Sub-district except a field report performed by Setiawan and Rachima [6]. However, the report only explains the characteristics of certain areas inside the Kartini Sub-district. Therefore, this paper hopefully can fill in the gap from previous research through its TU approach, which accentuates and support existing infrastructures provided by the government for the future betterment of Kartini Sub-district residents.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

2.1. Theoretical Review

Place-making is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in [7]. The Place-making concept allows ordinary space to become an attraction for people or other activities to take place and even bring economic and social benefits [8]. However, in reality, evaluated based on the implementation and how people interact with it, large-scale municipal interventions appear to be inadequate in giving more significant benefits to the community [5]. This brings contemporary approaches for place-making to the surface, which are characterized by informal, bottom-up development, small-scale, incremental, low-cost, and intentionally functional modifications of public space [9]. One of them is: "tactical urbanism" (TU). According to Merriam-Webster, tactical itself defines as "of or relating to small-scale actions serving a larger purpose." Applied to cities, TU is a low-cost, short-term, scalable intervention to the built environment intended to improve the local neighborhood and catalyze long-term changes [10]. It also features a quick installation and dismantling process, participatory and driven by community issues, and often initiated by emerging architects, artists, and creative "urbanists" working outside professional boundaries [11]. In addition, TU features five characteristics below [12]:

1) An intentional, calculated, phased approach to trigger change.
2) A contribution of local ideas for local planning challenges.
3) Short-term commitments and realistic expectations.
4) Low-risks, with a possibility of high reward
5) The development of social capital between citizens and organizational capacity between public or private institutions, non-profit or NGOs, and their constituents.

In this sense, it appears that TU emphasized local resources than capital-intensive municipal large-scale programs. However, a wide range of actors (tacticians) can also perform the TU approach, including governments, businesses and non-profits, citizen groups, and individuals [13]. There are possibilities that if any tacticians want to "intervene" in public places, they will need permission from the local authority or get the local government involved in the process.

There are several points on why this approach might be necessary and potentially be used [13]:

1) To inspire action.
2) To draw attention or awareness to perceived shortcomings, both in policy and physical design, allow people to experience alternative options physically.
3) To widen public engagement.
4) To deepen understanding of local user's needs in the neighborhood.
5) To gather data.
6) To encourage people to work together, strengthening relationships between actors involved in the projects.

7) Testing aspects of a program on a smaller scale before making larger-scale interventions requires political decisions and more significant financial investments.

Point number 7 above and the profile of tacticians indicate that TU projects can be positioned along a spectrum of unsanctioned (guerrilla or DIY projects) to sanctioned efforts (involving official authorization from local government).
There are several types of common interventions as seen in Figure 1 and case study, for instance: better block initiatives, chair-bombing, de-fencing, de-paving, food carts or trucks, guerrilla gardening, PARK(ing) day, pop-up cafes, pop-up parks, pop-up retail, and protected bike lanes. In addition, these interventions could be classified into barrier elements, surface elements, street furniture, landscaping elements, signs, and also through injection of programming [13].
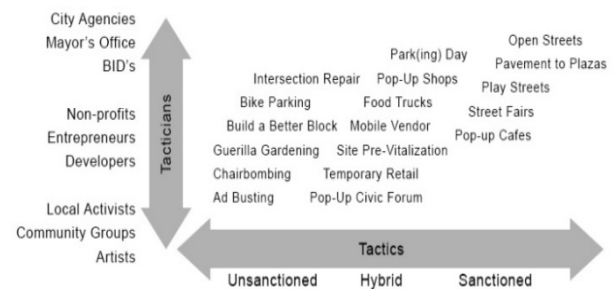

Figure 1. The Tactical Urbanism Project Spectrum
Source: Tactical Urbanism Volume 2 [12]

However, the TU project varies greatly depends on the scope of work, size, budget, and support. Actors (tacticians) involved in the project are free to go for any creative, innovative ideas for design and materials that are more suitable to the local context [13]. The previous statement shows that innovating is highly encouraged in performing TU. This principle is also clearly reflected in the absence of formal design guidelines. The "guide" or "material palette" which is written in the book titled "Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Design Version 1.0" by The Street Plans Collaborative, is intended only to share innovative ideas, not to restrain, limit [13] or even steer tacticians towards a specific design direction.
Based on mentioned theories, it can be concluded that: first, the classification of TU intervention (barrier, surface, landscaping elements, street furniture, signs, and programming addition) displays that TU can be realized in various forms. For instance: (i) Vertical and/or horizontal elements; (ii) Hard and/or soft elements; (iii) Tangible and/or intangible elements. However, none of these elements should be permanent. Second, looking back to the beginning of part two that mentions place-making allows ordinary space to become an attraction [8] is in line with these two aims of tactical urbanism: (i) To draw attention or awareness; (ii) To widen public engagement. Therefore, some keywords can be drawn: "attraction," "draw attention," and awareness," "public engagement." All these keywords imply the importance of visual aspects in the tactical urbanism design or intervention, without any intention to diminish the other

four human senses. It is also supported by the study mentioned in the introduction which says that human is 90% visual creature [3]. Therefore, in response, the visually striking intervention will be proposed.

2.2. Method

The research method used is descriptive-analysis based on photos, data, and literature study. The data obtained are then sorted to get an overview of the challenges and potentials in the Kartini Sub-district. Then, the potential spots ("the source of information"/infrastructures provided by local government) are mapped to be analyzed further along with other data. This method was chosen because the research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, there are limitations related to health protocols; not being able to observe directly in the field and conduct interviews with residents. Therefore, all data were acquired from various internet resources: Google Maps, news website, Jakarta One (the official website of DKI Jakarta Regional Government), and Kartini Sub-district Instagram account.

2.3. Case Study

Kartini Sub-district is a densely populated settlement, part of Sawah Besar District, Jakarta. Kartini Sub-district consists of both well-organized settlements and urban kampung, which mainly concentrated in RW 03, 06, 08, and 09 (Figure 2, 3)

Figure 2. Local Government Infrastructure Spots in Sub-district Kartini. Edited by Authors
Source: Google Maps, accessed on March 2021

The dissemination of food resilience programs such as urban farming (Figure 5) and disaster prevention program (recently: Covid-19 pandemic) takes place in the Municipal Administration Office of Kartini Sub-district, located in RW 08, and Local Station for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in RW 03. In addition, the dissemination regarding health and disaster prevention program (Covid-19 pandemic) was also done in the Community Health Center of Kartini Sub-district in RW 08 and through the door-to-door method. Meanwhile, from health and environmental hygiene, the government provides a local waste bank in RW 03 and the Pasar Baru area adjacent to RW 05 of the Kartini Sub-district (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Local Government Infrastructure Spots Concentrated near RW 03 and 08 Area. Edited by Authors.
Source: jakartasatu.jakarta.go.id, accessed on March 2021

One of the unique traits of the Kartini Sub-district is how the local government actively utilized social media as a platform to inform any information to its residents. The local government uses social media (photos) to "communicate" to stay connected to its residents. As a result, locals can know what and where precisely the work or any improvement being done in Kartini Sub-district (Figure 5). In addition, the local government uses Instagram's geo-tagging feature in each photo, including its coordinate location in the bottom part of each photo (Figure 6). This is also one reason why place-making that emphasizes visuals is essential, especially in Sub-district Kartini.

Figure 4. Neighborhood Cleaning Activities
Source: Instagram of Sub-district Kartini, accessed on March 2021

Figure 5. Urban Farming by Local Housewives in Small Hydroponic Garden inside Kantor Sub-district Kartini
Source: Instagram of Sub-district Kartini, accessed on March 2021

Figure 6. Dissemination of Covid-19 Pandemic Prevention and Mitigation
Source: Instagram of Sub-district Kartini, accessed on March 2021

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the photos and data acquired from various sources, the challenges and potentials in each infrastructure will be discussed as follows:

3.1. Municipal Administration Office of Kartini Sub-District

The site of the office is fully guarded with a fence. As a third floored building, the office itself is already distinct from its surrounding. In addition, it is the only building along this street that has a setback, allowing free space in front of the site itself for the parking lot, sidewalk, and small amount of greeneries. However, this sidewalk is now occupied by local street vendors. As a result, from various angles that can be seen, the front of the office is dominated by local street vendors (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Domination of Local Street Vendor
in front of the Municipal Administration Office
Source: Google Street View, accessed on March 2021

At the same time, behind the fence, there is a small hydroponic garden in the corner area. This left-over space is an urban farming workshop (as part of the food resilience program) provided by the government for local housewives to grow vegetables on their own using simple hydroponic installations (Figure 8). However, the installation is not visible from the front. Therefore, there is a possibility that only a specific group of locals may know the existence of this small garden.

Figure 8. Urban Farming Workshop Installation
Source: Instagram of Kartini Sub-district, accessed on March 2021

3.2. Community Health Center of Kartini Sub-District

Located right next to Municipal Administration Office, The Community Health Center of the Kartini Sub-district almost goes unnoticed. Apart from not having building setbacks, the

building itself has a similar characteristic to an old house and its surrounding (Figure 9).

Figure 9. The Community Health Center with its Surroundings
Source: Google Street View, accessed on March 2021

In front of the health center, banners are always put up to present health-related infographics for the public to read and raise public awareness about health. It is become more critical than ever due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, due to the inadequate condition of the building, the size, and the placement of the banner itself, this health center is increasingly fading away from the road (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The Front Part of Community Health Center
Source: Google Street View, accessed on March 2021

3.3. Local Station for Disaster/Covid-19 Prevention and Mitigation

This local station is situated in a house in the middle of a densely populated RW 03. In response to its small size, there have been efforts to make it visible to the locals. For instance: by (i) Performing guerrilla gardening to attract interest in urban farming and adding greeneries to the neighborhood as well; (ii) Making a small seating area that also can be used as a photo background. These efforts might also be categorized as TU. However, there is still plenty of room for improvement to draw more interest from the locals (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Photo Session in front of the Local Station
Source: Instagram of Sub-district Kartini, accessed on March 2021

3.4. Local Waste Bank "Maya"

The local waste bank is located in the middle of a well-organized settlement. This waste bank contributes to the reduction of waste, especially plastic waste, and a minor source of income for locals who exchange their waste. But, unfortunately, it is distinct from its surroundings because of its dilapidated condition (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Local Waste Bank "Maya"
Source: Google Street View, accessed on March 2021

Based on the identification above, in general, TU intervention that can be applied quickly and directly draw public attention is through the surface pattern in the form of artwork on the street (in this matter, building enhancement will be ignored because it is not categorized as TU). Similar artworks design can be applied on the street surface where the local government infrastructure is located. It could serve

as a mark or sign that reminds locals about the presence of government infrastructures. The artwork can be extended to the vertical element (wall) as well. This might be possible for Community Health Center, Local Waste Bank, and the Local Station Project. The Local Station has a broader background (wall) that could be utilized for significant artwork instead of using the existing "booth." Seasonal artwork is also encouraged to create variation, which will later evoke public interest as the artwork changes. The artwork also allows locals to interact with space (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Surface Treatment through Artwork
Source: www.readysetjetset.net, accessed on March 2021

Along with the artwork, various essential messages and information that the government wants to convey can be embedded in such ways to appear as an integral part of the artwork. This way, locals would pay more attention to the information and at the same time participate in the dissemination of information by sharing it via social media. As for Municipal Administration Office and Community Health Center projects, it is necessary to neatly arrange the existence of street vendors first by providing dedicated space on the site. In this case, TU might be used as an alternative solution through pop-up retail program intervention. Then, removing the existing fence and change it into "soft" barriers (fence plants) might be suitable as it will improve the spatial and air quality at the same time. Meanwhile, at the Municipal Administration Office project, urban farming-vertical installations could be utilized as a new barrier around the site. This intervention allows the urban farming program to be seen by the wider public audience and hopefully motivates them to participate in the program (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Vertical Herbs and Vegetable Garden Fence
Source: www.veggardens.wordpress.com, accessed on March 2021

4. CONCLUSION

Visual place-making plays an essential role because of its ability to attract locals right away. So far, only local governments have actively spread information and awareness about their programs. TU, through visual place-making, can draw locals in and interact with the spot, subsequently enabling locals to spread awareness or any messages to other locals through social media geo-tagging. This TU approach could also serve as a prototype for new infrastructures built in Kartini Sub-district in the future or other densely populated settlements. However, there are several limitations in conducting this research due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study can be developed further, especially regarding locals' local context and active participation from ideation to execution. Further study is also needed to implement the more significant or permanent solution, which will involve authorization from the government and more significant funds.

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