






Mine-Yours-Ours: The Collective Territory as Societal Everyday Practices

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Abstract. Space and territory in Global South countries may have been treated differently from those in their counterparts in the Global North. Rather than operating within an established system where regulation, permanence and ownership are emphasised, they often place more value on negotiation and flexibility. As a developing country, Indonesia vividly embodies these values, where everyday life is often marked by practices that negotiate the use of space and territory. This flexibility is evident in wedding receptions that temporarily convert communal access ways, such as public roads and neighbourhood alleys, into spaces of gathering, where demountable tents, decorations, and furniture reconfigure everyday circulation spaces into sites of festivity, ritual, and shared hospitality. This study mobilises the notion of Collective Territory as a conception to interpret how wedding receptions exemplify the negotiation of space, social consent, spatial adaptation, and temporary regulation, generating temporary forms of collective space. Grounded in a web-based visual investigation of Indonesian neighbourhoods, interpreted through a theoretical lens that connects everyday spatial practices with architectural and spatial discourse. The findings reveal how collective and temporary negotiations of space in the Global South expand the understanding of territory beyond formal design and regulation.

Keywords: collectivity, territory, negotiation, flexibility, everyday practices

1 Introduction

This paper examines how collective ownership of spatial territory emerges and continuously transforms through everyday negotiations shaped by social consent, spatial adaptation, and temporary regulation. These negotiations occur through the routines of everyday life, where individual actions and personal boundaries intersect with collective norms and shared spaces. In these spaces, people alternately play the roles of individuals and members of social collectives, whose exchanges between these roles continuously shape how space is articulated and experienced. These mundane and often unremarkable practices are so deeply embedded in routine that their implications for space and territory are frequently overlooked (Rendell, 2012; Wigglesworth & Till, 1998).

The understanding of spatial territory, however, differs across contexts. In many parts of the Global South, including Indonesia, space and its territory are often not defined primarily through an established system of regulation, permanence, and ownership, as is frequently displayed in the Global North (Simone, 2004). Instead, it is shaped by the condition of flexibility through negotiation that responds to changing circumstances, where social relations, temporal occupation, and collective adaptation play central roles (Dovey, 2012). This condition enables communities to continually redefine their boundaries and functions of space according to their everyday needs.

Architecture should not be understood as an autonomous entity characterized by ideal perfection. In reality, the production of architecture cannot be excluded from the condition of contingency and dependency that tend to resist complete control and prediction (Allen, 1999; Till, 2007, 2009). As Till (2009) argues, architecture depends on people, time, politics, ethics, and the complexities of everyday life, and yet, in most cases are perceived as external. Architectural ideals of perfection and permanence often dissolve in the face of real-life conditions, where space is continuously reshaped by change, compromise, and unpredictability.

This paper positions such everyday contingencies as essential to the construction of architectural thought to understand how space and territory are continuously shaped, adapted, and inhabited by society. Building on this position, the paper views Collective Territory as a conception grounded in everyday societal practices. The fluid and organic character of daily life in Indonesia articulates multiple forms of collective territory, each emerging as a reflection of how communities inhabit and reinterpret architectural space. In contrast to dominant discourses of territory in architecture, which often focus on boundaries and spatial definitions, this study argues that collective territory is not determined by fixed edges or formal demarcations. Instead, it materializes from the manoeuvres and negotiations undertaken by communities as they engage with social relations, temporal conditions, and the material aspects of their built environment.

This research examines a case that unfolds within the community's living environment and reflects collective intentions shaping the use of space. The case discussed in this paper concerns the organization of wedding receptions held in neighborhood alleys and streets, events that may appear unusual or out of place yet remain a common and accepted practice in Indonesian urban life, where residents temporarily close circulation routes to construct provisional structures often complete with elaborate interiors and decorations. These events transform the ordinary street into a shared venue for celebration, hospitality, and social gathering. Through this act of spatial reconfiguration, the community collectively negotiates access, boundaries, and function, allowing social consent and temporal occupation to generate new forms of architectural space.

2 The Everyday, Architecture, and Spatial Territory

The understanding that it is fundamentally difficult to view architecture as an entity with perfection and completeness is based on the influence of its context. There is no architecture without context (Tschumi, 2004), which means that architecture will always be dependent on many factors, from the moment it exists as an idea until it is used

by humans (Till, 2007, 2009). In this case, context is not limited to the aspect of place or site, but also encompasses various factors outside of architecture itself, such as human, economic, political, and other aspects. Context is also a defining aspect of architectural problems (Alexander, 1964). The influence of context often causes architecture to exist in conditions that are not ideal and imperfect as planned. However, it is precisely these imperfect conditions that are the reality of architecture itself (Brejzek & Wallen, 2021; Handa, 2015).

The beauty of imperfect conditions can arise from openness to the possibility of the unpredictable. The beauty of imperfect conditions emphasises spontaneity, disruption, and processes that are not fixated on formal perfection (Hamilton & Pearson, 2020). Imperfect conditions can be understood in several ways, such as the argument about “dirt” relating to conditions that are out of place (Douglas, 2002) or the idea of “ugly” which highlights elements that should not be in a particular place (Cousins, 1994). A condition that can be perceived as an error can also be viewed as a form of imperfection (Hughes, 2014). In various forms, imperfection has its own potential because it prioritises the ongoing process rather than controlling or correcting the situation. Moreover, this is closely related to the uncertainty that occurs in everyday life (Cheyne, 2023). Various factors in everyday society contribute to the construction of architectural reality and contain knowledge that has the potential to be further investigated (Harris & Berke, 1997; Wigglesworth & Till, 1998).

In relation to the discourse of spatiality, the concept of everyday life is linked to how space is socially produced and negotiated (Lefebvre, 1991; Lefebvre et al., 2013). This discourse of spatiality consists of how interactions, movements, and events become the main defining factors of architecture (Charitonidou, 2020; Tschumi, 1994), how a space is an arena/landscape for actions to take place together (Massey, 2005), or how, in the end, a spatial territory will continue to be redefined not only by boundary elements but also by human interpretations of space usage (Marlor, 2021). In some cases, the redefinition of spatial territory can occur due to movement along specific paths in people's daily lives (Paramita & Schneider, 2018) or due to a sense of ownership in the context of a particular residential environment, which ultimately also influences behaviour (Fluid, 2013; Yatmo & Atmodiwirjo, 2018). The aspects that contribute to the possibility of various definitions of territory are also inseparable from how communities employ their own tactics and strategies in navigating to meet their needs or face challenges.

This study conducted with a qualitative approach, uses secondary data gathered across multiple internet platforms. This method was used because the data to be collected essentially took place at unpredictable times, so it needed to be viewed as an archive to be re-examined. Furthermore, this internet search considers that these wedding activities are documented by the community according to their respective intentions. That is, as visual diaries if they are uploaded via social media platforms, or as part of an effort to report and share information if they use other platforms. Sources of this study include a reverse image search engine (Google Images), general websites, and social media. The inquiry begins with Google Images using the keyword “*resepsi pernikahan di jalan*” (“wedding reception in the street”) as shown in figure 1. Results from this query serve as a seed set for further exploration through the platform's similar-image filter. From each selected anchor image, algorithmic expansion enables

platform hopping into four data pools: websites that discuss comparable phenomena and host related images, YouTube for long-form video, TikTok for short videos organized in playlists, and Instagram for single images, carousels, and reels. These four platforms are leading media outlets in their role as digital recorders involving the active participation of society. These cross-platform recommendations make it possible to trace visual and textual leads at scale. For subsequent collection, the key visual criterion is the presence of tents and wedding decorations that intervene in the shared road.

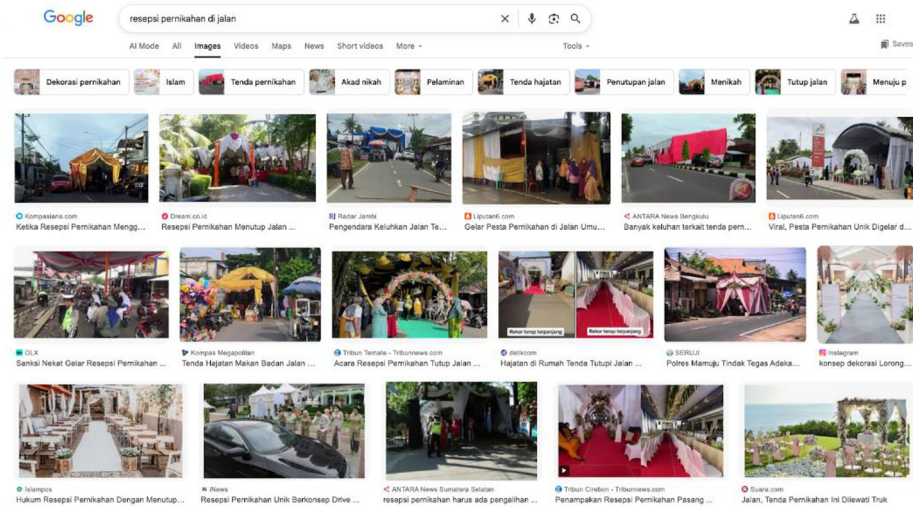


Fig. 1. Screenshot of the first page of Google Images search results for “*resepsi pernikahan di jalan*” / “wedding reception in the street” (Source: Various web-based sources)

3 Web-based searching as a mode of investigation

The investigation proceeds in four cross-platform stages spanning Google Images, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram; the initial phase is organized around each platform’s visual representation. Visual representations provide an effective initial overview that helps analysts surface salient patterns before deeper inspection (Shneiderman, 1996). This multi-stage investigation serves as a framework for data collection methods and is analytical in nature, as each platform has different characteristics, properties, and action requirements (figure 2). The initial stage involves a similarity-based image search in Google Images with a single reference visual as the query, whereby the picture itself functions as the input. Then extracts a key visual image from features and cross-checks these with surrounding page metadata, and shows clusters of look-alike images, ordered by similarity to the query. We scan the clusters to find how often and where the motif appears, note framing, and context, and log early clues of social or environmental impacts from the visual images. The next stage comprises a YouTube search, typically revealed by recommendations from the preceding step. Then, from a single selected video, subsequent materials are located via the platform’s similarity content. The search

yields amateur documentation of wedding receptions in streets or narrow alleys. The footage begins at the mouth of the alley and follows a walking path inward, so the viewer experiences the gradual compression of space as tents, trusses, and draped fabric narrow the passage. Frames linger on thresholds where house fronts meet the temporary interior of the reception, showing how doors, steps, and window ledges are repurposed as seating, serving stations, or storage. These materials capture the spatial experience of the event as it unfolds, and they reveal how temporary rules and neighborly negotiations are enacted in real time.

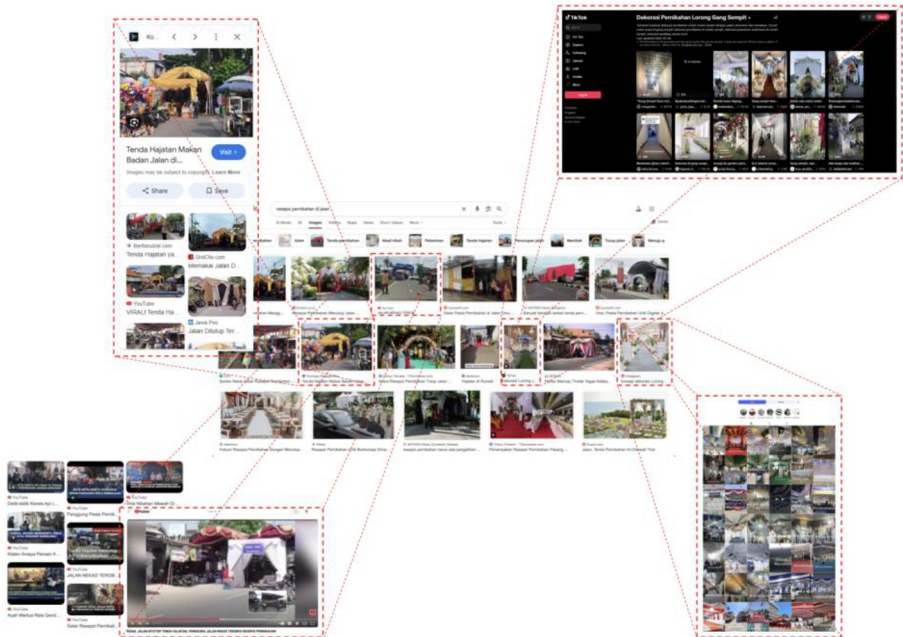


Fig. 2. Multi-stages investigation through web-based searching

The third stage consists of a TikTok search centered on short videos, using the playlist feature to organize and examine related clusters. A TikTok playlist functions like a folder, organizing many clips under a single heading so viewers can scan a seamless collection of similar videos. The playlist used here focuses on wedding decoration in narrow alleyways, typically curated by tent and decoration vendors as a promotional showcase. Each playlist assembles variations on the same motif, namely narrow alleys fitted with modular tents, drapery, lighting, seating, and buffet lines, allowing the observer to scan repeated solutions side by side. Taken together, the playlist operates as a serialized catalogue that shows how the ceremonial space comes into being across contexts, and it helps identify the practical consequences of temporary spatiality produced by tent installations in lived, everyday settings. The last stage consists of an Instagram query targeting single images, carousel posts, and short videos (Reels). Carousels are

especially useful because they present a sequence of stills in one post, which allows frame-by-frame reading of the setup, the finished arrangement, and occasional teardown. As in the previous step, the focus is on vendor accounts associated with wedding receptions. The aim is to collect as much information as possible about elements and events relevant to the topic. Taken together, single images, carousels, and reels provide complementary views that support close reading of spatial configuration, circulation, and temporary rules, and they enrich the metadata needed to compare cases of street intervention across sites.

Overall, this cross-platform workflow produces a curated, multimodal dataset that links still images, video, captions, and basic metadata into a clear base of evidence. By comparing what each source shows, we translate key ideas (negotiation, temporary rules, spatial adaptation, circulation, and phasing) into workable indicators and map them consistently across cases. We acknowledge limits such as platform curation and incomplete metadata, yet overlap among sources and explicit notes on uncertainty help keep the analysis reliable. Taken as a whole, the synthesis provides a solid foundation for examining how street-based wedding receptions create temporary collective territories, and how those territories are negotiated, regulated, and experienced in everyday urban life.

4 From Negotiation to Transformation of Territory

This study analyses data collected by conducting detailed descriptions and categorisations of key issues in selected cases. These descriptions aim to build an understanding of existing complexities (Creswell, 2007) and reveal questions about hidden patterns (Jenkins, 2013). The data obtained reveals that the context of "roads" as spaces for wedding receptions encompasses a diverse spectrum of characteristics. The spectrum here relates to the types of roads used or intervened by these activities. In contrast, the characteristics relate to the condition of the streets, which are essentially a means of mobility for people and vehicles. These characteristics are also related to the traffic on these streets during wedding activities, which interferes with the space.

Wedding activities that use roads as their location can be categorised into two types of roads: small roads or alleys in residential areas, and large/main roads in a neighbourhood/city (figure 3). This condition is not considered to be caused by the needs of the wedding activities, which then cause the community/organisers to choose a suitable road. Instead, it is closely related to the location of the community holding the activities. Therefore, they basically use the location of the activities contextually in relation to the type of road that exists or is closest to the area where they live. In the context of main roads, there are two categories of wedding activities: those held in spaces on the side of the road and those that use the road itself. In the case of using road space, there are two different conditions, namely occupying half the width of the road or using the entire width of the road. Meanwhile, in the context of small roads or alleys in residential areas, there are three categories of activities, namely using the road space in front of the house of the party organising the event, using the road space and space inside the house (either the organiser's house or their neighbour's house), and using the entire width of the

road/alley. The spectrum of road space usage described above illustrates a condition of "hijacking" space, as mentioned in the theory of *dérive* (Debord, 2010; McDonough, 2004), and clearly shows a condition that is considered "ugly" because it places something that should not be there (Cousins, 1994; Douglas, 2002).



Fig. 3. The different types of road as a context of wedding reception (Source: Various web-based sources)

In various contexts where wedding activities occupy roads, several different characteristics are found. The most apparent characteristic is how wedding activities overlap or superimpose on activities that should generally take place on a road, namely, the movement of people and vehicles. With the presence of wedding activities, road users encounter obstacles and must find ways to pass through. Trespassing can be seen as a form of spatial practice that reflects the reality of urban space (de Certeau, 1984). However, in this case, road users remain on their designated paths, and it is the activities that should not be taking place there that alter the situation. The data in this study reveals various traffic conditions, including those that are entirely closed and those that can still operate. It is these conditions that continue to run, showing several different variants. These range from partial running (where one side of the road is closed) to running with congestion, adjustments, and conditions where traffic continues as usual. From the mapping and categorisation of data, two key factors emerged as crucial in the formation of collective territory during the wedding reception described above: the negotiation of regulations and the spatial transformation of occupation.

4.1 Negotiation of regulation

Regulations in the space where wedding receptions take place are not essentially abolished or eliminated, but instead negotiated. These negotiations take several forms, ranging from how society collectively manages access, rearticulates boundaries, or reorganises how circulation takes place in that space. All forms of negotiation are informal agreements and are based on temporary rules, as shown in figure 4 and 5. This temporality is an important factor in the "agreements" that occur in public spaces. In cases where wedding reception tents occupy road space, regulations on road use are

immediately changed and negotiated. A tent blocking one lane of a main road necessitates traffic flow adjustments on the remaining lanes, converting them to two-way traffic.

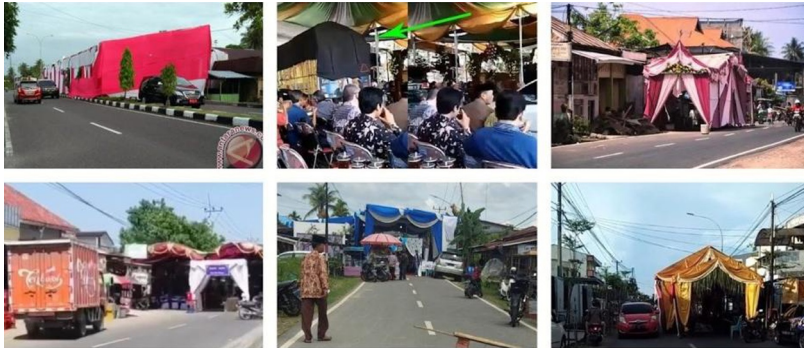


Fig. 4. The negotiation of regulation in different context (Source: Various web-based sources)

Another form of negotiation involves changes to the categories of vehicles that can pass through or the speed at which they can travel along the road. A tent covering part of the main road creates a temporary regulation, allowing motorcycles to pass through the centre of the tent. At the same time, cars must adjust by travelling along the remaining section of the road outside the tent area. Roads that were originally passable at a certain speed and allowed for smooth traffic flow have been transformed into roads with new speed controls and adjustments to traffic flow. Negotiations related to traffic flow also occur due to the occupation of space at traffic lights. The presence of tents occupying this space causes the traffic lights to cease functioning temporarily, and their mechanism is replaced by several people who regulate traffic movement.

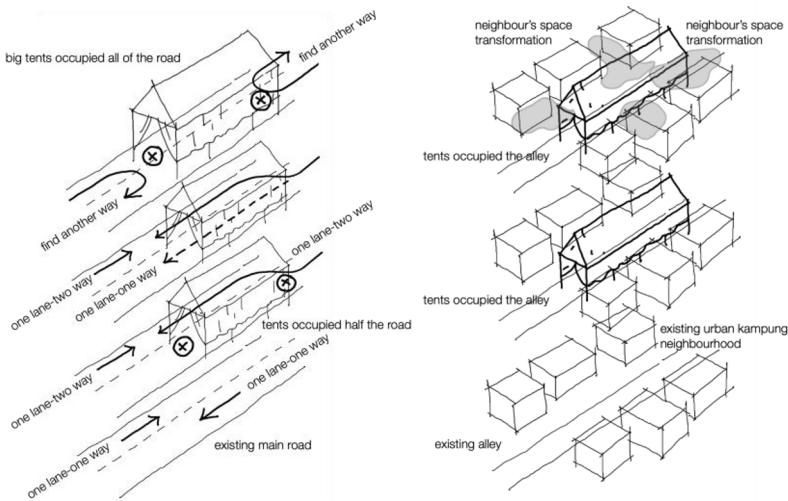


Fig. 5. The negotiation and transformation regarding spatiality and regulation

4.2 Spatial transformation and occupation

The transformation of space is the most visible aspect of the phenomenon of wedding receptions on public roads. The most obvious change is how a space that was originally public becomes temporarily private. This private element arises because only certain parties organise the ceremonial activities, whereas a large number of people have the right to use the road equally. However, other spatial changes can also occur as a result of the event's occupation, such as the transformation of the street into an area for street vendors accompanying the festivities. This condition occurs in wedding activities that occupy and close roads in residential areas.

The wedding reception, which took place in a narrow alley in a densely populated neighbourhood, also brought about another temporary transformation of space, namely the yards of the houses surrounding the venue. Spaces used initially as terraces, garages, or for other purposes were transformed into areas that became part of the reception activities. Among other things, they became areas where guests were seated, areas for placing food tables, and areas for welcoming arriving guests. The occupation of space not only eliminated the original function of the space, but at the same time articulated the space for a different function. The territory of these spaces is then collectively owned by the original owners and the parties carrying out the activities. A space instantly becomes an intersection of different authorities, and this occurs very fluidly. The transformation that takes place does not involve significant changes to the physical aspects, but instead involves maneuvering and cleverly reading the suitability of the space.

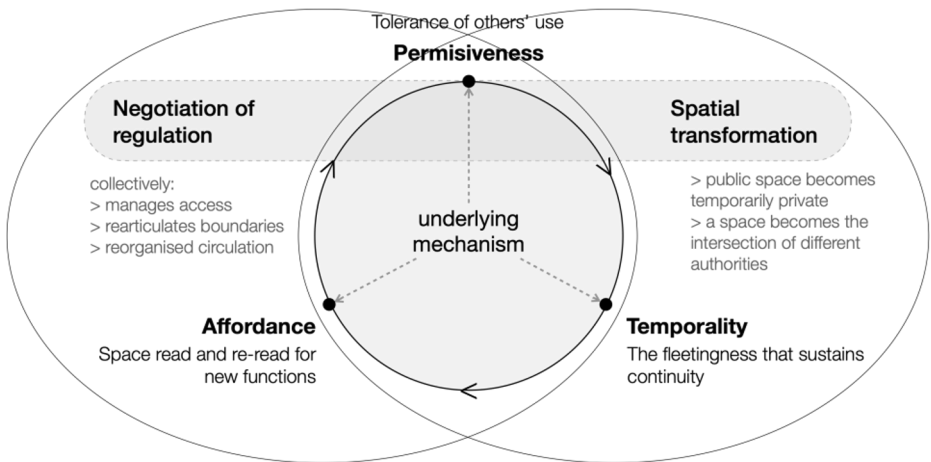


Fig. 6. Underlying mechanism of collective territory

This study considers that formal design aspects do not dominate regulatory negotiations or spatial transformations. The application of spatial and territorial definitions related to formal aspects is undoubtedly present, but several underlying factors contribute to this application. This study reveals that the underlying aspects include

permissiveness, affordance and spatial reading, as well as temporality and flexibility (figure 6). Permissiveness relates to the willingness of each party to tolerate appropriation. The collectivity contained herein exceeds the realm of common goals or benefits. This permissive attitude is more fundamental and results in the unnecessary dominance of logical reasoning over spatial ownership. Affordance and spatial reading relate to how the reinterpretation of space to fulfil functions that were not initially intended for that space takes place. This affordance then becomes the basis for how a space can be read and re-read by society, so that they present different articulations. The final aspect, temporality and flexibility, relates to the function of time on the activities that take place. The collective territory that is created can exist only at certain times and for particular durations. However, at the same time, it can continue to exist in different spaces. This transience is the strength of collective territory, making it a flexible and fluid concept of space that always exists in different contexts.

5 Conclusion

The understanding of collective territory is not only related to the clarity of aspects that can define the territory or the clarity of space ownership. Clarity often forms explicit regulatory articulation, including in terms of showing where the boundaries of a particular group of people's space are and where another group of people's space is. However, the flexibility of boundaries and the ambiguity of spatial ownership can also potentially give rise to different forms of territorial articulation. This flexibility is not a weakness, but rather a phenomenon that can be interpreted as a distinct understanding of the concept of collective territory.

This paper contributes to architectural discourse by framing Collective Territory as a concept for understanding how collective negotiations of territory serve as a mechanism for generating spatial production. It presents how an informal and temporary setting, such as a wedding reception held in communal access ways, especially in this particular case, public roads and neighbourhood alleys, converts the path of movement into a momentary space of gathering. By situating these practices within the everydayness of the Global South, the study broadens architectural attention to understanding territory beyond formal design and regulation.

The findings suggest that recognising such collective and temporal negotiations of space encourages a rethinking of architectural engagement with informality, community practice, and adaptation. Rather than viewing these events as departures from planned order, they can be seen as spatial production practices that articulate community values, social consent, and resourcefulness. Furthermore, findings regarding spatial transformation, whereby private spaces become public spaces and then return to being private, indicate that space can be defined as an intersection of different authorities. This study has limitations in terms of research methods that do not apply direct observation, or in aspects of case studies that differ in type of activity. Further studies will be needed and have the potential to develop the findings of this study, given that it is highly possible for similar studies to be conducted using different methods. Research on the conception of space in Indonesian society needs to be conducted with a critical

perspective related to everyday life. This perspective offers a foundation for reimagining design approaches that are responsive to negotiation, temporality, and shared territory in the built environment.

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