Occupying Leftover Urban Space by \textit{Bajaj} in Manggarai Station, Jakarta

Rumaishatul Ulya*, Dr.-Ing. Yulia Nurliani Lukito, ST, MDesS.

Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, University of Indonesia, Depok, 16424, Indonesia

*e-mail: rumaishatul.ulya@ui.ac.id

Abstract— In everyday life of the city, both formal and informal spaces exist with informal space as a sphere of spatial claim-making. The idea of informal space is very compelling to understand what really happens in everyday life of the city. The structure of the city, including its physical elements, contributes to the creation of informal space in urban life. It is the aim of this paper to relate the users or people in their everyday life with urban structures. We believe that informality in urban space, which is usually understood as a problem, can actually contribute to urban design development. As a basic platform to discuss informality in the city are some elements of the city such as nodes, corridors and connections, stepping stones, and barriers. Those elements define an absence of fixed values in informal space and, as consequences, there will be a negotiated space as a result of spatial claiming made by users. Here, we examine how informal space can create a negotiation of space and produce a specific space that experienced today, but might be different tomorrow. As a case study, this paper discusses the phenomenon of \textit{bajaj} ‘ngetem’ around Manggarai Station, in South Jakarta. ‘Ngetem’ is an activity of waiting for users to use \textit{bajaj}, which usually happens in a strategic city’s spot. The phenomena of ‘ngetem’ shows us how a leftover space can be used by people of the city and how the activity of occupying leftover space generates unique space and even produces new image of the city. By discussing the connection between the elements of urban informality around Manggarai Station and how users of the city occupy leftover spaces, we argue that urban informality becomes an important thing in the representation of the city. Moreover, the interaction between users and the physical elements of the city creates unique lived space. This paper suggests that considering and focusing on urban informality will offer new point of interventions and guidelines in our urban development.

Keywords— \textit{bajaj}, leftover space, urban informality, negotiated space

I. INTRODUCTION

Architecture, urban space, and everyday life are strongly related to each other. The interaction among them is related to design and occupation and to understand the interaction we need to know the actors or the users of urban space and their activities. There are two important actors in urban space, namely planners and users [1]. Discussing the two point of views of those actors will lead us to a better understanding of how people use urban space in everyday life and show that both formal city structure and urban informality are significant. However, urban informality creates a specific mode of the production of space and thus it continuously changes the meaning of space as the result of space claiming.

In dealing with city structure, Lynch suggests five basic physical elements to have an image of the city: paths, edges, nodes, districts, and landmarks [2]. In addition to this, Peraboni offers some other basic elements to understand the structure and the informality of built environment through nodes, corridors and connections, stepping stones, and barriers [3]. A discussion of basic elements of the city is related to the space production in everyday life and how users perceive opportunities in certain urban spaces. Therefore, it becomes a necessary thing to examine strategies, tactics and elements in understanding urban informality of the city.

Michel de Certeau in the Practice of Everyday Life examines how people individualize things in order to make those things suit their needs by using the idea of strategy and tactic [4]. Strategy means any method or rule of power manipulation related to proper places. By contrast with strategy, a tactic—which connected not only to places but also to time—is a manipulation of activity doing by users that take advantages of “opportunity” in strategic areas [5]. Strategies and tactics are two components in everyday architecture and urban life that cannot be separated as the way we create city images and give meaning to the city. In short, we can say that strategy is the way planners and government create the structure of the city while tactics are space making of people with less power or the weak.

Upton sees everyday life as less a rhetorical practice or collection of leftover activities and people have their own habits and backgrounds that will give various meanings to urban space [6]. This means that some activities in the city are formal or happened in certain or desired places according to the plan and some activities are informal or
happened in leftover spaces or out of plan. Upton’s idea captures not only formal but also informal interactions and tactical meanings of the city, though those meanings are not a perfect representation of the city as planned by governments or designers. Hackenbroch uses the idea of fixed values of informal space to describe negotiated space as a temporal condition that has a continuous existence in urban spaces [7]. He identifies many claim-making of informal spaces, which usually happens in public spaces, as a tactic for occupying leftover urban space. In other words, claiming making in informal spaces exists in social and political urban life [8].

Most of the time, in designing a city planners use their objective views that only give a frozen image of everyday relationships in urban life. Ignoring our structural, tactical or interaction in the city means that those planners neglect a fundamental dimension of urbanism. Crawford sees the connection between everyday life and urban design is established through an everyday space: a space that is constructed spontaneously between defined and undefined realms of home (private or first places), institutions (public or second places), and workplace (third places) [9].

In this study, we relate the city structure as strategies and people living in the city as an actor who use tactics in everyday life of the city. We believe that the notion of everyday urbanism can help us to re-establish the neglected connection between the structure of the city and everyday urban environments or people living in the city. Though the everyday space is descriptive and generic, close observation of the city and people highlights inhabitation, action, and appropriation of space. The users’ point of view is vital in such a public realm to addresses informal and spontaneous utilization of space together with the formal and designated functions. Formal public places such as squares, markets, and parks have often been studied in connection to historic and ideal places providing opportunities for people. But, informal activities in everyday places that construct multiple forms of public are less recognized and result negotiated space.

One of those realities is in the phenomenon of bajaj ‘ngetem’ activities in Manggarai Station, Jakarta, as an example of negotiated space. This paper discusses the structure of the city and how people appropriate and negotiate space with the case study of bajaj ‘ngetem’ in Manggarai Station. We would like to discuss the concept of urban informality’s through bajaj’s activities, as a connection between the structure of the city and everyday life. Hopefully it can help us to understand that informality and unplanned activities in the city can be positive things for further city development.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Bajaj is commonly found in Jakarta as one of public transportation in the city. The drivers’ well-known activity is called ‘ngetem’ or waiting for costumers or just to take a rest in the sidewalks that have strong invitation elements for people to come. Unfortunately, they are often seen as not appropriate activities and stimulating cities problems like traffic. Bajaj drivers are considered in a weak position since their activities are not appropriately follow the function of urban space.

Jakarta as one of big cities with high urbanization faces a problem of informal space and activity seen as an excess when planners design urban areas. The informal space and activity actually play an important role in the economy of the city but their existence is often seen as troubles or out of place. Tarlo says that social-dynamic among spaces, places, and actors can be understood by city’s structures and elements interaction that creates many events in urban life with unique characteristic [10]. For example, we all know that every city has a transportation system and the planner has created in some strategic areas for those systems. Bajaj drivers try to occupy any possible strategic areas in Jakarta to get some costumers, knowing that they have less formal spaces for their activities in comparison to bus or train.

In Jakarta, there are some areas used by bajaj drivers to wait for customers or known as pangakalan. The place of pangkalan is usually related to strategic places near market and offices. In developing a transportation system, there is a lack of connection between formal and informal activities that creates an opportunity for the ‘users’ of the city to claim space. In claiming those spaces people feel that they have some rights to use the space since those spaces are in public domain [11]. Planners and governments have only few attentions to informal activities in planning and designing the city and consequently the creation of urban informal can be avoids.

Bajaj drivers survive because they support urban services, especially for middle and lower class, and provide alternative route to people. Moreover, bajaj driver is one of occupation for people with relatively lower education background in comparison to employees working in offices in Jakarta. Around the 1970s bajaj started to become a transportation mode in Jakarta known as having bright orange color, noise and making pollution from waste gas. In the year two thousand, Jakarta government decided to change the appearance of bajaj into ‘Bajaj BBG’ which have blue color, with gas as its fuel that creates less noise and smoke. The bajaj is a small three-wheel vehicle that can carry up to 3 passengers, it can bring you almost to every corner of the city with shorter route. Where buses and cars cannot go through, bajaj can go through alleys. Another interesting thing about bajaj is that passengers can bargain the fare to their destination.

However, the routes for bajaj are limited and it cannot go through main boulevards. Occupying a part of the street for ‘ngetem’ is considered an illegal activity yet it is needed in the city. In reality the activity of bajaj ‘ngetem’ attracts other economic activities such as street vendors and other kind of transportation, like taxi and ojek and it gives something amusing yet full of social values in street life. In the end pangkalan bajaj and bajaj ‘ngetem’ create an interesting phenomenon in the street life and space claiming activity becomes inseparable part of Jakarta urban life.

The problem that arises in connection with bajaj ‘ngetem’ is mostly caused by urban authorities who try to
keep the city in order. Therefore, it seems that there is no place for informal activities. There is also extortion from people or a group of people who claim the place belongs to them, and if bajaj drivers want to stop for a while or ‘ngetem’ in that place they need to pay. Urban spatial planning that is not based on the understanding of urban informality will tend to ignore the need of spaces from informal sector and even create social friction and problem to the city.

Peraboni introduced the concept of ecology infrastructure to understand informal urban areas so that we can examine the process of urban space transformation, according to:

- Nodes: Areas that have a high ecological value in relation with its context, which have been identified as key elements to protect and potentiate as part of a strategy to consolidate and develop natural values.
- Ecological corridors and connections: It can be considered as a strip of the territory.
- Stepping stones: A category conceptually attached to the ecological corridors, and consist of places which act as rest and refugee areas for determinate user.
- Barriers, which interrupt the ecological networks.

He stresses on the understanding that the infrastructure in the city is connected to ecological environment too. Every landmarks, path, edges, or districts in the city should be seen as a mosaic of urban life. Urban informality come along with a negotiated space in the city, which is usually seen as leftover space and it becomes a bad element for the city image. Space with any possibilities that everyone whose acknowledged it as an opportunity will occupy that space for personal or communal gain.

The phenomena of bajaj ‘ngetem’ in Jakarta should be understood in the context of urban space transformation that includes some elements in its structure and the space use. The application of the concept of urban informality in the practice of urban planning will integrate informal with the formal activities, and accommodate the need for informal activities such as bajaj ‘ngetem’. As parts of urban economic and transportation system, bajaj deserves more attention in urban spaces not only to accommodate their activities but also to support the need for transportation. Bajaj is one of transportation systems and actor in urban economy that can foster the development of the city. Moreover, it plays a role in shaping the image of the city that should not be considered as an excess to formal city structure.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The idea of tactics and strategies in bajaj ‘ngetem’ can help us to understand the everyday life of the city, how informality plays in urban space, and how time might be as important as space. Pangkalan bajaj, which is usually seen as an ugliness in urban areas, gives an opportunity to develop informality in Jakarta into something desirable and good structured. Discussing strategy and tactic used by people of the city gives a basis for an explanation of pangkalan bajaj as temporary elements in the city.

Considering informality in designing urban space can help to achieve visual order in the urban environment rather than ignoring the existence of it.

Discussing urban informality means examining how people use urban space in everyday life. City like Jakarta has mixed land uses to maintain the high mobility in every district. All transit spots hold an important role to see how well the city doing is. In this study, we define that Manggarai Station becomes one of urban mosaic elements as well as its function. The daily activity around its environment represents the interaction of its space elements. Stepping stones element, as one of urban informality’s elements, is facing out and makes perceptions and opportunities around the space can be used by every actor of everyday life. This space also tells us about what leftover space is and how claim-making space happens around Manggarai Station is.

Pangkalan bajaj around Manggarai Station is one of negotiated spaces in Jakarta that also becomes urban informality. Street vendors, bajaj, taxi, and ojek drivers occupy the leftover space and try to divide and negotiate space among themselves. Space division and social interaction become important to their negotiation. Fig. 2 describes the occupation space around Manggarai station conducted by many actors such as bajaj or taxi drivers. We can experience the space composition have done by people who claim informal space near the station.
The space for *bajaj* ‘ngetem’ describes something special for it is located in a strategic area needed by many people in the station area. *Bajaj* drivers occupy strategic space near the entrance that has fences as barriers located between inside and outside of the station. The entrance of the station has one-meter-high fences along the paths to direct people. As a solid element, those fences create a clear border for the station. From this situation, the drivers can look clearly to passengers getting out of the station as well as observing what happens outside the station so that they can call passengers from the station. The fences and the openings make solid-void elements that give an opportunity for *bajaj* drivers (Fig. 3). In this space, there are some interaction between space and people, inside or outside the Station. People, in this study refer to passengers, who during their transit in Manggarai station do various activities. They get in or get out the station, tap their tickets, walk along the paths, have some stops or buy some food, and wait for someone. Passengers do their activities in the station created or directed by physical elements. The area outside passenger’s area may be called leftover space such as near the side walk and some corners. *Bajaj* drivers are one of the informal communities who see the leftover space in front of the station and consider that leftover space as necessary for their activities.

City’s elements like edges, barriers, corridors and connections are shown by the station’s structure and its surroundings. Edges and barriers are described from its fences, stairs, or the canopies. In other way, edges and barriers give different spatial qualities in our lived experiences. Corridors and connections are shown by its floors or paths that brought us to every corner of the spaces. Interactions among those elements, highlighted the reaction from each element. By any means, stepping stones elements come along with the interaction of corridors and connections which role as rest and refugee areas for determinate user. At the same time those spaces are lack of continuous corridors and connections that support social and spatial interaction. This tells us how stepping stones element in urban informality gives some advantages for people who occupy the leftover space around.

‘Ngetem’ take an important activity, as strategy, among *bajaj* drivers in urban areas. According to the strategy, every *bajaj* that have come to pangkalan must be in a row (Fig. 4). When a passenger comes, and takes the first *bajaj*, it makes the order line goes forward. The order from what seems to be chaos also affect other users such as ojek or taxi drivers and street vendors to create their rule and order and look for opportunity in the same informal space around Manggarai station.

Tactics are related to daily activities and affected by time. Fig. 5 tells us in different time, there will be different activities, occupancy of space, and various possibilities of using the leftover space around Manggarai station. Around 7-10A.M., many people are in a hurry to go to their works and this increases the opportunity for
street vendors and bajaj drivers for example as dominant users around Manggarai station who claim leftover spaces for them. Bajaj drivers give food for people while those people wait for the transportation. Accordingly, bajaj take the opportunity to offer alternative transportation with its ability to cut across the traffic. As the time goes by, those hectic-morning-activities seems to become normal again and the leftover space is occupied with less bajaj drivers. Bajaj around Manggarai Station start to claim the leftover space around four o’clock in the afternoon as people go back from their works to their home. During busiest time in the morning and in the late afternoon, bajaj drivers stay or ‘ngetem’ only for a short time and some street vendors and ojek driver may take over their empty space. The society existence in urban informality usually changes and gives us variation of urban space quality through the time. We can tell that it is one of everyday life and negotiated space framework that exist in our life. Negotiation of rules, claim-making with regulations and spaces, continuous transformation, and absence of fixed values are the way negotiated space produced. As negotiated space is produced, borders of activities defined by physical elements also changes. Responses of users define interactions and negotiation of space. Seeing this phenomenon, we can tell that everyday space is in opposite side with public space that has designed function [12]. However, the existence of everyday space and public space are completing each other performance and identity.

The meaning of urban space, public are continually being redefined in the practice through lived experienced and representation. Considering existence of informality, we can begin to recognize a multiplicity of simultaneous urban interaction which created by all elements in the environment. Expressing urban informalities offer a new way to have a formal design in intervention and some directions in designing and restructuring urban space. Discussions bajaj ‘ngetem’ space in designated locations acknowledge the amazing reality of bajaj needed but attempt to restrict one of the main advantages of public transportation in the city like Jakarta: its ability to respond to capable in urban space and image of the city.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research finding presented in this study, as one of the actor in the city, bajaj driver manage their business by occupying leftover urban space. The leftover space in Manggarai is defined by everyday activities around Manggarai station which becomes a negotiated space defined by physical elements. Bajaj drivers do some strategies and tactics in order to make use of the leftover space, and their activities create urban informality. The strategy that they use is related to the use of physical elements so that people know their existence in some strategic spots. The tactics that they use is related to continuous changes of spatial interaction in different times. They do some interaction in leftover space, like marking the space by their lines up while ‘ngetem’, and it describes how significant their space claiming or their negotiation with space, time, and people. In short, both planner and users of the city have important role for using and developing the urban space, and it is important to incorporate the informal activities to create order and opportunity in the everyday life of the city.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper presents findings from my final thesis research in architecture subject. I would like to thank Mrs. Yulia as my supervisor in this thesis and Mrs. Joko as my college supervisor. Furthermore, I would also like to thank the three reviewers whose comments enabled me to further improve this paper.

REFERENCES