

Insurgent Planning Practices in Indonesia's Development Planning

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Abstract

Insurgent planning represents a strand of planning theory that transcends political boundaries, challenges societal oppression, and envisions alternative urban futures. This study explores the concept and practices of insurgent planning in Indonesia through a descriptive qualitative method with a comparative approach, focusing on three major cities: Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Jakarta. The findings reveal dynamics similar to those in the Global South. In Yogyakarta, the Kalijawi Community, supported by Arkom Jogja, resisted eviction along riverbanks through social network strengthening and alternative housing initiatives. In Makassar, Kampung Pisang residents addressed tenure insecurity with Arkom Makassar via participatory mapping, negotiation, and land-sharing. In Jakarta, post-eviction residents of Kampung Aquarium reclaimed their right to the city through advocacy, litigation, and coalition-building. The study concludes that reclaiming neglected urban assets represents the most prominent form of insurgent planning, emphasising a shift from top-down approaches towards inclusive, participatory, and justice-oriented urban planning.

Keywords: Insurgent Planning, Participatory Planning, Urban Justice, Informal Settlements, Alternative Urban Futures

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, various planning theories and perspectives have emerged. Friedmann (1987) stated that planning theory is ineffective in practice due to a lack of understanding of its multidimensional aspects. On the other hand, Healey (1987) argues that to become a developed country, there are three major traditions, namely economic planning, physical development management, and public administration management and policy analysis, which are multidimensional in nature. Although contradictory, both parties agree on the multifaceted nature of planning. Some time ago, transformative planning theory became known. Transformative planning theory emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional planning, which often failed to account for existing conditions and societal phenomena. Transformative planning theory is further divided based on its nature, with some being revolutionary and others evolutionary.

In addition, Abbot (in Priyani, 2005) states that planning is a process carried out to change the future in accordance with expectations. From this, we can see that there are three critical timelines: the past, the present, and the future, which form the basis of planning itself. According to Friedmann (1987), planning contains four constituent elements, namely 1) planning as a way of thinking about socio-economic issues; 2) planning is always future-oriented; 3) planning focuses on achieving goals and the decision-making process; and 4) planning prioritises comprehensive policies and programmes. Hudson, Galloway, and Kaufman (1979) describe five planning theories, namely Synoptic, Incremental, Transactional, Advocacy, and Radical, which are later abbreviated as SITAR. Later, another SITAR development planning theory emerged, one of which is *insurgent* planning, which is similar to radical planning.

Insurgent planning has existed since the neoliberal era and authoritarian regimes. This planning was a result of high immigration and development at the time, which led to inequality in several regions, particularly in access to basic services. This inequality became the basis for grassroots citizenship to resist government planning and for related stakeholders to demand their rights to basic services that they were not receiving. Insurgent planning is a form of planning that accommodates communities marginalised by non-inclusive spatial planning. Insurgent planning tends to spark social innovation among communities, which may differ from country to country due to different social values and norms. Marginalised communities are typically groups that face difficulties accessing various services, including information on planning. Those who are marginalised in planning will find it challenging to rebel and resist until they have a good understanding of the planning. Through planning models such as insurgent planning, knowledge related to planning will be decentralised among all actors so that it does not rely solely on planners and professional experts. This insurgent planning approach provides a deeper understanding of knowledge production and community formation from marginalised communities in development (Sletto, 2021).

Marginalised groups, affected by neoliberalism, find themselves marginalised and forced to commit offences to access basic services and urban spaces that they consider to be their rights within the city. The failure to distribute basic services and citizens' rights evenly has led these marginalised groups to rebel. They are fighting against privatisation, which leads to the dehumanisation of the poor and the underprivileged. Insurgent planning is not a new or rare phenomenon; rather, it is a common practice in the Global South. Several regions in countries belonging to the Global South have experienced insurgent planning practices resulting from neoliberalism and capitalist hegemony, which is supported by the government regime system. In some cases, insurgent planning occurs in informal communities characterized by economic inequality, where specific communities lack access to essential services, including healthcare, housing, food, and infrastructure, as well as political representation. These marginalised groups will be accompanied or form alliances to strengthen their position in voicing their concerns and participating in politics regarding the distribution of rights. Some of them involve collaboration with academics and NGOs that assist and act as intermediaries between urban planners and local communities.

This issue is then resolved using an approach known as co-production. Using a participatory approach, several of these Southern Global countries have formed joint design strategies to facilitate mass services that meet urban environmental needs they previously lacked, especially by highlighting the disproportionate burden borne by informal settlements and the excessive capacity and agency that often exist through organised and structured collectives. The objective of this research is to explore the practice of insurgent planning in major Indonesian cities.

METHODS

This research is a descriptive qualitative study using a comparative study method. This study compares several insurgent planning practices in major cities, specifically Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Jakarta, identifying their differences and similarities. In addition, the insurgent planning strategies implemented in these cities were identified using parameters from six strategies in insurgent planning (Hou, 2010), whereby these strategies facilitate feasible changes in existing conditions rather than seeking broader changes that would mobilise broader structures that reproduce inequality. The six strategies identified are:

1. Appropriating (Repurposing urban assets): Reallocating the use of urban resources for the benefit of citizens.
2. Reclaiming (Adapting underutilised assets): Using underutilised resources to achieve citizens' goals.
3. Pluralising (Adaptation for underrepresented communities): Adapting planning practices to reflect a broader range of interests, particularly those that incorporate the interests of minorities.
4. Transgressing (Crossing official boundaries): Crossing institutional boundaries to convey alternative visions from existing institutions.
5. Uncovering (Making visible assets): Reinterpreting urban resources to make them visible and usable by residents and communities.
6. Contesting (Disputing over assets/framing): Actively debating dominant framing and visions of the city in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As in other developing countries, several insurgent planning practices are evident. This article will discuss insurgent planning practices in three major cities in Indonesia: Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Jakarta, and how these cities strategize to solve the problems they face.

Yogyakarta

One example of insurgent planning practices in Indonesia is the situation on the riverbanks in Yogyakarta. Although this city is a Special Region, its Human Development Index and poverty rate remain relatively high, with concentrations in the riverbank area. The inability to buy a house due to increasing market pressure has rendered various types of tenures insecure for the lower-middle class. Marginalised communities face a lack of public investment and the threat of eviction due to being considered slums.

Their desperation eventually led them to form a community to fight for and defend their rights to remain living on the riverbanks by forming a community network known as the Kalijawi Community. This community has received local support from Arsitek Komunitas Jogja (Arkom) and has been working together since 2010. With assistance from Arkom, the Kalijawi community has implemented several strategies to address housing issues on the riverbanks. These include negotiations to prevent eviction, forming savings and loan groups, mapping and assessing assets, conducting land use negotiations, and improving the physical condition of their homes. These actions are part of insurgent planning practices aimed at securing their tenure (Broto et al., 2022).

When linked to insurgent planning strategies, the following applies:

1. Appropriating: Informal settlements along riverbanks are a strategy of rebellion that leads to land redistribution. Negotiations aim to secure the 'right to remain', often following occupation, and to enhance tenure security for communities.
2. Reclaiming: Mutual Recognition Disclosure – Mapping and surveying activities value community knowledge and reveal the existence and scale of marginalised communities. This helps to reinterpret riverbanks as places of inclusion and environmental protection.
3. Pluralising: The formation of savings and loan groups and subsequently the Kalijawi network has created spaces for engagement that facilitate community participation in formal spaces.

Makassar

Kampung Pisang is a village in the city of Makassar inhabited by 240 people, with the majority of the community working in the informal sector. Kampung Pisang is the result of the development of the Jeneberang River, which was formed in 1980. It was developed from the dredged land of the embankment, originally a swamp and fishpond, into a village. Approximately 7,000 m² of land, resulting from the construction of the Jeneberang River embankment, is home to 31 permanent and semi-permanent houses.

In 2006, the Makassar City National Land Agency (BPN) then reclaimed the land boundaries by revoking the SHM in the area, and since then, Kampung Pisang has experienced land ownership conflicts. For some time, the people of Kampung Pisang faced threats from developers who claimed the land they had occupied for 30 years by showing certificates and rights to the land. Thus, the developers had legitimate ownership of the land, and the people of Kampung Pisang were considered to be in violation because they had built on land that they did not own (PNPM Kota Makassar, n.d.).

The residents of Kampung Pisang have engaged in various acts of rebellion and have received threats of eviction on multiple occasions. The community of Kampung Pisang received support from Arkom Makassar to try to resolve their housing issues. They were assisted in negotiating with the relevant government agencies, offering alternative housing locations and land-sharing methods. They also carried out mapping, planning, and designing a new environment for Kampung Pisang.

1. Appropriating: Kampung Pisang was formed on land that was not originally owned by its residents. What was initially open space was then turned into a settlement, a strategy of rebellion that led to the redistribution of land. The community negotiated to secure their 'right to live' and obtain tenure security.
2. Pluralising: The community collaborated in planning the development of the village environment to meet their collective housing needs in the new Kampung Pisang.

3. Transgressing (Crossing official boundaries): Voicing injustices experienced and demanding tenure rights, as well as providing input and alternatives for tenure security through land sharing.
4. Reclaiming: Attempting to map and scan land that can be claimed in locations not far from the previous settlement for land sharing.

Jakarta

Kampung Aquarium is located on an island formed by sedimentation carried by the Ciliwung River towards its estuary. The sedimentation formed in the 18th century and took the shape of an island. Over time, ownership of the land was transferred to residents through sale and purchase agreements with the management, and it became the origin of the residents' settlement, before being evicted in 2016 by the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government. After the eviction, most residents chose to stay on the existing land by setting up tents and non-permanent shacks.

In their struggle, the Aquarium Village community was supported by various parties, including the Rujak Community, LBH, JRMK, and UPC, as well as academics and agrarian research teams. This was achieved through a participatory approach with the Aquarium Village community, with an emphasis on co-producing knowledge. Some of the strategies and practices employed by Kampung Aquarium to reclaim their rights to the city include defending their location, transforming their settlement, employing soft diplomacy, co-producing knowledge, advocating at various levels, creating networks between villages, coalitions, and collaborations, engaging in litigation, and legitimizing various actors. When viewed from a strategic perspective, the following can be observed:

1. Reclaiming: transforming settlements,
2. Pluralising (Adaptation for underrepresented communities): forming coalitions and collaborations, creating networks between villages
3. Transgressing (Crossing official boundaries): advocating at various levels (local, city, regional, national, international)
4. Uncovering (Making visible assets): Co-producing knowledge and undertaking settlement transformation planning (reconfiguring space)
5. Contesting (Disputing over assets/framing): soft diplomacy, litigation, and legitimisation of various actors, highlighting the struggle for identity and rights in the public sphere

In line with Henri Lefebvre's theory of space production, space is not a passive container but a social product that is continuously shaped by social, economic, and political forces. This indirectly shows that urban space is shaped by social, economic, and political forces that enable disparities in the ability to use urban space, in line with Harvey's theory of the right to the city. Capitalist urbanisation, reflected in space as a social container, leads to social inequality and unequal access to the city, resulting in grassroots planning practices initiated by communities unable to access the right to the city. In the case study area, a rebellion emerged against the process of urban development and planning, indicating that the planning and distribution of benefits and rights within the city have not yet been achieved or are still far from being balanced, which is inevitable. This study supports Lefebvre and Harvey's theory as an extension of the understanding of the co-production of planning knowledge and insurgent planning practices in Indonesia. This phenomenon highlights the need for innovative approaches, methods, and solutions in regional development planning in Indonesia, which continues to face complex social and urban dynamics.

Several common causes of insurgent planning in Indonesia are attributed to the harshness of capitalism and market competition, including land acquisition, as well as the uncertainty of tenure rights, which have led to land conflicts in several regions. In addition, neoliberalism and social inequality are also similar in these three cases, where vulnerable communities tend to live in grey areas because they are unable to compete and afford decent housing, resulting in them living on open land and facing the threat of eviction (Putri, 2020). It can be concluded that housing provision and land development cannot be left entirely to market mechanisms. The government needs to intervene in distribution so that every community's rights are guaranteed. Various policies can transform the approach to planning, which was originally top-down, into a bottom-up approach, rethinking participatory planning and the participatory indicators themselves. Insurgent Planning in Indonesia is an important approach that produces co-production, which is very useful in solving problems within its radical context.

Each country has a different response to the concept of good governance. In Indonesia, it appears that this concept has taken considerable time to be fully implemented, considering the country's unique character, culture, size, and population. Good governance essentially requires time to implement. Compared to several years after the reform, governance was still far from the principles of good governance. From the analysis results, it was found that the development and implementation of good governance in Indonesia throughout the year underwent changes, and the principles of good governance began to be applied in governance.

CONCLUSION

The insurgent planning approach in Indonesia is not only an indication of resistance to policies that do not favour marginalised communities, but also a form of planning that demonstrates social legitimacy and community resilience in the use of urban space. Insurgent planning, as seen in several case studies, has emerged as an alternative form of inclusive, participatory, and equitable urban planning that accommodates various activities in urban spaces by marginalized groups. The practice of this approach also marks the beginning of a paradigm shift in development, transitioning from top-down to participatory and socially equitable approaches.

A comparison of the three cities under observation, namely Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Jakarta, reveals that all three cities protect the interests of marginalised communities by devising alternative strategies for utilising urban grey space. The city of Yogyakarta has developed alternative housing strategies to strengthen social networks, enabling residents to settle and avoid the need for relocation. In this practice, it was found that insurgent planning has provided new knowledge and strengthened community networks. The same approach was also employed in Makassar City, where participatory mapping and a shared land distribution model were implemented. In Jakarta City, the production of shared knowledge and the development of broad coalitions were observed. In these three cities, the most prominent outcome was that insurgent planning practices had successfully strengthened social networks and facilitated the production of knowledge and innovation, thereby creating models for problem-solving strategies in participatory radical planning practices that lead to fair and sustainable urban development.

Based on the form of insurgent planning proposed by Hou (2010), the most prominent practice in these three Indonesian cities is reclaiming, which is the reuse of neglected assets to strengthen the legitimacy of the community's existence. Reclaiming is carried out on assets such as land that has the potential to be used for housing, settlements, or shared spaces. This strategy appears dominant because many marginalized groups struggle in gray spaces, such as riverbanks, landfill sites, and post-eviction areas. In addition to reclaiming, several other practices were also identified, including appropriation, pluralization, transgression, uncovering, and contesting.

The limitation of this study lies in the lack of detailed literature on insurgent planning in Indonesia, which has prevented a comprehensive comparative analysis from fully capturing the variety of existing strategies. Nevertheless, the implication is that there is a need to shift planning from a top-down approach to a more inclusive and participatory approach. The practice of insurgent planning is not merely a form of resistance; it is a strategic approach to achieving a desired outcome. However, it can also be a source of knowledge and inspiration for policies that favour marginalised groups and open up opportunities for more equitable and sustainable urban planning innovations.

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