



Social and Physical Processes in the Production of Urban Public Space: A Case Study of RPTRA Construction in Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Public spaces in Jakarta have significantly declined due to physical development and illegal occupation. In response, the Jakarta Provincial Government initiated the Integrated Child-Friendly Public Space (RPTRA) program in 2015. This study aims to analyze the social processes in RPTRA production, covering planning, design, and operation stages. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and content analysis, the research examines "structuring forces" (systems of meaning, authoritative, and allocative structures) and the roles of various actors. Findings reveal that RPTRA production is driven by the "Child-Friendly City" discourse and supported by regional regulations (Governor Regulations). The physical environment of RPTRA is shaped by a combination of government funding (APBD) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), involving actors from top-level officials to local communities. The study concludes that social and physical processes are interlinked in creating sustainable urban public assets.

INTRODUCTION

Public spaces in megacities like Jakarta are increasingly scarce due to rapid physical development for housing, offices, and commercial functions. Many existing public spaces have been illegally occupied by street vendors or other interests, reducing accessibility for ordinary citizens. This scarcity is particularly acute in dense urban kampongs, where children often play on streets due to the lack of safe, dedicated spaces. Since 2015, under the leadership of Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), the Jakarta Provincial Government has initiated the development of *Ruang Publik Terpadu Ramah Anak* (RPTRA) – Child-Friendly Integrated Public Spaces. By 2019, over 290 RPTRA units had been built across Jakarta’s administrative villages. These spaces are designed to integrate green open space, children’s play areas, sports facilities, libraries, and social services such as Posyandu and PKK activities.

However, the production of RPTRA involves complex social and political processes. According to Lefebvre’s theory of the social production of space, urban space is not a neutral container but a product of dialectical relationships between society, time, and space (Lefebvre, 1991). Giddens’ structuration theory further suggests that space is shaped by *structuring forces* (allocative resources, authoritative rules, systems of meaning) and *actors* (agencies) who reproduce or transform these structures (Giddens, 1984).

This study aims to: (1) identify the structuring forces influencing RPTRA production, (2) map the actors involved, (3) analyze their influence on the physical built environment, and (4) examine post-construction management. By doing so, it contributes to understanding how public spaces are socially and physically produced in the context of a rapidly urbanizing Global South city. This research explores the social and physical production of RPTRA, identifying the structuring forces and actors involved. It poses questions regarding how these forces influence the design, construction, and management of RPTRA throughout its life cycle.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Social Production of Space

According to Lefebvre (1991), theory of the social production of space, urban space is not a neutral container but a product of dialectical relationships between society, time and space. Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a social product: every society produces its own space

Urban Design Life Cycle

The production of public space involves four stages: Pre-Design, Design and Development, Use/Management, and Regeneration/Decline.

Structuring Forces and Actors

Giddens’ structuration theory further suggests that space is shaped by structuring forces (allocative resources, authoritative rules, systems of meaning) and actors (agencies) who reproduce or transform these structures. Based on Giddens (1984), spatial production is influenced by:

- a. *Systems of Meaning*: Ideologies and discourses.
- b. *Authoritative Structures*: Formal and informal rules.
- c. *Allocative Structures*: Distribution of material and human resources.

Actors: Various stakeholders from regulators and investors to daily users – claim and shape public space based on their interests and power. Actors – from policymakers and funders to designers and daily users – have unequal power to influence projects. Healey (2007) emphasizes that the influence of structuring forces depends on how actors mobilize, resist, or manage them.

RPTRA as a Case

RPTRA is a unique typology combining public open space, child-friendly facilities, and community services (PKK programs, counseling, disaster shelters). Previous studies have examined RPTRA from the perspectives of child attachment, deliberative democracy, and political representation (Prakoso & Dewi, 2017; Faedlulloh et al., 2017; Permanasari et al., 2019). However, few have analyzed the full life cycle – from planning, design, construction, to management through the lens of social production of space.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to interpret facts and phenomena in RPTRA production. This research employs a qualitative descriptive case study approach. Four RPTRA sites in East Jakarta were selected purposively to represent variations in funding sources and development phases:

1. Unit of Analysis: Structuring forces, actors, and the physical environment.
2. Research Sites: Five RPTRAs in Jakarta (Kalijodo, Permata Intan, Cililitan, Kebon Pala Berseri, and Citra Permata) representing different funding models (APBD vs. CSR).

Table 1. Funding Models of Five RPTRAs

RPTRA Name	Funding Source	Architect Consultant
Cililitan	CSR (PT Pembangunan Jaya)	PT Arkonin (Prototype 1)
Kebon Pala Berseri	CSR (PT Astra)	CV Sena Putra Akda (modified Arkonin)
Permata Intan	APBD (2016)	PT D-Associate (Prototype 2)
Citra Permata	APBD (2016)	PT Han Awal & Partners (Prototype 6)

3. Data collection methods included:
 - a. Field observations and visual documentation of physical environments
 - b. Semi-structured interviews with officials (provincial to sub-district levels), architects, RPTRA managers, and community members
 - c. Document analysis of regulations (Ministerial decrees, Gubernatorial regulations, budget documents)
4. Data Analysis: Content analysis of legal documents (secondary data) and interviews/observations (primary data). Data analysis followed content analysis procedures: reducing data, displaying data, and drawing conclusions, using both *text as a reflection of public opinion* and *text as a cause of public opinion* (Marvasti, 2004).

RESEARCH RESULTH AND DISCUSSION

Structuring Forces

1. *System of Meaning*: The RPTRA initiative is rooted in the "Child-Friendly City" (KLA) discourse initiated by the central government in 2006 and further developed by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection. The national Kabupaten/Kota Layak Anak (Child-Friendly City) discourse, initiated by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection since 2006, provided the overarching narrative (Kedeputian Gubernur DKI Jakarta, 2018; Yembise, 2018). Jakarta declared its commitment in 2013, and RPTRA became a flagship initiative to realize this vision.
2. *Authoritative Structures*: Implementation is governed by several regulations, notably Governor Regulation No. 196 of 2015, which defines the management, functions, and services of RPTRA. A hierarchy of regulations enabled RPTRA development:
 - a. National: Permen PPPA No. 11-14/2011 on Child-Friendly Cities
 - b. Provincial: Pergub No. 196/2015 (RPTRA management guidelines), Pergub No. 349/2015 (implementation team), Pergub No. 213/2016 (standardization of facilities)

These regulations defined RPTRA's functions, services (child services, community services, disaster services), and minimum facilities (Permen PPPA, 2011; Pergub DKI No. 196/2015; Pergub No. 349/2015; Pergub No. 213/2016).

3. *Allocative Structures*: Resources for RPTRA production include land (often recovered from illegal occupation or purchased from private owners) and funding. Funding originally relied on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) but shifted toward the Regional Budget (APBD) to accelerate development. Land and funding were critical constraints. Land was often obtained from underutilized government land (e.g., former school yards, vacant lots, even former prostitution sites). Early RPTRA (2015) relied entirely on CSR, but from 2016 APBD funding dominated (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perlindungan Anak DKI Jakarta, 2019; Koran Tempo, 2017). CSR-funded RPTRA allowed design flexibility, while APBD-funded projects followed rigid contracts.

Roles of Actors

The production involves a hierarchy of actors:

1. **Regulators:** The Governor and provincial officials who provide the political will and legal framework. Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was the most influential actor. He initiated the idea (inspired by sociologist Imam Prasodjo's input on youth delinquency), issued regulations, and personally pushed for rapid construction (law-justice.co, 2018; Kompas, 2015). After his tenure, the concept shifted to Taman Maju Bersama (open-space dominated), showing how leadership change alters public space production.
2. **Producers:** Architects and planners who translate the social needs into physical designs. Corporate CSR donors (PT Pembangunan Jaya, PT Astra) funded early RPTRA, enabling proof-of-concept. They often selected contractors directly and allowed community input (e.g., in Cililitan, residents requested a PAUD room).
3. **Eleven renowned architects** (Aboday, Andramatin, Arkonin, D-Associate, Han Awal & Partners, etc.) volunteered their services to design prototypes (Tempo.co, 2017). This professional idealism resulted in 11 distinct prototypes, enriching spatial quality. For example, Han Awal's prototype (Citra Permata) used exposed structure and carved eaves, giving a traditional-modern hybrid feel.
4. **Users & Managers:** Local communities and site managers who ensure the space remains functional and safe post-construction. Local managers (6 staff per RPTRA, selected by sub-district office) ensure daily operations. They manage schedules, cleanliness, and small repairs using income from Grosmart (convenience store) or subsidized food programs. However, maintenance funding remains a challenge because RPTRA assets often belong to the city's housing department, not the sub-district.

Physical Outcomes: Variation and Authenticity

The physical environments varied significantly:

- a. **RPTRA Cililitan (CSR, large land 3,600 m²):** Complete facilities (futsal, amphitheater, PAUD, library). High design quality. Community involved in programming (Wawancara dengan Mardianto Trianto, Kasie Kesra Kelurahan Cililitan, 2018; Kompas.com, 2018).
- b. **RPTRA Kebon Pala (CSR, 1,100 m²):** Adequate facilities but contractor-driven design (L-shaped building). Less architectural sophistication (Wawancara dengan Bapak Akmal, CV Sena Putra Akda, 2018).
- c. **RPTRA Permata Intan (APBD, only 955 m² – below standard):** Very tight site. Futsal field replaced with smaller volleyball court. Functional but cramped (Wawancara dengan Ibu Tati Amran dan Pengelola RPTRA, 2018).
- d. **RPTRA Citra Permata (APBD, adjacent to sub-district office):** Good location, complete facilities, architecturally expressive (Han Awal prototype) (Wawancara dengan Sekretaris Kelurahan Bapak Eddy, 2018; wartakota.tribunnews.com, 2017). Well-maintained due to proximity to government.

The findings show that land size and funding source strongly influence physical quality. CSR projects allowed more community negotiation and design flexibility, while APBD projects followed standardized prototypes but ensured wider coverage.

Management Sustainability

All RPTRA have six locally hired staff working two shifts (06:00–22:00). Salaries come from sub-district budgets (Pergub No. 196 Tahun 2015 Pasal 33; Wawancara dengan Pengelola RPTRA, 2018). However, maintenance and operational costs (electricity, water, repairs) are not always fully covered. Managers innovate by using income from commercial activities (Grosmart, subsidized food sales) to fund repairs (Wawancara dengan Pengelola RPTRA Permata Intan dan Citra Permata, 2018). This creative self-financing sustains the spaces but places an additional burden on local staff.

Community response is overwhelmingly positive. Residents use RPTRA for sports, reading, family events, and even weddings (Wawancara dengan Ibu Coriah dan Farel, warga pengguna RPTRA, 2018). The spaces have become genuine community centers, especially for children and mothers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

RPTRA is a physical manifestation of a complex social process in Jakarta. Its production is not merely a construction task but a result of intersecting structuring forces legal mandates, socio-political discourses, and resource allocation and the interaction between various powerful and grassroots actors. Successful RPTRA projects demonstrate how inclusive planning and diverse funding models can revitalize urban public life.

This study concludes that:

1. RPTRA is a product of three structuring forces: the national Child-Friendly City discourse (system of meaning), provincial regulations (authoritative structures), and land/funding allocation (allocative structures). These forces interact dialectically with actors.
2. Key actors – the Governor, CSR donors, architects, and local managers – have unequal power. The Governor’s political commitment was decisive in scaling up RPTRA. Architects brought aesthetic and spatial quality. CSR donors enabled early experiments.
3. Physical outcomes vary significantly. Large land and CSR funding allow more complete, flexible designs. Small APBD-funded sites risk being purely functional. Authenticity and integrity of RPTRA as a *public space typology* depend on maintaining the balance between standardized facilities and local adaptation.
4. Post-construction management is fragile. While local staff are dedicated, maintenance budgets are uncertain. Creative local financing (Grosmart, food programs) helps but is not a long-term institutional solution.
5. To sustain RPTRA as a model for urban public space production in Indonesia, strategic recommendations include:

- a. Strengthening participatory design to include community voices earlier
- b. Ensuring dedicated maintenance budgets in sub-district annual plans
- c. Developing design guidelines that allow flexibility while protecting key child-friendly features
- d. Institutionalizing architect involvement beyond voluntary prototypes
- e. Monitoring post-occupancy to improve future RPTRA generations.

RPTRA demonstrates that public space can be produced through a combination of political will, professional idealism, corporate social responsibility, and community management (Simatupang, 2017; Permanasari et al., 2019; Surayuda, 2016). However, without sustained funding and institutional support, even the best-designed spaces risk deterioration.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research could further explore how levels of community participation influence the long-term sustainability of RPTRA. This is important because a lack of community involvement during the design phase can reduce a sense of ownership of public spaces

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