

## COMMUNITY PUBLIC SPACE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION

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### ABSTRACT

Nowadays, local government of Jakarta is now concerning on the development of public space. World Bank (2014) notes that there are 2.965 public spaces, including urban park, community public space (called *taman interaktif*, *taman lingkungan*, and *taman bangunan umum*), recreation area, green area and waterfront. This paper studied a community public space in East Jakarta, a kind of Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) focused on child development. The result indicated that the public space can facilitate child development, including recreation, playing, attachment, supervision of children, and family togetherness. In addition, users of the public space also benefit from access and economic aspect.

**Keywords:** Child Development; Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE); Public Space.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

During the last few decades, social scientists, urban planners and environmental psychologists have highlighted the increase in traffic, the reduced number of public spaces, and the declining sense of community which make cities increasingly more difficult to live in. This progressive dehumanization of urban space in particular has affected children, who have seen their freedom of movement compromised (Rissotto & Giuliani, 2005). Among Indonesian cities, Priatmodjo (2012) found that Jakarta was still searching for an appropriate urban culture. Urban land was scarce, and public spaces were limited. People make use of any available spaces for public activities. Indoor air-conditioned spaces of shopping malls become the popular choice. Outdoor public spaces or spontaneous public spaces were created from riverside green-belts, fly-over underneath spaces, small lake, street, and other vacant spaces between buildings. As a temporary solution, the municipality provides a monthly car-free day that allows the main boulevard of the city to become an instant or temporary public space. In addition, only a few citizens could access the monthly car-free day. Attitude of property developers (i.e. "land greedy") and inadequate policy as well as control of the municipality were among causes of the scarcity of public spaces in Jakarta.

On this account, Priatmodjo (2012) throw a question on how Jakartanese struggle with this limited public spaces. The upper class enjoys golf courses, sports-clubs, cafes, and other expensive facilities. The middle class gets pleasure from strolling in shopping malls or passing time at less expensive cafes. Later in the last few years, the city provides monthly "car-free day" that allows people to make use of prominent streets as public space. What makes it amazing is the way the lower and lowest classes invent

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their public spaces. Without shoes and proper clothes, they are refused to enter shopping malls. They have to create enjoyment from any available space they can access.

The scarcity of public spaces become a bad news for children and their growth and development. Jakartanese children find it harder to get some spaces to justly play at, except children from middle class family that could access urban expensive facilities.

Children are the unacknowledged outsiders in the planning and management of urban areas; yet their enjoyment of and contribution to these areas is ignored at our peril (Spencer & Woolley, 2000). Actually, children's daily lives are complex, unique, and inherently spatial. Children explore the space around them even before they are mobile. Before they can move about, or move from place to place (crawl, walk, run, play, riding bicycle etc.) independently, infants are interested in many things that fall within their reach. As Piaget and others have suggested, these early explorations play an important role in how children come to know the world around them (Bell, 2005).

Since 2015, situation starts to change. People and especially Jakartanese children started to be optimist because of the development of many public spaces around Jakarta city with facility for children and undoubtedly it can facilitate child growth and development. Jakarta Post newspaper (2015) reported that Jakarta city administration has increased its efforts to develop so-called Child Friendly Integrated Public Spaces (CFIPS) by inviting private companies to contribute as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. The city had plans to develop 11 public spaces in South Jakarta in the year 2015. The news also reported that in Menteng, Central Jakarta, for example, public space will be equipped with a library, music instruments, children's playgrounds and even a room for family planning (KB) consultations. Later, Tempo.co (2016a; 2016b) also reported that in early 2016, residents who living in Pasar Minggu Sub-District, South Jakarta will soon have five Children-Friendly Integrated Public Spaces (CFIPS). Those locations will have public space with lands as wide as 800 - 1,500 square meters. And finally, South Jakarta Administration will construct 24 CFIPSs this year.

## 2. METHOD

The purpose of this study is to evaluate community public space in East Jakarta, especially for child growth and development. By using observation and semi structure interview, we developed initial research on parents who accompany their child or children in the space. The evaluation is a kind of post-occupancy evaluation.

Post-occupancy evaluation (POE) is the examination of the effectiveness for human users of occupied designed environments (Zimring & Reizenstein, 1980). POE is also a process of systematically evaluating the performance of buildings after they have been built and occupied for some time (Federal Facilities Council, 2001).

Preiser (2001) divided five POE based on technical evaluations:

- a. A POE addresses questions related to the needs, activities, and goals of the people and organization using a facility, including maintenance, building operations, and design-related questions. Other tests assess the building and its operation, regardless of its occupants.
- b. The performance criteria established for POEs are based on the stated design intent and criteria contained in or inferred from a functional program. POE evaluation criteria may include, but are not solely based on, technical performance specifications.

- c. Measures used in POEs include indices related to organizational and occupant performance, such as worker satisfaction and productivity, as well as measures of building performance as referred above (e.g., acoustic and lighting levels, adequacy of space and spatial relationships).
- d. POEs are usually “softer” than most technical evaluations. POEs often involve assessing psychological needs, attitudes, organizational goals and changes, and human perceptions.
- e. POEs measure both successes and failures inherent in building performance.

Although, POE study generally focuses on design, this study was more focused to psychological study. The study also assessed psychological needs, especially for child development. The subject would be parent who uses space to accompany his/her child or children. Data gathered by observations and semi-structure interview.

### 3. RESULT

#### 3.1 Description of Taman Mahoni

The community public spaces as an object study called Taman Mahoni. The space is located at Jalan PKP RT.7/RW.9, Ciracas, East Jakarta. With area of 3,300 square meter, facility of the space includes parking (for about 50 motorcycles and a few street vendors), security post, trash can, jogging track, long bench, semi-circular bench, arboretum, futsal (mini football) field, and public toilet. There is also game amenity for children, such as slides, swing, and classic climber.

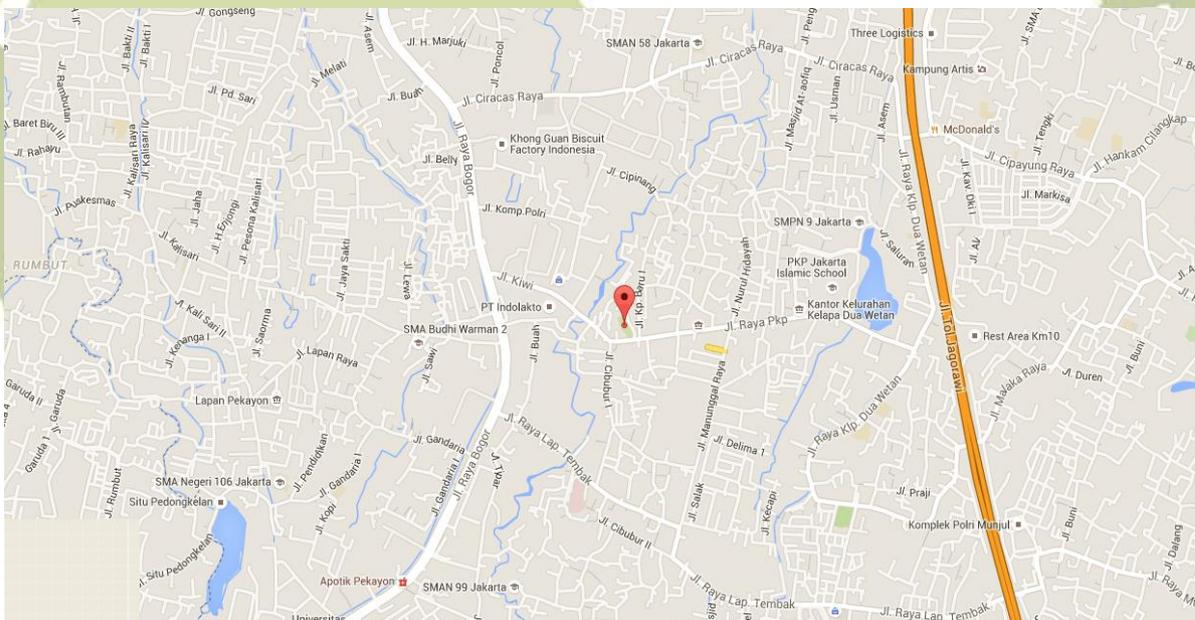


Figure 1 Map of the Public Space



Figure 2 Climbing, Swinging and Semi-circular Bench (left) and Jogging Track (right)

Uniquely, in every Saturday afternoon there is an entertainment of Weasel (*Paradoxurus hermaphrodites*) from Musang Lover community. Children who come in the weekend can play together with the weasel accompanied by the member of community.

### 3.2 Characteristic of Subject

Subject was four mothers who accompanied their children. Demographic and attending characteristic were mention in table 1 and table 2.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Subject

No	Initial name	Occupation	Age	Visit with	Distance
1	A	Bank employee	31	5 years old boy, husband, and grandfather	2 km (with motorcycle)
2	B	Housewife	30	2 years old daughter, 3 month old daughter, husband	200 m (with motorcycle)
3	C	Administration	27	6 years old boy, 11 years old boy	500 m (with motorcycle)
4	D	Hospital staff	30	2 years old boy, husband, brother in law	30 km (with motorcycle)

Table 2. Attending Characteristics of Subject

No	Initial name	The place before	Frequent of visit in a week	Time Length	Activity and preference amenity
1	A	Cijantung shopping mal	2 times in a week Every Saturday (afternoon) and Sunday (morning)	1 year	Climbing and weasel community
2	B	Minggu ceria <i>car-free-day</i> (Cijantung)	1 times in a week (Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning)	1 year	Slide and running at jogging track
3	C	At home for playing gadget and watch TV Spontaneous fishing ground lake at Jalan PKP	1 times in a week or vacation	1.5 year	Climbing, sliding, swinging
4	D	Smaller public space in neighborhood	10 times	1 year	Swinging and running

### 3.3 Motivation to come

User's motivations to come to the space were for relaxation, child need and saving fund.

#### a. Relaxation

Relaxation is the main reason for the users, which include entertainment, education for children, and friendship. Users got entertainment from fresh and cool trees, and a more different atmosphere than staying at home. Been in this space, the users do not feel bored at home and alternative activities other than watching television and playing gadgets at home. In addition, users can also meet friends or other visitors, as well as for their children's education. A said, *"Let me not feel bored at home, so that my son could play in open space, and meet friends"*. And C added, *"..want to just find another atmosphere. Here are lots of trees so fresh and cool to enjoy, than at most only playing gadget and watching television at home. Here we also could see people on the streets, so enjoyable ..."*

#### b. Child need

The needs for space for children to play was the other reason besides relaxation. Users attend many facilities for the children. B said: *"Because there are a lot of game amenities, I accompany my children and therefore my children are happy"*. Based on the observations, the limited number of game amenities preferred by children in public space has caused them to wait in line with the other children who use the same facilities. There are also children who live near a public space that plays a bicycle by utilizing a jogging track.

#### c. Saving funds

Proximity and free of charge were the reason for users to come. This is reinforced by the distance between the houses where they live in with the public space, like C

who said: *“Here, it's free. At least we only spend money for parking only. There is no need to spend a lot of money”*.

One of the visitors (D) who become research subjects are citizens of Sawangan, Depok who lived approximately 30 km from the public space. They visited the public space several times. In addition to free of charge, they also feel that the public space is more extensive than the public space near where they live. *“There is a public space like this in our surrounding, but it is smaller, unlike this one which is spacious”*.

### 3.4 Benefit of the space

Users had some benefit after visiting the public space and accompanied their children. The benefit was including child growth, child development, and recreation.

#### a. Child growth

The growth of children which can be facilitated by the public spaces are motoric development, because the child get a space for exercise. B said that, *“Motoric sensor of the child can be developed here”*. In addition C told. *“.... they can also exercise, knowing my son is fat. Let his muscles be trained, despite being fat he is nimble”*.

Besides, children also become more active and have a good balance. All of which is caused by the presence and their activity in the public sphere. D told that her son has *active movements*. And, A said that, *“....if he plays climbing, my son learned to have a balance...Then he learned the iron grip on both the right and left”*.

#### b. Child development

Some aspects of child development can be facilitated by the public space; these include the socialization, patience and sharing, knowledge, courage, and attachment. With the existence of this public space, children can socialize with other people and also can make new friends. B said that her child was easier to socialize and become braver. *“...he was no longer embarrassed, since here there are other friends he may acquaintance”*. In addition, C told about her son, *“Let him socialize with others. Children today are mostly happily play the game alone. If here, he can interact with people who are more real and not like that in the game”*.

The limited number of playing facilities teaches children to be more patient and to share with other children. They can learn to be patient and sharing. A told her only son, *“My children are so accustomed to be patient, because he has to wait for the turn to play with the playing facilities if he wants to play but he had to wait for another child who was playing. It's okay, because the space is public property. Let him learn unselfishness.”*

The new knowledge obtained for children, especially when children interact with weasel accompanied by the Musang community. Beside knowledge, the children also become braver by interacting with the weasel.

Togetherness children and parents may not be facilitated in the house. This togetherness can improve attachment between parent and child, and can be facilitated by the public space.

#### c. Recreation

By visiting and conducting some activities in public spaces parents and children were more refreshed and happy. A told that, *“ ... it could be a sort of entertainment.”* Or C said that, *“... if they are happy I am also happy.”*

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The result of this research was a case study that was difficult to generalize because of the limited sample because the research only took one location of 2.965 public spaces in Jakarta. However, despite these limitations, this study argues against the idea of Priatmodjo (2012) that considers the difficulty to get a public space for the lower middle classes in Jakarta. Especially on the account of children this study rejected Spencer & Wooley (2000) and otherwise supported the notion of Bell (2005), in which children who are the subject of this study was introduced to space by their parent in their environment for growth and development. Thus, public space can facilitate the growth and development of children.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The existence of Taman Mahoni as a community public space in East Jakarta has benefits according to the four research subjects. This benefit is relaxation, access, and economic aspect for the parent. In addition, it also has benefits for the growth and development of children.

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