Interiorization of public space in a high-density settlement: a case study in Kampung Cikini-Ampiun

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Abstract. High-density settlements in an urban area are always confronted with the lack of space issue. This situation leads to the use of public space – specifically the alley as a circulation space – for exclusive uses of the inhabitants, such as cooking, cleaning, and selling. This study will discuss the strategy of making a public space into individual interior space as an analogy of collecting process by Walter Benjamin, from choosing, bring inside, and be presenting. A qualitative method was conducted to trace the process, and the result of interiorization in public space in which case study was taken is located in Kampung Cikini-Ampiun, Central Jakarta. The study revealed that the process and the result of individual interiorization in public space are no longer separated from each other and yet they are connected by the inhabitant’s social relations.

1. Introduction

Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia where the core of politic, economic, and cultural movements occurs. This centralized system makes Jakarta one of the highest population density. In 2017, Jakarta’s population density reached 15,518 persons/km²[1]. Due to high population density, the land price keeps skyrocketing and left high-density settlements as one of the side effects used by the low-class populations.

Cultural habits, such as arisan (social gathering in the form of lottery), and tropical climate as an effect of geographical conditions, certainly influence the way of doing activities. These conditions created unique strategies to confront the limited space issue in high-density settlements. It brings out many phenomena of such space informal usages. There are many household activities that were normally happened inside a house, where space is privately owned, yet happened outside on roadsides.

Regarding this situation, interiority is continuously being challenged in a new, different way. The interesting part highlighted in this paper is the interior as an extension of domestic private space of household that conducted in public owned space due to the limited space issue, that differs the individual strategy compared to the common ones.

Interior is usually understood as a situation being inside. In its relation to the exterior, their definition sometimes undergoes degradation and defined as a rigid relation separated by walls. In fact, the interior and exterior are not in a static-absolute relation, but rather a complementary-dynamic relation [2]. In order to regulate the dynamic relations, a concept of interiority is required.

Based on McCarthy interiority is defined as, “…abstract quality that enables the recognition and definition of an interior” [3]. It also controls the boundary as a point of transition between interior and exterior. Grosz as cited by Atmodiwirjo, Yatmo and Ujung argued that boundary between inside and

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outside does not stand in a fix condition or as a limitation, but an elastic line that makes inside and outside became entities that can be traversed [4]. Interiority makes the understanding of interior became an entity that can be controlled and potentially controlling [3]. In order to control the space, it should be limited and restrained. Those actions are part of interiorization.

Interiorization as an act by a human is more appealing and visible for us to be analyzed rather than the concept of interiority itself. Based on the explanations above, this paper discussed the process of interiorization that occurs in Kangpu Kangpung Cikini-Ampiun.

2. Methodology
In this paper, qualitative methods are used to find the process of interiorization. Firstly, actors and activities are set as variables of this research. The data are collected through visual observations and confirmed by conducting interviews with inhabitants. The observation focused on the private objects as traces for domestic activities. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton stated,”…the household as a place where people have (at least some) control over their things, with the home accommodating a complex material ecology of the self.” [5] The observation is located in Kampung Cikini as a high-density settlement in an urban area within a lively social interaction between the neighborhoods, which makes it interesting to be furthermore discussed.

The respondents as the actors are selected from three households living side by side in one certain area where many private objects are placed on the roadside, namely RT 12. The selection is based on site mapping and identification of domestic objects in its relation to activities that happened outside the house. The interviews include some basic information about the respondent background, the consideration behind the spatial arrangement, and so on. It took three months to gather all the information before analyzed by the theory below.

Interiorization is an act of making interior by a human. Walter Benjamin explained interiorization as a collecting process – including selecting, bring inside to a system of relations, and presenting. By that, the interior can be defined as a selected exterior. The process of collecting could be interpreted as an organization, operations, and dynamics of interior making as mentioned by Charles Rice refers to Benjamin [6]. The step of selecting is reflected on the chosen spatial elements based on the inhabitants’ preferences while bringing inside to a system of relation is seen on the spatial arrangement, how the objects are related one to another. And the last, presenting is a result of the arrangement that can describe the inhabitants based on its value. Here, objects have an important role as a tool for interiorization. So, to see the process of interiorization, spatial arrangement is needed to be seen. As Winton stated, “…in which careful observation of its contents may reveal the traces of everyday life” [7]. Walter Benjamin’s collecting also consider interior as “…an art of genre where the fictional framework for the individual’s life is constituted in the private home” [6], which makes it suitable for this paper.

In this paper, the public space is seen as an exterior for the inhabitants. Public space itself was defined as a space that outside the control of a person or a group and became a mediator between private space [8]. Here, the alley is standing as a public space that can be accessed by everyone.

3. Gang Ampiu St. in Kampung Cikini
Kampung Cikini is a high-density settlement located in Pegangsaan, Menteng, Central Jakarta. Pegangsaan as an urban village is the highest population density area in Menteng subdistrict with 27,934 inhabitants living in 0.98 km² area [9]. The area known as Kampung Cikini itself is the settlement located in RW 01.

Kampung Cikini is barely seen from the main road as it is surrounded by public formal building such as office buildings, universities, and hospital. This condition makes Kampung Cikini a strategic area. Gang Ampiu – an alley in Kampung Cikini across the neighborhood – became the main alternative access for pedestrians and bikers as it connects Cikini commuter line station to RS Cipto Mangunkusumo and other office buildings.

As a high-density settlement, Kampung Cikini – especially in Gang Ampiun – is an animated area with a closed relation between neighborhoods. The majority of the inhabitants came from low-income
households, working as online driver, laborer, employee, and housewife. They usually live in houses less than 20 m² with the other four to six people. This condition leaves them no other choice than using public space for their exclusive use, by putting some private object for their activity. These domestic activities later developed into selling activities after the inhabitants realized the opportunity offered by Gang Ampiuun as a strategic place.

The observation area for this paper took place in RT 12. In this area, there are four individual activities located both on the left and right side of the alley including cooking, selling, bird feeding, and dishing.

4. Result

The process of interiorizations that will be discussed in this paper was done by Mrs. Zahra, Mrs. Ratna, Mrs. Aminah, and their families. Mrs. Ratna and Mrs. Aminah live together in one house with their children and husbands, while Mrs. Zahra lives in a house in front of them. The following is an explanation of interiorization process in details.
area based on her familiarity, which is the front side of her house. In the process of selecting, some things are added and removed as an idealization of space [6]. In this case, Mrs. Zahra tried to manipulate the environment by putting some rocks on the gutter so that she can put up the interior elements over it. For some occasions, the rock in front of the house door is lifted to give access to the gutter. As an example, right after Mrs. Zahra finished her cooking, she put out the rock to dispose of the residual water into the gutter. This action confirms elimination on selecting step.

The process of selecting has also appeared in tools preferences. Here, Mrs. Zahra chooses two tables as a main interior element, rather than a stall due to the nature of her products. The products she sells are noodles and blended instant drinks. Both noodles and blended instant drinks need some spaces to be made rather than displaying them. Other than economic reason, she chose tables for its compactness. The inhabitant in facing the lack of space issue considered a negative space under the table as a potential cooking area, which leads to the next step of collecting, bringing inside.

Bringing inside to the system of relations could be seen in this case on the way of arrangement, how an object is connected. For example, after been brought inside the tables are transformed into a structure of interconnected action for cooking and selling. Mrs. Zahra arranged the tables side by side. The first table accommodated the preparation and making process, such as blending, while the second table functioned as storage and sometimes displaying some snacks she sells. This layout program is integral to the activities and the preference of the inhabitant which shows her identity and habits as a presenting step.

Alongside Mrs. Zahra's, there are a cooking and selling space similar owned by Mrs. Ratna. In selecting step, Mrs. Ratna chooses a table and a display cabinet as her tools. The way she treated the table is similar to Mrs. Zahra. Similarly, the left space under the table is used for cooking space. The display cabinet is chosen to adjust the heavy meal she sells such as rice and side dishes. The meals are made in large proportions simultaneously, then displayed in the cabinets. Unlike the previous inhabitants, Mrs. Ratna creates a vertical layout as she tends to display the foods rather than the making process.

The strategy of interiorization applied to Mrs. Aminah’s stall is a system of layering created by the arrangement of the product. The first layer structured by small sachet products. In order to deal with the limited space issue, those products were hung under the ceiling and positioned in the very front of the stall creating a kind of curtain. Unconsciously, the curtain became a tool for giving signals of a visitor by the sound of product frictions.

Figure 3. Mrs. Zahra’s table arrangement (left) Mrs. Ratna’s table (center) Mrs. Aminah’s stall (right)
The second layer is made by a bigger product that was stored in a jar, like crackers. This layer is more permanent than the first layer, but still open to the intrusions. While the outer can be easily deformed by visitors, the second layer isn’t. In order to have the product, the customer should pull and cut the sachets ‘curtain’. On the second layer, the customer only allowed to pick the product from the jar, while the jars itself weren't deformed. The last layer – constructed by a display cabinet – is the thickest layer. This layer can only be accessed by the owner, Mrs. Aminah, to take the product inside before it’s given to the customer.

Cleaning space on the roadside acted as a temporal space because the duration is very short – five to ten minutes – in every occasion. The existence of the space highly depends on the current situation of the circulation. Here the selecting is seen in time preference. Mrs. Ratna and her family prefer to use the space around 11:00 A.M, 2:00 PM, and/or 7:30 P.M, avoiding crowd circulation of people from going to work and going home. By that, the selected hours became a part of the interior, and the rest is exterior. Another temporary interior is found in bird feeding that occurs in the morning. The movement of the bird created an interior as it crossed the street.

It turned out that Mrs. Ratna, Mrs. Zahra, and Mrs. Aminah considering each other while choosing their product. Each of them sells a different kind of product, so they didn't have to compete with each other. The connection of the interior could be seen in the arrangement by Mrs. Aminah. She put her chair closer to Mrs. Ratna interior space so that they could have some conversations. By that, the interior has indirectly a relation one to another.

![Figure 4. The inhabitants gather in front of their house in the night](image4.jpg)

Every day, the observation spot seems to be a point of gathering between households. In the afternoon – around 2:00 P.M – and the evening – around 7:30 P.M, the other householder of each house went outside one by one sitting in front of their house to have some interactions. The kids are also playing on the alley with consideration to the circulation.

![Figure 5. Diagram of the interconnected interior created by interactions](image5.jpg)

5. Discussion
From the result, we can confirm that interiorization is flexible spatially or temporary as interiority is. McCarthy argued that interiority has a temporary characteristic, because of its elements such as flexible boundaries, activity, and dynamic intimacy [3]. McCarthy gave an example of the differences in term of interior qualities between day and night. As the resulting interior can also become temporary and makes interiorization also depends on time.
The dependency on time makes the individual interior became a trigger for social interactions in a neighborhood, which makes it connected one to another. Though the interconnected interior seems to be inclusive, the alley still allows people to go through it as a public space.

Based on the result we can also see the interiorizations in its position to some issue, such as the lacking space. The form of interiorization they have been doing for years is placing some privately-owned object in front of their house. Their spatial view alongside the issue makes them utilize some odd negative space like under the table became usable. Other than confronting the lack of space issue, interiorization is also considering the ability to control the space as interior related to privacy. This kind of interiorization could be seen in Mrs. Aminah’s stall, where the layers became a refuge for her privacy.

The interiorizations by the inhabitants in this case definitely are illegal. It could lead to another issue such as privatization or illegal territorialization. But, here rather than view in a negative way, we take a different approach to see the interiorization as an object to be learned.

6. Conclusions
Interior is not always space inside and limited by the wall. It surely can be formed outside even in public space. In order to make an interior, inhabitant should do the interiorization. Here, collecting as an analogy of interiorization – from selecting, bring inside, to presenting – can also be seen in a high-density area as a strategy to deal with the limited space issue. The inhabitants saw the potential of negative space under the table and change it into a space for cooking and storing. Another occurrence is that the process of interiorization makes an interior in the sense of control, to achieve an ideal space physically and mentally for inhabitations. The senses of control, one of them are aimed to achieve privacy, for example by making a layering system. To make an ideal condition, collecting process should involve elimination in selecting step also. Interiorization also gives a sense of personalization, that can be found in bringing inside and presenting step, to make uncontrollable public space becoming controllable. In this paper, individual interior in RT 12 Kampung Cikini is happened to be interconnected to each other by social interactions and makes sense of inclusive living room but still can be accessed by everyone.

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