

# Creativity in limited facilities in informal settlement essay



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As A Marginalized Architecture in Urban Areas prepared by: Dr. -Ing. Ir.

Paulus Bawole, MIP1 Abstract The squatter settlements or informal settlements are common phenomena in many big cities in developing countries. Such settlements mostly grow up near the city center and the inhabitants work in informal sectors. Since there are many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America facing these phenomena, the United Nation gives more attentions with declaring the Millennium Development Goals.

Through this declaration the United Nation tries to eliminate the informal settlements including the slum areas from the world. In Indonesia the government also tries to reduce the development of informal settlements in the cities with several strategies. Many informal settlements within the big cities in Indonesia are destroyed by the local governments or private institutions, because they always think that the squatter settlements and slum areas make image of the cities are getting worst.

Besides the bad situation of the informal settlements, there are many positive aspects that can be found in informal settlements, if the settlements are observed carefully without having negative prejudice before. Those positive aspects are creative process of the inhabitants for struggling in the settlements which have very limited housing facilities.

Concerning the architectural and spatial forms made by the poor in informal settlements, many people says that those creativities are Marginalized Architecture in the cities, because the poor are always marginalized by any other people who do not live in informal settlements or people who belong to the middle to high income class. In informal settlements the inhabitants

demonstrate their great ingenuity in improving the surrounding built - up area and in arranging the open spaces and construction of the houses, even if the government regards them as illegal.

To regard the poor not as a problem but as a solution requires an honest good motivation, because it is quite difficult to appreciate the poor activities and creativities positively. If the inhabitants improve their surrounding environment as well as their living quality with their own effort, they will maintain the environment very well and the development of the informal settlements will be sustainable too. Key Words: Creativity, Marginalized Architecture, Informal settlements I. Introduction Based on the Millennium Development Goals, the global attention concentrates to overcome the world poverty, tarvation, lower education, gender equality, and health problems especially AIDS. Those problems mostly happen in slum areas and squatter settlements, where the poor lives in the cities of developing countries.

(United Nations, 2006) Since the worst environmental quality within the city is mostly in slum areas and squatter settlements, many people including the government officers and private institutions have an opinion that the slum areas and squatter settlements are the garbage of the city which makes worsening the image of the city.

Therefore I Lecturer and Researcher at the Department of Architecture - Engineering Faculty - Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta; Jl. Dr. Wahidin No. 5 - 25, Yogyakarta 55224; email: [email protected] com; HP: 081227016331 there are many urban planners and designers, who change the slum areas and squatter settlements into a more beautiful area

according to their interpretation. Definition of a squatter settlement or <https://assignbuster.com/creativity-in-limited-facilities-in-informal-settlement-essay/>

informal settlements varies widely from country to country and depends on a variety of defining parameters.

In general, it is considered as a residential area in an urban locality inhabited by the very poor people who have no access to tenured land of their own, and hence “ squat” on vacant land, either private or public. (Srinivas, 2008)

Like in other developing countries, almost all big cities in Indonesia have their slums and informal settlements. In all informal settlements the inhabitants live without having a legal land certificate and building permission for their houses.

Nevertheless there are many families, who pay retribution to local government in regard to their living. Therefore they have objections and do not agree, if the government or other institution says that they squat the vacant areas within the cities, because actually the local government knows that the poor and their informal settlements exist in parts of the city. In informal housing areas poor people develop their houses first with very simple materials such as pieces of cardboard, plastic, bamboo or wood. During certain times the housing area grows spontaneously.

Because the environmental quality within this area is poor, the government implements revitalization programs on the riverbanks which often gets rid of the spontaneous settlements and move the people to other areas.

Sometimes if people refuse to move, the government forces them by burning or bulldozing the settlements. (ACHS, 203) Since they cannot afford the price of formal houses developed by the government or private developer, they will try to find another vacant area and then build again their huts informally.

Demolishing the informal settlements does not solve the problems, but it stimulates the growth of informal settlements in other areas. In spontaneous housing areas poor people have to deal with minimal infrastructure facilities. They have to live with bad access to the main road, bad environmental quality, and lack of playgrounds for the children, etc. This situation forces them to be creative in using the physical facilities within the housing areas.

Besides, the relationships among the inhabitants are very close, so that people will help each other if one of them has a problem. The physical environment within the spontaneous housing areas has specific characteristics because people develop their houses and the surrounding environment without any plan and the developments are adjusted to their demand and capabilities. The relationship between the way the people develop their housing areas and limited facilities available creates specific characteristics.

Hence there are many interesting places created spontaneously and the people use them very intensively. Since the inhabitants in informal settlements are usually marginalized by the citizens within the cities, the architectural and spatial forms created by the inhabitants in informal settlements are also called Marginalized Architecture. II. Basic Theories Poor people demonstrate great ingenuity in developing their residential neighborhoods and in organizing the open spaces and construction of housing, even if the government regards them as illegal. (Hardoy, 1989) The statement above is understandable, because if a man is forced by the bad situation in his life, automatically his strength will appear and he will face the problems with all creativities he has. People in informal settlements have <https://assignbuster.com/creativity-in-limited-facilities-in-informal-settlement-essay/>

limited capabilities and the bad situations of their life force them to be creative in handling their problems. Usually the government takes into account their creativities as illegal actions of the inhabitants. The Indonesian government pays attentions also to the poor people, who live both in rural and urban areas.

Since the poor in urban areas live in informal settlements, the government always try to help them with developing many houses for the poor. According to the written regulations the Indonesian government helps the poor in developing their informal settlements which are built in the city center. The government attentions can be recognized in Indonesian Constitution 1945 (UUD 1945), governmental regulations, up to district regulations implemented in all of Indonesian areas. It is clearly written in the constitution 1945 section 34 that the poor or the needy and the neglected children will be protected by the government.

Besides in the amendment of the constitution 1945 section 28A up to 28J made in 2000 it is clearly written that the human basic right is protected and raised to be a base of making the other government regulations. (MPR - RI, 2000) Based on the observation in several informal housing areas in 4 cities, the problems of the informal settlement begin to appear when the local government considers the informal settlement as a bad image of the city that must be removed. In fact the informal settlement has been developed up to the second generation or more than 15 years.

Socio-culturally and economically, even psychologically they have roots in that area of the settlement. By removing the settlement, in one side the

local government tries to beautify the area based on the concept of beauty idealized by the city planner and the staffs of the local government. On the other side, the local government stimulates indirectly the appearance of the informal settlement in other areas, because the grass root people who are not able to buy a formal house will look for another empty area in the city centre as their place to build a new informal hut.

The grass root people in informal settlement do not have a chance to live in formal settlement, because they are too poor to reach the formal housing prize. In other word it is quite difficult for them to save their money for their future better live. (UNHCS, 1996) The only alternative to stay around the city center is in a piece of land in which they do not have to buy the land or to pay for the rent. That is why so many poor people occupy vacant areas within the cities, in which the government or private institutions have not used them yet. At those vacant areas automatically there are no dequate infrastructure facilities, but the grass root people with their great ingenuity can struggle for their life. Since they live in informal settlement with minimal infrastructure facilities, they have to be creative and used the facilities within the settlements effectively. Therefore their ways, plans, designs and building materials are often far better suited to local needs, incomes, climatic conditions and resources than the official, legal standards demanded by governments. (Hardoy, 1990) Spatial form in informal settlements can be seen as public open spaces and pathways in which many people carry out their daily activities.

After finding out the spatial forms including inhabitants' activities inside, it is necessary to choose several active open spaces within informal settlements  
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and then use them as an orientation of the plan for urban revitalization program. The active open space is chosen because it is a place used as a centre for human activities in the settlements. The circulations connecting the open spaces available should be considered as a secondary pattern of the settlements, because the main pattern of the settlement is linear pattern following the river flow.

Afterwards the houses developed along the circulations or pathways should be improved step by step individually with the strategy of self-help development. (Ribbeck, 2002) The Situation of Informal Settlement in Nezahualcoyoti observed in the year 1970 The Invasion of Mexico City on vacant areas available in the city which are flat like at the beach areas and steep like in mountainous areas. The Development of Informal Settlements in Nezahualcoyoti observed in the year 1997 Informal Settlement in Jalalpa, 1970 Informal Settlement in Jalalpa, 1997 Figure 1.

Informal Settlements in Mexico City Developed with the Strategy of Land Consolidation, Housing Development with Using the Self-Help Strategy Understanding the activities of the poor in architectural space within the informal settlements is very useful for arranging a development strategy based on the character of the inhabitants. By paying attention to the economical situation of the low income people living in informal settlements, it can be understood that they are hard workers, who are persevering in looking for their basic necessities of life for their family. (Nierman, 2005) Not only the husbands work, but also the wives work to help their husband in order to have additional incomes. Their dependence to the centre in the bustle of the city is very strong, because in the centre they can get their

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income everyday. III. Experiencing the Informal Settlements Even though the inhabitants in informal settlements come from different socio-culture and place of origins, their characters in facing social life in such settlements are more or less same.

The similar characters of those people are that they belong to the low-income class and do not have a legal certificate for the land in which they built their houses informally. The other characters of the inhabitants in informal settlements can be identified as follows: > They use the public open spaces within the settlements very intensively by turn or "time sharing" from early in the morning up to evening time. > The poor in informal settlements are hard worker and their efforts to gain small money for the whole family are only for struggling. > Their opinion about sustainable environment cannot be the main priority of their life, because their main priority now is to get money in informal sectors for the food needed by their family. > The social relationship among the inhabitants is very strong and it is expressed in feeling the unity among them, respecting every individual person or family and helping each other, if one of them needs help. Based on research observation in several informal settlements along the riverbanks, there are several similar physical characters of the settlements that can be identified. Those characters can be explained with the following categories: .

The Common Characters of Informal Settlements > The density of housing areas in informal settlements is very high > The location of informal settlements is hidden by the houses or shop-houses developed formally. > In the case of informal settlements along the Wonokromo riverbanks in Surabaya, the bad situation of such settlements on the back of the house is

camouflaged by good performances of the front facade which are facing the street. > The front facade and the back facade of the house in informal settlements especially the settlements developed along the riverbanks are very different.

View of the shop-houses from the Street Which Cover the Informal Houses Behind View of the Informal Houses Seen from the other Side of the Babura River - Medan Figure 2. The Different View of Built Up Areas Between Buildings along the Street and along the Babura Riverbanks - Medan b.

Infrastructure Facilities in Informal Settlements > Almost all families in Informal Settlements have electricity in their house. > Clean water facilities used by the inhabitants are public wells and water spring available on the riverbank. Few families use the clean water tap provided by the local government.

Lighting on the Kampung main street which also stimulate the social Small mosque (Moshola) on the Chode riverbank as a social infrastructure facility which stimulate the social relationship among the inhabitants Open and closed drainage from the city which flows through the informal settlements to the Chode river Public well and natural spring on the Chode riverbank as clean water facilities in which the inhabitant carry out their social Figure 5.

Social and Technical Infrastructure Facilities within the Informal Settlements along the Chode Riverbanks in Yogyakarta gt; Since within the settlements there is no adequate drainage, the waste water produced by every family is thrown directly to the river without any treatments. > Social infrastructure facilities especially the facilities which can stimulate social interactions

among the inhabitants are always available in the settlements. Those <https://assignbuster.com/creativity-in-limited-facilities-in-informal-settlement-essay/>

facilities are guarding post, small mosque (mushola), informal small playground, inadequate sport facilities, small kiosks, etc. c. The Pattern of Circulation within the Informal Settlements > Usually circulation pattern in informal settlements is linear following river flow or the street.

If the settlement is developed in steep areas, the circulation pattern is perpendicular to the river or street. The main Kampung street which is perpendicular to the Brantas river in the city of Malang The pattern of circulation in informal settlement along the Brantas riverbank in Malang The pattern of circulation is linear following the flow of the Babura River in the city of Medan The end of the main Kampung street which is perpendicular to the river Houses in the both side of main circulation in informal settlement in Medan Non-permanent houses developed along the Babura Riverbanks in Medan

Figure 4. The Pattern of Informal Settlements which are developed along the Brantas riverbank in Malang and Babura Riverbank in Medan > If the main circulation is developed in the middle of the housing areas, the front facade facing the street has better performance compare to the back. If it is developed along the riverbanks, the inhabitants will throw any waste they produce every day directly to the river. > The other secondary circulations in the settlements do not have special pattern, because they were developed spontaneously following the pattern of housing areas. gt; There are many small streets, tiny paths or alleys usually called mouse path (jalan tikus) which are used by the inhabitants as an alternative circulation to the main street. IV. Marginalized Architecture There are many terms about squatter

settlements used by the housing experts in order to explain their specific <https://assignbuster.com/creativity-in-limited-facilities-in-informal-settlement-essay/>

approach for developing the low-income housing areas in their countries. The others terms of squatter settlements are shanty town, unauthorized settlements, unplanned housing areas, uncontrolled settlements, *barriadas*, *favela*, *gecekondo*, *barong-barong*, etc. (Herrle, 1981) Principally the meaning of slum areas and squatter settlements are similar. They are all housing areas occupied by the low-income people, but in slum areas the inhabitants have legal certificate for their piece of land and the people in squatter settlements have no legal certificate. (UNCHS, 1982) The people who live in informal settlements or squatter settlements are grass root people or the lowest-income people in the city which are often considered as a causal factor of quality degradations of the city.

With this situation the poor in informal settlements are marginalized by the citizen of the city and their creativity in facing the limited housing facilities in such settlements are also called Marginalized Architecture. (see Figure 4) The guarding post in Kampong Petisah - Medan is made by the inhabitants from bamboo and used very intensively Creativities in green architecture by the poor in informal settlements along Brantas riverbank - Surabaya. The small informal sport facility is used by the children and youth in Kampung areas along the Chode river, Yogyakarta Figure 4.

The Creativities of the Poor in Facing the Limited Housing Facilities as A Marginalized Architecture in Informal Settlements Hardoy in his book titled "Squatter Settlement" wrote that the poor demonstrate great ingenuity in developing these new residential neighborhoods and in organizing the construction of housing even if government regards them as illegal. Their ways, their plans, their designs and their building materials are often far

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better suited to local needs, local incomes, local climatic conditions and local resources than the official, legal standards demanded by governments.

Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989) In Journal 'Habitat Debate' Cody wrote in his article as follow: " By regarding the poor as partners and not as problems, community responsibility, accountability, and development can be returned to the community itself, and a more responsive and sustainable system of urban environmental management implemented. To regard the poor not as a problem but a solution requires a radical change in thinking, and in expectation, but result in a society which is far more equitable and sustainable? It benefits the urban environment, ad it benefits every section of urban society. (Cody, 1996) According to the statement wrote by Cody there are many positive aspects that can be considered in regard to the marginalized architecture created by the poor in informal settlements. The Architectural and spatial form in Informal settlement can be seen below: a. Architectural Form of Houses in Informal Settlements > There are many houses built by the inhabitants with non-permanent and semi permanent qualities. Some houses built with permanent qualities, but the quality of building materials are low.

Informal Housing Areas in Kampung Kubur in Medan Figure 6. Roof Form of Houses in Informal Settlements Developed along the Babura Riverbanks in the City of Medan > Houses developed a little bit far to the river are built with simple raised platform constructions. > The roof forms of the house are dominated by the Javanese roof types called " Panggang Pe" and Kampong. " > The people use cement construction for the floor material in their house, but many of them still use soil floor without any finishing for their house. gt;

All houses are equipped with varies size of windows and mostly have ventilation above for maintaining air cross ventilation in the house. b. The Character of Public Open Space in Informal Settlements > The public open spaces in informal settlements are very limited. Therefore some of them use the Kampong streets or pathways for their social interactions. > There is no specific form of public open spaces in informal settlements, because the forms and sizes of the open spaces depend on the remind spaces which have not been used for expanding the houses. gt; In general the public open spaces surrounded by several houses are more actively used by the people for their social interactions. > If in the open space there is a social or technical infrastructure facility like public well, kiosk, water tap, etc. , the open spaces are mostly used by the inhabitants for maintaining their social relationship. V. Conclusions Listening to the community may provide ways to improve the understanding about the socio- culture of the people and give bright ideas how to develop their settlement.

Indigenous people demonstrate great ingenuity in developing their residential neighborhoods and in organizing the open spaces and construction of housing. Therefore their ways, plans, designs and building materials are often far better suited to local needs, incomes, climatic conditions and resources than the official, legal standards demanded by governments. To develop the informal settlements it is much better to involve the inhabitants in the development process. To a large extent, the future city will be financed, built and shaped by people with low incomesgarbage collectors or scavengers.

Shoemakers, peddlers, those making clothes, foods and crafts in their homes, maids, low-paid factory workers, shoe-shiners, market sellers and others. The people provide cheap labor and cheap goods and services on which much of the city's economy depends. But they are excluded from legal land and housing markets, legal health services and very often legal markets for water and transportation. (Hardoy, etc. , 1990. p. 232) Considering the interesting marginalized architecture created by the poor in informal settlements, it is very important that the demolition programs in Indonesia should be changed into up-grading programs.

Since the inhabitants know more about their settlements including the activities they make every day than the other people who not live in informal settlements, the poor should be involved in every step of development planning for their settlements. Total participative is very appropriate for the development program in Informal settlements.