



COMMUNITY SELF-ORGANISATION IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS IN PERUMNAS MOJOSONGO, SURAKARTA

PENGORGANISASIAN MANDIRI MASYARAKAT PADA TAMAN LINGKUNGAN DI PERUMNAS MOJOSONGO, SURAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the involvement of the community in creating and managing neighbourhood parks in Perumnas Mojosongo residential area, Surakarta, Indonesia, with the risk of transgression. The neighbourhood parks were undeveloped until residents intervened in these government land without legal permission. This research aims to explore the motives for intervening in these sites and the processes that drive the success of self-organised actions by local residents. It expands on previous studies by examining a different setting: spaces intended for public facilities in a planned residential area. The research began with a quantitative strand to select two sites that function properly as neighbourhood parks as the cases. The selection phase analysed the characteristics of the neighbourhood parks using frequency statistics by assessing the sites' condition from participant observation and official documents. Then, a multiple case study utilised semi-structured interviews to retrieve experiences from 16 key informants, residents with first-hand experiences regarding both parks' development. The research concludes that residents' proximity to government-owned land motivates them to initiate park development, even on a small scale, when the government neglects the land. However, the legitimacy of their actions is only quasi-legitimate, as they lack formal permission from the government to utilise the land. Instead, their actions are supported by verbal permission, the perception of dispute resolution as a permit, or even the assumption of government funding as a form of approval. Social recognition from neighbourhood associations becomes a determinant of the safety of their actions.

Keywords: self-organisation, community, public green open spaces, neighbourhood parks

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji keterlibatan masyarakat dalam pembangunan dan pengelolaan taman lingkungan di kawasan perumahan Perumnas Mojosongo, Surakarta, Indonesia, yang menunjukkan risiko adanya pelanggaran. Taman lingkungan ini tidak berkembang sampai kemudian warga melakukan intervensi di tanah pemerintah ini meskipun tanpa izin resmi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi motif di balik intervensi di area-area tersebut dan proses yang mendorong keberhasilan tindakan pengorganisasian mandiri/ swadaya oleh penduduk setempat. Penelitian ini memperluas studi sebelumnya dengan menyoasar situasi yang berbeda: ruang yang ditujukan untuk fasilitas umum pada kawasan perumahan yang terencana. Penelitian dimulai dengan tahap kuantitatif untuk memilih dua lokasi yang berfungsi dengan baik sebagai taman lingkungan sebagai kasus. Tahap pemilihan ini menganalisis karakteristik taman lingkungan menggunakan statistik frekuensi dengan menilai kondisi area dari observasi partisipan dan dokumen resmi. Kemudian, studi kasus ganda menggunakan wawancara semi-terstruktur untuk mendapatkan pengalaman dari 16 informan kunci, yaitu warga yang memiliki pengalaman langsung terkait pembangunan kedua taman lingkungan tersebut. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kedekatan jarak warga dengan lahan milik pemerintah tersebut memotivasi mereka untuk memulai pembangunan taman, bahkan dalam skala kecil, ketika pemerintah mengabaikan lahan ini. Namun, keabsahan tindakan mereka tidak sepenuhnya sah, karena mereka tidak memiliki izin formal dari pemerintah untuk memanfaatkan tanah tersebut. Sebaliknya, tindakan mereka didukung oleh izin lisan, persepsi penyelesaian sengketa sebagai izin, atau bahkan asumsi pendanaan pemerintah sebagai bentuk persetujuan. Pengakuan sosial dari Rukun Warga dan Rukun Tetangga menjadi penentu keamanan tindakan mereka.

Kata Kunci: pengorganisasian mandiri, masyarakat, Ruang Terbuka Hijau publik, taman lingkungan

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1. INTRODUCTION

Self-organisation in urban development allows communities to shape their neighbourhoods and cities in line with their values and priorities. It can take the form of grassroots efforts or formalized organisations and may involve advocating for interests, addressing community issues, or shaping policies. By empowering communities to address their own needs, self-organisation can create functional and appropriate spaces. Aside from being a practice performed by marginalised people to fulfil their basic needs (Bott et al., 2019; Bott & Braun, 2019), self-organisation can also occur to achieve the collective interest of the residents in a well-built area (Eizenberg, 2019; Göttl & Penker, 2020; Könst et al., 2018). The production of public space through self-organised collective action has raised the debate on why and how the community initiates the process. The provision of public spaces is often claimed as the responsibility of the government to fulfil (Suhartini & Jones, 2020). However, at some point, the residents take the first initiative to produce a common space that meets their needs, represents their ideology, and symbolises their identity (Eizenberg, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991; Portugali, 2000; Yap, 2019).

The studies on urban community gardens in the US and Europe by Eizenberg (2012), Göttl & Penker, (2020), Könst et al. (2018), and Yap (2019) and urban regeneration in the United Kingdom by van Meerkerk et al. (2013) unfolded the evidence that the commoners can take the lead to alter their surrounding environment. Eizenberg (2012) exemplified the residents' movement to transform vacant lots around abandoned private buildings into community gardens since 1970s in New York City. Instead of being sanctioned for trespassing, the managements of around 500 gardens were covered by the city government and two non-profit organisations during 1999-2002 to prevent privatisation (Eizenberg, 2012). This decision means that the city and its society legitimised and recognised the outcomes of community gardens exceeding the illegal conduct of trespass. Meanwhile, Göttl & Penker (2020) provided a contrast example in German-speaking countries when the authorities supplied assistances for community gardens on public land from the beginning of the process. The legitimacy is given early to self-organised actions that improve the quality of urban space.

While public green open spaces (GOSs) are important facilities, not all of them are provided by the government (UN-Habitat & WHO, 2020). The provision of such spaces often depends on the scope of services. City parks are typically constructed and maintained by the government, while developers often build neighbourhood parks as recreational facilities in residential areas. However, some studies have also explored how urban community gardens can arise from local initiatives and autonomous actions (Eizenberg, 2012; van Meerkerk et al., 2013; Yap, 2019). These studies from the US and Europe found that the desire to create ecological and social public spaces motivated self-organised efforts to produce and develop community gardens as communal spaces. Often starting with a single person transforming an abandoned lot into an urban farm, community gardens can evolve to be organised by groups of people with shared goals (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Eizenberg, 2012; Könst et al., 2018). In these cases, self-organisation by the community underlies the creation of usable spaces that reflect the social relationships and identity of local residents.

Eizenberg (2012) examined self-organisation and community gardens in New York, the USA, where local residents have transformed neglected spaces between urban buildings into successful green spaces with ecological and social benefits. The study found that the community's initiative to reclaim these spaces has attracted the attention of the government and private sector, leading to their eventual takeover. A similar phenomenon was observed by and Yap (2019) in Seville, Spain, where residents formed a special organisation to transform abandoned and deteriorating urban spaces into community gardens. Yap stresses the importance of communication among members for effective interaction and conflict resolution, whether on a personal or more formal level.

In the Netherlands, Könst et al. (2018) conducted more specific research on community gardens and community-based initiatives in an undisclosed location. The study found that there are five community gardens in the area, all of which are managed by the community through different foundations. Three of

these gardens are owned by the foundations, while the others belong to the city. The research focused on how initiators can shape the management of these gardens after the construction phase. The community organisations that manage these gardens are more informal and organic, meaning that their structure can change at any time based on common goals. While local residents are not necessarily involved in the management of these gardens unless they are part of the organisation, the research found that neighbourhood involvement is essential for the sustainability of these initiatives. In addition, the researchers highlight the importance of having an adaptive organisational structure related to management, as well as a network for sourcing resources.

Similar to the case of community gardens mentioned, the development of the Parang Kusumo Park, a neighbourhood park in Semarang Municipality, Indonesia, highlights the role of citizen initiatives in creating social spaces within residential environments. Through collaboration with the municipal government and the private sector, residents within their neighbourhood association could transform an abandoned space into a functional and attractive public park in 2008 (Rahmiati, Setioko, & Hardiman, 2013). While the park has brought benefits to the community, such as increased social cohesion and economic activity, it has also led to some negative impacts, such as increased traffic and noise (Rahmiati, 2017). These findings highlight the need for proper supervision by the authorities to ensure that sites designated for public GOSs are used to benefit their users and maintain the comfort and enjoyment of those who use these spaces. Without proper supervision, there is a risk that these spaces may be misused, leading to negative impacts on the community and potentially undermining the intended benefits of these spaces.

Specifically, in Surakarta Municipality of Indonesia, community self-organisation can be recognised when the residents encounter common threats. Taylor & Peace (2015) highlighted the role of “*gotong royong*” as a cultural factor that motivates community members to help each other during the 2007 flood disaster. This philosophy is based on a traditional view of communality that encourages individuals to contribute to achieving common goals or addressing shared problems voluntarily. For instance, during the disaster mentioned in the case, citizens assisted with providing food, moving belongings to safer locations, and cleaning schools after the flood (Taylor & Peace, 2015). The practices of *gotong royong* in the community are often self-organised and do not necessarily require government approval to begin. This culture may foster cohesion among residents and encourage them to autonomously address shared problems by utilising their resources.

The application of “*gotong royong*” can also be observed in the development of GOSs and urban farming in the two neighbourhoods of Mojosongo, Surakarta. In Ngemplak Sutan, a neighbourhood in Mojosongo, the development of urban farming was initiated and promoted by a religion-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) to encourage the growth of organic vegetables in residents' front yards (Ramajaya, Retnowati, & Kismantoroadji, 2021). The NGO approached members of the neighbourhood association, which ultimately formed a voluntary group for this urban farming effort. Meanwhile, in Ngemplak, the nearby neighbourhood, academia facilitated a community movement to cultivate flowers for sale (Kusumastuti et al., 2021). Technical and managerial assistance was provided to the community to grow decorative flowers in the existing neighbourhood park, and a voluntary group was formed to manage this movement. Both of these cases demonstrate how community self-organisation was sparked by external forces through the fostering of the community's willingness to improve their environment.

This study examines the involvement of local residents in the creation and management of neighbourhood parks as public GOS in Perumnas Mojosongo residential area, Surakarta. The research aims to understand the residents' motives for intervening in government land and the processes that drive the success of self-organised actions by local residents in the development of the park.

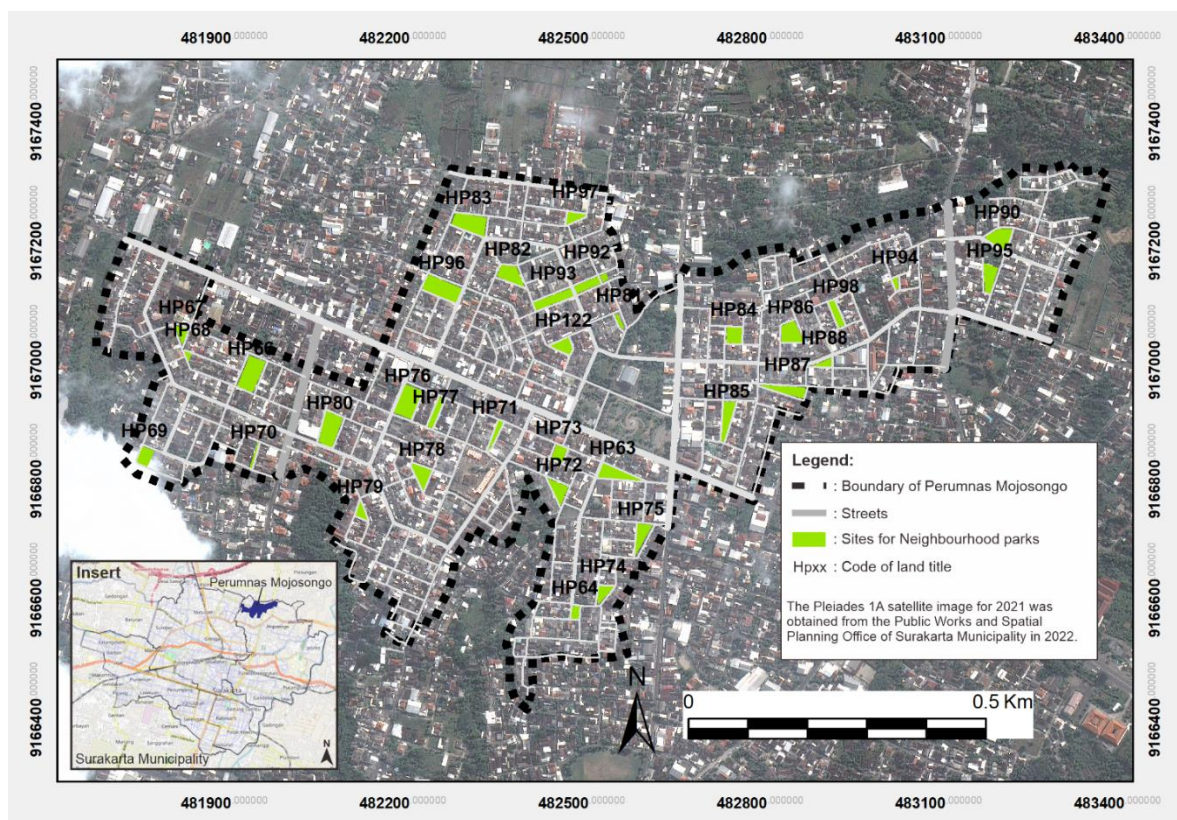
This study expands on previous studies by examining a different setting: sites for neighbourhood parks in a planned residential area. These sites were allocated by the housing developer, Perum Perumnas, for public use and recreation, but were previously neglected by the municipal government, which was responsible for developing them. However, through the efforts of self-organised community movements, these parks have been revitalised. This study focuses on the involvement of local residents in their

neighbourhood associations, which are recognised by the municipal government. By analysing the impact of these residents' participation on their community, this research aims to understand the extent to which their efforts have transformed their environment. In addition, this study investigates the role that structured and directed government-society relations play in the success of these community initiatives.

2. DATA AND METHODS

2.1. Study Area

This study takes place in the Perumnas Mojosongo residential area, located in the Surakarta Municipality of Central Java Province, Indonesia. Perumnas Mojosongo is a 60-hectare state-led housing established in 1983 in the north side of Surakarta. The 35 neighbourhood parks discussed in this research are situated throughout this residential area (see Figure 1). Two sites are selected for the case study and in-depth analysis regarding the residents' motives to develop neighbourhood parks on them successfully.



Source: Analysis, 2022

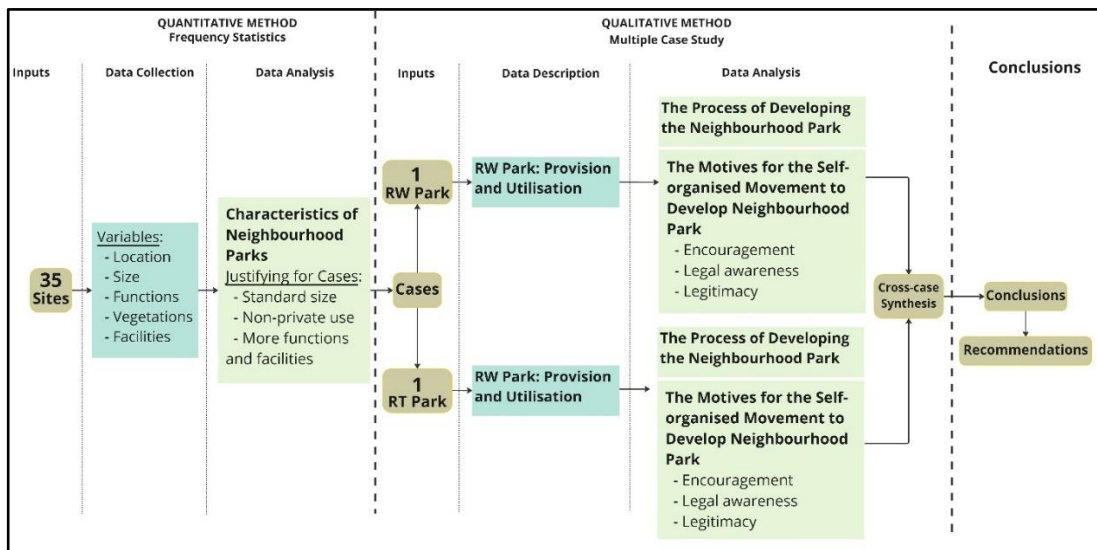
Figure 1. Research Location

2.2. Research Methods

This research employed mixed methods, quantitative strand in the first stage, followed by the qualitative one in the second stage to ‘explain initial quantitative results’ in deep (Creswell & Clark, 2011) as seen in Figure 2. In the quantitative phase, a frequency statistic was utilised to assess the sites that function properly as neighbourhood parks in the residential area of Perumnas Mojosongo. This stage identified the condition of all 35 sites for neighbourhood parks by using the criteria outlined in Regulation of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14/2022 on the Provision and Utilisation of Green Open Space: size, vegetation, functions/ uses, and facilities. Given the Ministerial Regulation, public GOSs at the neighbourhood level consist of *Rukun Warga* (RW) parks and *Rukun Tetangga*

(RT) parks. Frequency statistic was used to select two sites as the cases, an RW park and an RT park, that represented proper neighbourhood parks for further in-depth analysis.

The second stage of the research employed a multiple case study method to analyse the motivations behind the self-organised movement to develop neighbourhood parks and the process of their development. Yin (2018) explains that a case study approach can be used to provide a comprehensive explanation of a detailed study of an individual or social unit over a certain period of time. The data collected was then used to analyse the parks' development according to the themes of activities, influential actors, and resources for the process aspect, while encouragement, legal awareness, and legitimacy for the motive aspect. By examining the process and motive of the two selected parks using the same procedure, this study could gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the neighbourhood parks and the community's role in their development.



Source: Author, 2023
Figure 2. Research Design

2.3. Data Collection Methods

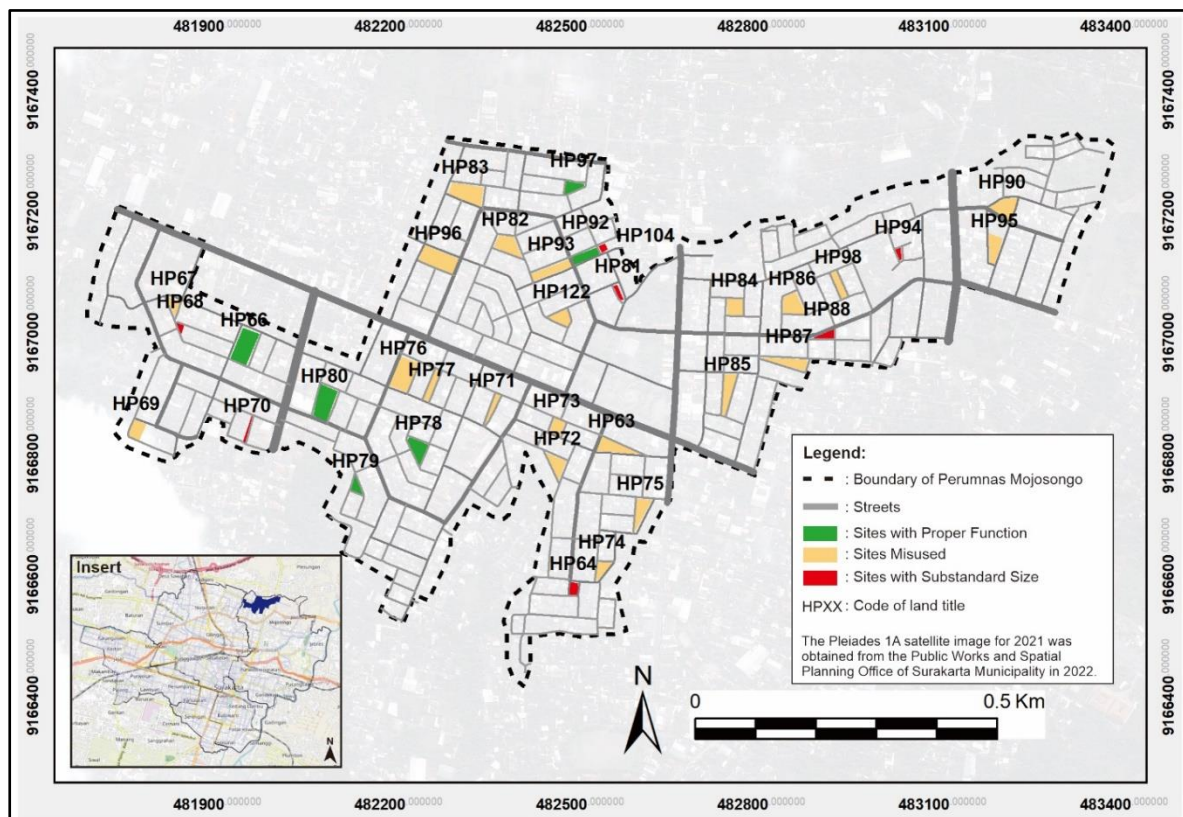
In this research, primary data were obtained through participant observation in the sites intended for neighbourhood parks and 23 semi-structured interviews with three groups of informants. The first group is Perum Perumnas, as the housing developer, to gather information regarding the planning and land provision for Perumnas Mojosoongo residential area. The second is the Municipal Government of Surakarta, including Local Planning and Development Agency, Local Financial Management and Asset Agency, *Kelurahan* (quarter) Mojosoongo, Public Works and Spatial Planning Office, and Environmental Office, to understand the policies on the neighbourhood parks' development in Perumnas Mojosoongo. The last group is the residents whose knowledge-rich on two selected neighbourhood parks. At the same time, secondary data were collected through official documents of Perum Perumnas (the housing developer) and the mentioned agencies/ offices in the Municipal Government. The semi-structured interviews with residents used a snowball method to recruit reliable informants. All 16 informants interviewed had first-hand experiences dealing with the selected neighbourhood parks to ensure the authenticity of the information. In the multiple case study stage, cross-case synthesis was used to identify common patterns, themes, or trends across the cases. This approach involves comparing and contrasting the findings from each case to identify similarities and differences, and then using this information to draw broader conclusions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Characteristics of the Neighbourhood Parks in Perumnas Mojosongo

The neighbourhood parks in the Perumnas Mojosongo residential area were intended to provide residents with public goods and services and recreational opportunities. As previously noted, the responsibility for developing these neighbourhood parks was transferred to the Municipal Government of Surakarta in 1985. The land ownership status for these sites is indicated by the presence of information boards, confirming that they are government-owned properties. The development of these neighbourhood parks was not guided by a formal design process. This condition is evidenced by the lack of design concepts or shop drawings provided by Perum Perumnas for the public facilities, except for a site plan for the entire residential area. It suggests that the design and planning of the public facilities were not given the same level of attention and care as those of the residential area. Additionally, the municipal government has not created detailed plans for neighbourhood-level public GOS in the Perumnas Mojosongo residential area (an official of the Environmental Office of Surakarta 2022, author interview, 6 October) except for the Smart Park of Mojosongo established in 2008 (an official of Kelurahan Mojosongo quarter government, author interview, 22 September).

The first step, as part of case selection, is to assess the characteristics of the sites for neighbourhood parks based on the criteria taken from the Ministerial Regulation. As seen in Figure 3, apart from the sites with substandard size, most of the sites are misused for private vehicle parking. This fact reveals that despite the intended function of the sites for residents' amenities, and the failure of the government to provide public GOS there, it does not mean that the residents would necessarily fill the gap leaving by the government. The rest six sites indicate how they can function properly, how they are not misused, and how they are equipped with relatable features as a neighborhood park.



Source: Author, 2022

Figure 3. Map of Neighbourhood Parks Characteristics in Perumnas Mojosongo

Assessing the 35 sites for the neighbourhood parks in Perumnas Mojosongo found that seven sites have substandard sizes, or smaller than 250 m². The most common feature for these small sites is the presence of two-six trees. A community garden can be found on most of the sites (five out of seven). This finding reflects the ecological function of these sites despite the substandard size. Meanwhile, three sites contain a community hall and only two sites with multifunctional field but none of them are equipped with playgrounds. This situation depicts the correlation of the smaller size of the park with the less social functions on them. These findings align with the WHO Regional Office for Europe (2016) concern regarding the size of GOSs and its impact on the variety of activities that can be conducted within them. Smaller parks may not be able to serve the needs of the community in an inclusive manner.

After considering the size of the neighbourhood parks, it is important to evaluate their function as public GOS in residential zones. Despite one site (HP No. 90) which has been converted into a microbus terminal (Primasasti, 2022), the observations located 21 sites occupied partly for car/ motorcycle parking lots (see Figure 4). The carports imply that the supposed public space belongs permanently to specific individuals. Meanwhile, the Regulation of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning clearly states that neighbourhood parks, RW parks, and RT parks aim for public purposes. Non-green spaces as part of public GOS must still be utilised for communal use. Considering this misuse of public GOS for a private purpose, these sites do not reflect proper function of neighbourhood parks.

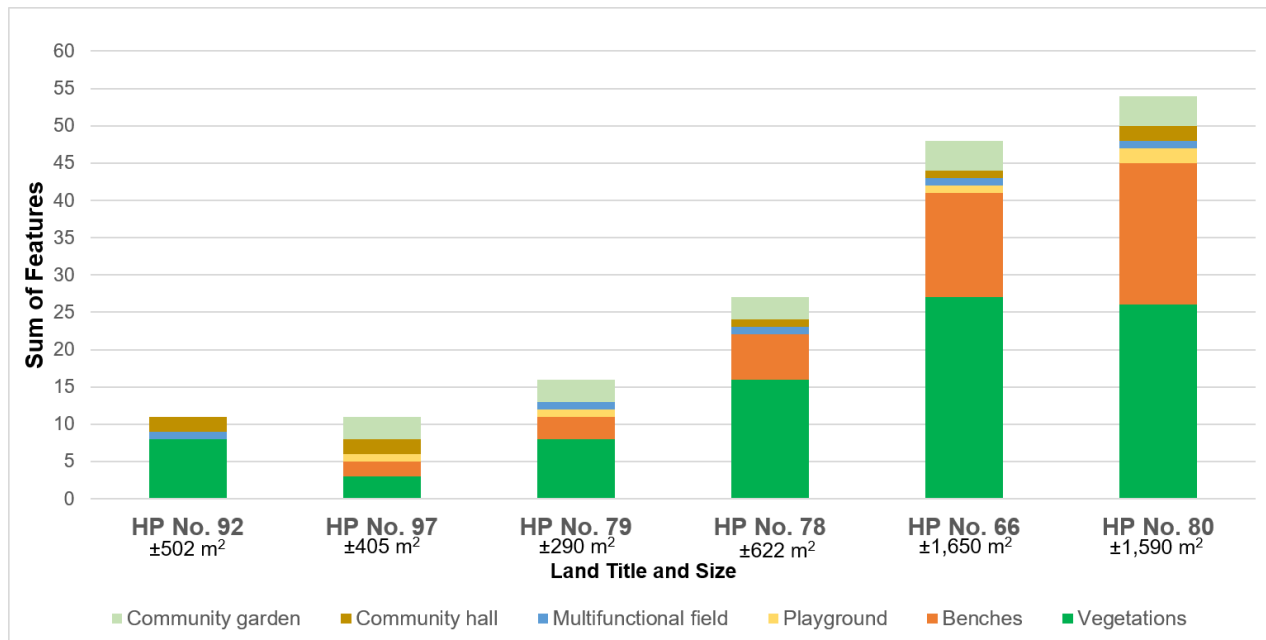


Source: Author, 2022

Figure 4. Several Sites being Misused as Parking Lots

Assessing the characteristics of neighbourhood parks in Perumnas Mojosongo reveals that six sites have been functioned properly (see Figure 5). Two of these sites belong to the RW park category (larger than 1,000 m²), while the other four are RT parks (250 – 1,000 m²). Among the two RW parks, the site HP No. 80, named Smart Park, demonstrates a seemingly ideal neighbourhood park. Built by the municipal government in 2008, this park was designed primarily to accommodate children's activities. All of the facilities, are well-maintained by the quarter government of Kelurahan Mojosongo after being handed over in 2013. Despite the ideal condition, this site does not reflect community self-organisation as it is a government project. The other RW park, HP No. 66, has similar functionality, with playgrounds, a multifunctional field, benches, community gardens, and a community hall, albeit with lower quality. As such, the site HP No. 66 has been selected for further analysis regarding the community self-organisation in developing this neighbourhood park.

Among the four RT parks that display the best functionality, diverse conditions are evident. The two parks at HP No. 97 and 79, have distinctive characters, with one resembling a large community garden with decorative plants and two community halls, and the other predominantly a playground with planters and a multifunctional field. The largest park, HP No. 78, not only has a range of common features, such as main trees, a community hall, community gardens, benches, and a multifunctional field for social interactions, but also incorporates a hydroponics garden for economic purpose. It seems that these parks are well-utilised and provide valuable social, ecological, and economic benefits to the local community. Hence, the site HP No. 78 demonstrates the RT park with the best functionality for being utilised not only for social and ecological but also economic purposes.



Source: Author, 2022

Figure 5. Facilities Available at the Six Neighbourhood Parks

3.2. Main Findings from the Case Studies

The development of the two sites, RW park at the site HP No. 66 (see Figure 6) and RT park at site HP No. 78 (see Figure 7), was not a swift process. Residents' intervention has started since several years they occupied this housing in the late 1980s. These two neighbourhood parks have been developed by the residents who are part of legitimate neighbourhood associations, RW and RT. These associations have facilitated interactions between residents and communication to the government in developing these neighborhood parks. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the two cases.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Two Sites

| Variables | RW Park at Site HP No. 66 | RT Park at Site HP No. 78 |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Location | RW 14 (within RT 3 area) | RW 16 (bordering RT 4 and RT 5) |
| Size/ shape | 1,650 m ² / rectangular | 622 m ² / triangular |
| Functions | Social and ecological | Social, ecological, and economic |
| Features (vegetation and facilities) | Trees, benches, playground, field, community hall, community gardens | Trees, benches, field, community hall, community gardens, hydroponics garden |

Source: Analysis, 2022

1. RW Park Development at Site HP No. 66 in RW 14

Developing the RW park at site HP No. 66 has undergone two distinct phases. The individual and fragmented actions occurred before the shift in priorities on how the site HP No. 66 was supposed to be developed. The RW Park site HP No. 66 is a prime example of a neighborhood park that effectively supports both ecological and social functions. The site features a variety of amenities (see Figure 6) including community gardens on the north and east sides, playground equipment, a field in the middle, benches and a community hall. Additionally, the presence of trees surrounding the site adds to the ecological value of the park. It is important to note that the development of these features did not occur in a short time frame, indicating a prolonged effort in maintaining and improving the park's function. This section provides an in-depth examination of the different phases of development that have occurred at the RW Park site HP No. 66 in RW 14. This park's current situation can be seen in Figure 6.



Source: Author, 2022

Figure 6. The Neighbourhood Park at the Site HP No. 66 in RW 14 of Perumnas Mojosongo

During the first phase, *individual and fragmented actions*, the residents in the vicinity of the neighborhood park engaged to improve the space. The gardens on the east side were gradually developed by residents in front of the site who were interested in gardening and saw the potential in the space. Similarly, the larger garden on the north side was established by two residents who were motivated by their religious teachings and invested significant amounts of their own money and effort to improve the neglected land. Other residents contributed as well, with one neighbor donating playground equipment for children's use. Another example of self-organising action is the construction of a community hall by the residents of RT 3 in the mid-2000s. Although initially opposed by other RTs who believed the site should be built at the RW level, the community hall of RT 3 was ultimately accepted by the community to avoid further conflicts. It is important to note that these interventions complied with the criteria for a neighborhood park, demonstrating the residents' ability to create and manage public spaces on their own. These interventions were carried out with the understanding that as long as the neighbors, RT, and RW did not prohibit them, they were considered acceptable.

However, the site was also misused as a private vehicle parking lot, leading to its deterioration over time. In 2017, the residents agreed to ban this misuse. This decision resulted from the RW-level neighborhood meeting, attended by the RW board and RT representatives. Several negotiations between the RW board and the residents to stop car parking on the site preceded the meeting. The meeting concluded with the consensus to ban vehicle parking on the site and plan its development accordingly, marking the beginning of the second development phase.

The second development phase, *planned and goal-oriented movement*, began after the vehicle parking was discontinued, the residents of the RW desired to transform the site into a public space. The RW board subsequently finalized the plan to install a sports field and a performance hall. To accomplish this, the head of RW 14 formed the park development committee in 2018, which included residents from RW 14, to design and calculate the budget. Interestingly, the idea received verbal permission from the quarter government of Kelurahan Mojosoongo, enabling the residents to receive government funding, albeit partial. Due to the limited funding, the residents could only construct the field at the center. Later, the RW board proposed additional funding through the Development Planning Forum to secure government support.

This phase demonstrated a level of cooperation and collaboration among the different RTs in the neighborhood. This collective action serves as a means for all RTs to unite and work towards a common goal: developing a functional and desirable public space for the entire community. Overall, this case also illustrates that the residents' attitudes towards the site changed, which motivated them to transform it into a public space. Moreover, instead of relying solely on self-funding, they established communication with the government to seek financing and make their intervention known to the government.

2. RT Park Development at Site HP No. 78 in RT 4 of RW 16

The development of RT park at site HP No. 78, in RW 16, has been a complex and multifaceted process within three phases. The park at site HP No. 78 serves as a striking example of the full utilisation of neighbourhood-level public GOSs, for social, ecological, and also economic purposes. Nevertheless, this site has been developed incrementally without a design process. The scale of utilisation of this park has evolved from being a park for the entirety of RW 16, despite its relatively small size, to a park for the use of RT 4 within RW 16. This case also highlights the potential for neighbourhood associations to create silos within society rather than strengthening relations between neighbours, resulting in restrictions on the use of public space for certain group. See Figure 7 for the recent condition of this park.



Source: Author, 2022

Figure 7. The Neighbourhood Park at the Site HP No. 78 in RW 16 of Perumnas Mojosoongo

The first phase of intervention in the site under consideration involves *moderate use*, similar to the earlier case, apart from the misuse for disposing of building materials. The residents initiated their involvement in the site by creating gardens, which they have continued to maintain until the present. The garden not only serves an aesthetic purpose by providing a pleasing space, but also has a practical utility as residents cultivate spice plants for their daily use.

The second phase, depicted *rapid development as RW-level public space*, was marked by a territorial dispute around 1990 between RT 4 and RT 5 over the site management. As the number of residents grew, so did the demand for shared spaces. In this phase, two RTs engaged in a friction over the management of the site. This dispute was eventually resolved with RT 4 appointed as the site manager by the quarter government of Kelurahan Mojosoongo. The dispute resolution was perceived as government approval to manage the site, despite the absence of terms and conditions. Furthermore, it served as a catalyst for more coordinated efforts to develop the park as the public space for RW 16. During this period, the RW 16 board played an active role in coordinating this development, seeking funding to expand a community hall and other features. RT 4, as the site manager, added independent features to the park, including a multifunctional field. The site had since been developed into an RW park capable of accommodating larger-scale activities.

However, the establishment of the Smart Park led to a decrease in utilisation of this site as an RW park. In 2008, the government constructed the Smart Park with a variety of features at a nearby location, gradually causing the communal activities of the RW 16 residents to shift to the Smart Park. This government project decreased the park's utilisation and resulted in less significant progress. The site HP No. 78 remains available for small-scale activities, while the residents of RT 5 prefer to conduct their public activities elsewhere.

The third phase is when the site *becoming neighbourhood park of RT 4*, which followed the construction of the nearby Smart Park that drew most of the activities of RW 16. A few small-scale activities such as children's programs *posyandu* continue to take place at the site. The residents of RT 4 are the main drivers behind the development and utilisation of the park during this phase. They have introduced an economic dimension to the park by creating and managing a hydroponic garden, whose profits benefit RT 4. It is noteworthy that the dispute resolution mentioned earlier still serves as the basis for limiting the direct involvement of other RTs in the park. It means that any interventions must be coordinated with the residents of RT 4. This phase reinforces the park's status as an RT park of RT 4. Meanwhile, the residents are still pursuing government funding for further development through the Development Planning Forum. Overall, this case study illustrates how early government intervention encouraged organized collective actions by the residents of RW 16, under the coordination of RW 16 and RT 4 boards, leading to the development of the site.

3.3. Cross-case Comparisons and Synthesis of the Two Cases

Developing neighbourhood parks through community self-organisation is a complex process involving multiple actors and factors. In Perumnas Mojosoongo, Surakarta, the sites for these parks are usually acquired through formal planning practices and are intended to meet the provisions for public facilities in residential areas. Edelenbos et al. (2018, pp. 52–54) and Eizenberg (2019, p. 43) have noted that it is difficult to find any activity in the context of urban development that is entirely free from government influences as all areas may be planned in detail but lack control.

Though technically owned by the municipal government, their development process is not always as simple as a standard planning-land provision-designing-utilisation pattern. For instance, the development of site HP No. 66 was initiated by the collective decision of RW 14 residents, who shifted from individual interests to more collective goals. However, the second phase of the park's development adhered to ministerial regulations and ensured proper utilization. Similarly, the park at site HP No. 78 was developed organically and collaboratively with government aid. Still, the lack of clarity in the agreement between the community and the government regarding park management raised concerns about potential future conflicts. These findings oppose what Rauws (2016, pp. 343–344) argued that self-organisation is conducted freely from the directive role of the authority system as the regulator.

The role of neighbourhood associations and individual residents as place-makers is significant in developing government-owned sites. These associations serve as an extension of government efforts to promote citizen engagement, as Yap (2019, pp. 2–3) has noted that a formal system can promote autonomous social action and the creation of desirable communal spaces. The decisions made by

community representatives, such as the RW and RT, hold significant weight in representing the community's interests to external stakeholders. However, it is worth noting that there have been "anti-social interventions" (Douglas, 2018, p. 63) on both sites, carried out by individuals or groups who prioritize their own interests over those of the community, which can hinder the development of these parks.

Resources also play a critical role in the development of these parks. Both sites received funding from the government, which can be seen as a form of tacit approval for the community's efforts. On the other hand, self-financing from collective funds facilitated by neighbourhood associations or residents' personal contributions also demonstrates the nature of self-organisation that acts "without waiting for permission" (Douglas, 2018, p. 41). The cases of neighbourhood parks at sites HP No. 66 and 78 also confirm the findings of Douglas (2018) and Könst et al. (2018), who argued that actors of self-organisation in public spaces have sufficient knowledge and skills to create valuable alterations. This expertise is gained from work, habits, formal education, or the internet and is used collaboratively to produce the desired neighbourhood parks. Ultimately, local residents are people with diverse experiences who share the same goals for the betterment of their neighbourhood.

A cross-case synthesis (see Table 2) examines the similarities and differences between these two cases. In the context of this research, this type of analysis can be used to identify common themes and patterns in the experiences and outcomes of different communities. Both cases showcase similarities as community interventions were initiated through individual contributions in the form of community gardens for neighbourhood parks. However, there are also distinct differences. In the first case, the community's internal awareness to transform the site was driven by the negative impact of car parking on their intended public space. In contrast, the second case saw government intervention through the appointment of RT 4 as the site manager, which motivated RW 16 residents to develop the site HP No. 78 as their communal space. Unlike in the second case, the RW 14 residents in the first case had misused the site HP No. 66 for car parking until 2017.

Table 2. Cross-case Comparisons and Synthesis

| Theme | RW Park at Site HP No. 66 | RT Park at Site HP No. 78 |
|--|--|---|
| The Process of Developing Neighbourhood Parks | | |
| Main Trigger for Self-organised Actions | Internal awareness | Government intervention |
| Development Phases | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual and Fragmented Actions (unorganised interventions, but socially recognised) 2. Planned and Goal-oriented Movement (organised communal interventions in developing an RW park) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moderate Use (improving the appearance and functionality) 2. Rapid Development as An RW-level Public Space (dispute resolution driving organised actions) 3. Becoming Neighbourhood Park of RT 4 (reduction in use leading into exclusivity) |
| The Motive for the Self-organised Movement to Develop Neighbourhood Parks | | |
| Encouragement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proximity to the site – Proximity between residents – Neighbourhood associations recognised by the government – Resident consensus to stop misuse. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proximity to the site – Proximity between residents – Neighbourhood associations recognised by the government – Resolution for the territorial dispute. |
| Legal Awareness | understand its legal status but believe the intervention is beneficial | understand its legal status but believe the intervention is beneficial |

| Theme | RW Park at Site HP No. 66 | RT Park at Site HP No. 78 |
|------------|--|---|
| Legitimacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government approval: no formal written permission, only verbal permission and tacit approval through funding. – Social recognition: supported by the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government approval: no formal written permission, only resolution from the quarter government for the dispute and tacit approval through funding. – Social recognition: supported by the community. |

Source: Analysis, 2022

Proximity can play a significant role in changing the priorities of residents. As the land owner and the supposed public space provider, the government had neglected the intended sites for neighbourhood parks. This neglect led residents to feel the need to take matters into their own hands and organise themselves to develop the park. Proximity to the designated sites serves as a foundation for community engagement and participation. The existence of a neglected site for public space, such as in the case of RW park site HP No. 66 and RT park site HP No. 78, has proven to be a catalyst for collective action among local communities. Locating close to residents' homes allows for a sense of connection to the site and increased willingness to improve its condition.

Additionally, the proximity of being in the same neighbourhood facilitates communication and coordination between residents, leading to a stronger sense of community and solidarity. It is more feasible for residents around both sites to commit to and regularly participate in the development and maintenance of the park. The proximity facilitates participation and coordination and can help to foster a sense of community and solidarity among those involved (Agger & Jensen, 2015, p. 4; Douglas, 2018, p. 42). It is a significant factor, as it directly impacts their daily lives and overall well-being. The site's condition, whether in a state of disrepair or well-maintained, directly affects the residents' everyday experiences. As a result, the residents prioritise the park's development over other concerns, leading to the willingness to improve its condition even without formal consent.

In addition, the neighbourhood-based associations have played crucial roles in facilitating interactions between residents to encourage collaboration among residents in seeking external resources for the neighbourhood parks. In both cases, RW and RT, as neighbourhood associations recognised by the municipal government, provided a sense of formal structure for the residents to coordinate their efforts and move forward with the park project. These associations served as a foundation for the community to engage in collective action. It helped improve their bonding and bridging capital (Holman & Rydin, 2013, p. 72) as they worked together to address the common problem of neglected sites. Through neighbourhood meetings, the residents gained collective interest in reforming the site, discussed the potential for transforming the site into a proper neighbourhood park, and reached a consensus on the need for this project. In the case of RW park at site HP No. 66, this consensus marked a shift from individualistic and fragmented actions before 2018 to pave the way for more organised collective actions.

However, the development of the neighbourhood parks was not a swift process. The transition to reform site HP No. 66 from a parking lot to an RW park took significant time. It indicates the lack of consensus to develop the site as a proper neighbourhood park in the previous RW and RT periods. This condition highlights the limitations of the RW and RT in effectively managing community actions and decision-making processes. A divergent course of action transpired at RT park site HP No. 78 in RW 16, even though its development necessitated an extended period. Following an internal conflict over the site management, the resolution from the government motivated collective actions earlier for developing the park. As Göttl and Penker (2020, p. 38) inferred, early legitimacy from the authority could facilitate community self-organised actions since the actors feel safer and legal to realise their initiatives. Nevertheless, the incomplete permission was not accompanied by clear rights and responsibilities, which could cast doubt on the long-term management of the park. The community needs clear agreements

outlining the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved to prevent misunderstandings and ensure the management of public spaces complies with regulations.

Therefore, while the proximity increased residents' willingness to act, the (perceived) legitimacy of their actions ultimately motivated the community to continue developing the park. The legitimacy in this context consists of government approval and social recognition from the community and RW or RT boards. Community initiatives drove the development of the neighbourhood parks in both cases, and the residents placed a high value on social recognition concerning their actions on the site. They prioritised recognition from local residents over recognition from the government as the landowner. They believed that as long as residents did not object to their actions, such as creating community gardens on RW park site HP No. 66 in RW 14, the actions were deemed worthy of continuation. Furthermore, the recognition of the RW and RT as legitimate neighbourhood associations was deemed crucial in legitimising their interventions in the government-owned land. This acknowledgement highlights the importance of operating within the framework of established neighbourhood associations, as they prioritise the interests of their respective neighbourhoods while considering the potential impact on other areas (Agger & Jensen, 2015, p. 2048).

The sense of legitimacy that arises from this social recognition can serve as a powerful motivator for residents to continue their efforts towards developing functional and desirable public spaces. The awareness of using the site as a public space can help promote community engagement and prevent misuse, such as parking lots or disposal grounds. Despite understanding that the site belongs to the municipal government, residents believe their actions are rightful and acceptable, as the land has been allocated for public facilities. However, this approach also presents challenges, such as a lack of cooperation and collaboration with other neighbourhood associations or the government (Ruef & Kwon, 2016, p. 165). Clear agreements and a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved are essential to ensure the sustainability and legality of the community's efforts. Furthermore, it is important to have transparent and clear communication between the community and the government regarding the park's management to prevent future conflicts.

The community's perception of obtaining social recognition for their efforts is further reinforced by the belief that incomplete government permission is sufficient for their actions. The case of the RW park exemplifies it at site HP No. 66, where the residents of RW 14 proceeded with the proposal and construction of a multifunctional field after receiving verbal permission from the local government. Similarly, in the case of the RT park at site HP No. 78, the dispute resolution was perceived as legitimate permission, despite the absence of defined rights and responsibilities for both parties. Thus, obtaining formal approval from the government would provide a more robust legal foundation, guidelines, and knowledge inputs to provide a proper public space, as inferred by Douglas (2018, pp. 80–81). He underscored the significance of community initiatives aimed at enhancing urban amenities through adherence to regulatory guidelines, which can improve functionality. Any agreements between the community and government about the park's management must be clearly articulated to prevent potential conflicts and ensure compliance with regulations. This clause follows the Local Regulation of Surakarta Municipality No. 7 of 2016 on the Municipality's Properties Management (2016) on the Municipality's Properties Management (2016), which stipulates that agreements for the government property utilisation must include specific details regarding the subjects, objects, duration, rights, and obligations to ensure its appropriate use.

The cases also demonstrated that the funding from the government encouraged the residents to take action on the sites. In the context of community intervention in government property, the government's willingness to fund or support the community's efforts without providing a formal agreement could be called tacit approval. Douglas (2018, p. 95) implied that tacit approval is a way to interpret the government's actions as a sign of support for the community's efforts, even if they do not have a formal agreement in place. In both cases, the government recognised the value of the community's efforts and was willing to invest in them, even if they had not received a formal approval process. The funding can be seen as a way for the government to express their consent for the initiatives without the need for formal approval.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the idea of tacit approval is nuanced, and it is important to understand the context and the specific situation to interpret whether or not it truly exists. It is also important to note that while government funding may be seen as tacit approval, it does not necessarily mean that all government regulations or requirements have been met. Additional steps may need to be taken to ensure the legality and sustainability of the community's interventions.

The perception of perceived government approval implied from incomplete permission and tacit approval, combined with social recognition, serves as a form of quasi-legitimacy that motivates the community to intervene in government-owned sites. This form of legitimacy is based on the recognition and acceptance of community actions without formal, written permission. It is essential that formal written permission is obtained and that agreements between the community and government regarding the management of these sites are clearly defined and comply with local regulations. Those factors could ensure the long-term legality and sustainability of these interventions and avoid potential conflicts.

Complementing the above factors, personal interests, such as hobbies and religious beliefs, can significantly encourage people to develop public spaces. These interests can serve as a driving force for community members to come together and take action to create a space that meets their specific needs and reflects their values. For instance, the residents with a passion for gardening together create a collective community garden in the RW park of RW 14. This shared interest can unify, bringing people together and fostering a sense of community ownership and responsibility for the space. Similarly, religious beliefs can motivate people as religion induce a sense of purpose, community, and moral obligation towards a noble goal. They can also provide a sense of stewardship and responsibility to preserve and protect natural spaces, a strong foundation for the community's efforts to develop the park as their 'duty' in transforming neglected space (Könst et al., 2018, p. 581).

In addition, personal interests can also be used as a tool for more efficient and effective self-organisation. It can be seen that when the community maintain and clean the sites, the interest in having a clean and safe environment can be leveraged to mobilise people. However, it's important to note that while personal interests can be a positive driving force, they can also lead to conflicts. For example, when the community garden created by gardening enthusiasts becomes exclusive to only that group, the community members who are not involved in gardening may not feel welcome in the space, which could lead to social division. Therefore, community members need to consider the potential impact of their actions on the broader community and strive to create inclusive spaces despite using personal resources.

Finally, these cases highlight the implications of the participatory planning and policy-making system in Indonesia, particularly regarding the neighbourhood parks development in Perumnas Mojosongo. The system, in fact, facilitates the quasi-legitimacy of the residents' actions to intervene in government land. Through vertical communication and connection to the authority, the residents perceive verbal permission or tacit approval as sufficient to legitimize their actions, making them feel confident in developing parks on government land. However, it is important to note that this system does not provide a solid legal foundation or assurance of the long-term acceptability of the residents' actions. The lack of a formal agreement could lead to potential conflicts or limitations in the future. Hence, it is crucial to address the underlying issues of government neglect and the need for a proper legal framework to ensure the long-term sustainability of these community-led initiatives.

4. CONCLUSION

The neighbourhood parks development in Perumnas Mojosongo emphasizes the importance of recognising these sites are owned by the Municipal Government of Surakarta and intended for public facilities. The case of RW park in RW 14 and RT park in RT 4 of RW 16 represent the community involvement to develop a public space on government land with the risk of transgression. This research's findings suggest that the proximity of government-owned park sites to residents is a crucial factor in motivating them to take action to develop neglected public spaces when the government fails to do so. Due to their close proximity,

residents view these parks as a regular part of their daily lives and feel a sense of ownership over them. This reason motivates them to prioritise park development as a public space. The close proximity to the parks allows for a sense of connection and increased willingness to improve their conditions, as residents who live near the park often demonstrate interest in installing and maintaining features with their own resources. Hence, the residents are driven to initiate park development, even if it is on a small scale based on personal interests. Personal interests, such as hobbies and religious beliefs, reinforce people to develop public spaces and provide a sense of stewardship and responsibility to preserve public spaces.

Furthermore, the residents' motivation to continue their self-organised actions to develop RW and RT parks comes from a sense of legitimacy. However, the legitimacy of their actions is only quasi-legitimate since they lack formal written permission from the government to utilise the land. They rely on verbal permission, the perception of dispute resolution as a permit, or even the assumption of government funding as a form of approval. The government funding as a tacit approval is interpreted as a sign of support for the community's efforts, even if they do not have a formal agreement in place. This perceived government approval could facilitate community self-organised actions since the actors feel safer and legal to realize their initiatives. However, incomplete permission without clear rights and responsibilities could cast doubt on the long-term management of the park. Moreover, the social recognition provided by RW and RT play a significant role in supporting residents' actions. As legitimate neighborhood associations, their recognition is crucial in legitimising residents' interventions in government-owned land.

The development of these neighbourhood parks is not necessarily illegal, but they may lack an understanding of the proper procedures and regulations for building or developing on government property. Despite the community's good intentions and the public benefit of the park, their actions have not been carried out per the legal processes and requirements for using government land. Therefore, the agreements made between the community and the government regarding these sites' management must be clearly defined and fully respected to ensure the legality and sustainability of the interventions. This research highlights the importance of obtaining formal approval from the government, which can provide a more robust legal foundation and assurance of the acceptability of the community's actions in the long term. It can avoid potential conflicts and ensure compliance with regulations.

Developing a neighbourhood park through community self-organisation is a complex and dynamic process involving various actors and factors. This approach is more organic and adaptive than a more rigidly planned and structured approach, allowing the community to respond and adapt to changing circumstances more flexibly and effectively. Community self-organisation of the construction and management of these neighbourhood parks typically began with a triggering event that brought attention to the need for a public space. This event started when the residents noticed an empty lot not being used while they knew the need for communal space in the neighbourhood. The process continued as they sensed the urge for more features. Some influential actors within the community began to take on leadership roles in initiating and organising the effort. These actors were within the neighbourhood associations, RW and RT, as community institutions to come to a consensus. They played a crucial role in bringing people together and providing guidance on moving forward with the project.

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