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Balancing Heritage in Urban Expansion: Gedung Sate's Resilience towards a JunkSpace Landscape

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Abstract

This paper argues that the vertical stratification of formal, informal, and historical layers in Bandung contributes to the emergence of Junkspace, particularly around Gedung Sate, a heritage government building embedded in a rapidly urbanizing context. Drawing on Koolhaas' concept of Junkspace and theories of spatial heterogeneity, the research explores how informal peripheries intersect with formal urban growth, creating porous hybrid spaces that defy conventional spatial order. Through qualitative spatial analysis, street-level observations, and time-lapse figure-ground studies from 2017 to 2025, the study reveals that informal structures adapt to, rather than displace, formal ones. This coexistence generates architectural incoherence marked by non-hierarchical, fused uses. The findings suggest that Gedung Sate is evolving into a form of Junkspace not merely through the erosion of spatial order but through active transformations that blend historical permanence with dynamic informal encroachments, reflecting the complex and layered realities of contemporary Bandung.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanism in the modern day has been a driving force for how spaces adapt, evolve, and serve their inhabitants, where urban areas are always expanding and population growth is always rising, urbanization continues contributing to shaping the environment, some of the examples of urbanism are Bandung. Where within urbanism it creates a redefinition of how citizens move, live and interact with each other within the city. Urbanism itself can be defined to be a science that needs to be planned out (Corbusier, n.d.),it is the natural and dynamic life of cities, where diverse uses, active sidewalks, and mixed neighborhoods create safe, vibrant, and economically functional environments (Jacobs, 1992). From High Rise building to revitalized public space principles of urbanism have even influenced how infrastructure, zoning, culture, and even community plays out. Urbanism unconsciously created formal and informal spaces starting from formal being a more organized area and informal being an unplanned form of an urban fabric (Gouverneur, 2015). This juxtaposition creates a duality where both sides have nothing in common, it creates complexity and contradiction. Although these differences can have the potential of creating a type of mutualism where both sides can benefit from each other. Where wigglesworth stated that activities have a tendency to have multiple possibilities within one area (Jacobs, 1992)figure 1 exemplifies how the dining table shows multiple possibilities of activity on a smaller scale. Which reflects how multiple activities can be done on a bigger scale like a city especially in an informal space context. But within informality and formality a.k.a. Urbanism there is another "entity" that resides within these two that is a Historical site.

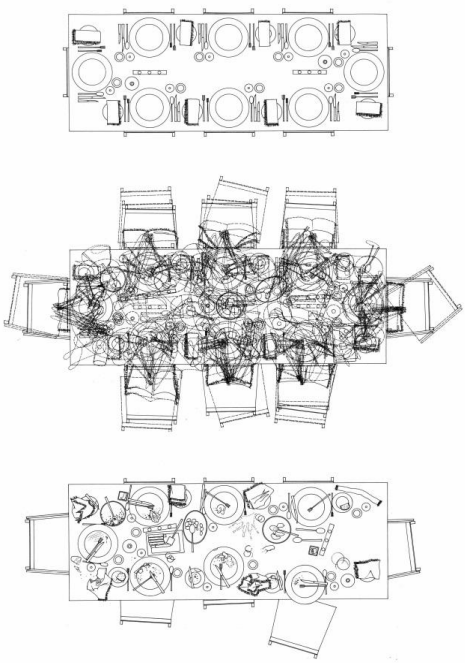

Figure 1. "Dining Table" (Wigglesworth & Till p.32 , 1998)

The historical site can be seen way before urbanism came into play, where historically Bandung was one of the cities that was visited by the dutch in indonesia, where the leader at that time Herman Willem Daendels was the main commando leading the dutch in 1810. Some of the acts that he did was building the great post road where it was built across Java island, making it the most valuable road which helped with the military and trading at the time. In 1905 urban development for bandung was being commenced where at the center of bandung, precisely in the area around *Alun-alun*, jalan *Asia-Afrika*, and *Braga* the urban tissue started as a more Grid urban fabric. This decision of making the urban fabric into a grid like form is to make it easier to move trading goods and military goods as well as strategic government placement. In the 1920's Bandung was expanded even more precisely at the north side of bandung where in this area the government at the time had decided to use a different approach toward the urban fabric. Implementing the principles of garden city in this area was also done to make the dutch to be more comfortable and the location was picked where the government needed a cooler area to stay, thus why the north area was expanded. In this area there also resides the Gouvernements Bedrijven where it was used for the central office for the dutch, where now it is called *Gedung sate* where it is considered to be a historical landmark (Kusbandiah & Wisnuadji, 2024) and it is still used for governing use but some added functions like museum are added showcasing the historical building.

Currently, Bandung is one of the fastest-growing cities in Indonesia, with most of its growth coming from the wholesale and retail trade contributing to **26.32%** of the overall GDP, and the manufacturing industry having a contribution of about **18.29%** of the overall GDP (World Population Review, 2025). Bandung's population has also been growing since 1950, starting from **511,000**, and now in 2025, Bandung's population is estimated to have reached **2,758,100** (shown in Figure 2), where it has grown a staggering **393%** from 1950 to 2025.

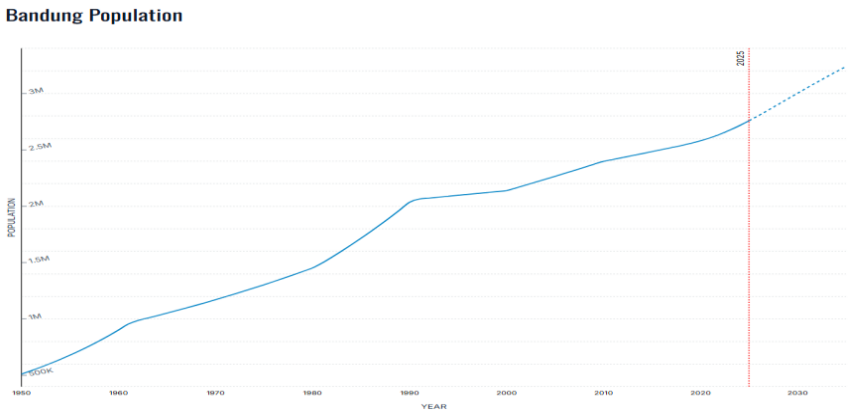

Figure 2. Population Growth of Bandung from 1950 to the Present and Projection up to 2030 (Source: World Population Review, 2025)

With the amount of growth that has been happening there is no denying that urban expansion is needed in the current growing city, especially the area around *Gedung sate* we can see through figure 7 There is a significant increase in buildings development surrounding *Gedung sate* area a.k.a *Gedung Sate.* Because this area was intended to have garden city principles, much of the urban form is built formally, figure 11 shows how the plan was mixing grid like form and implementing garden city principles like boulevard, This shows how urbanism creates an urban tissue that "act" formally and informally, starting from the formality like the housings that are place accordingly to the grid and then there's the informality where urban dwellers can be seen forming. This creates a possibility of a junkspace introduced in this part of the area, junkspace itself is a space of impaired vision and reduced earnestness, where distinctions and hierarchies are replaced by accumulation and addition (Koolhaas & Foster, 2016). In hindsight looking from figure 7 and figure 11 we can briefly see how junkspace creates an issue where it is devouring *Gedung Sate* a.k.a. *Gedung sate* area which may result in the making of junkspace, figure 3 shows how urbanism is overgrowing historical site.

Figure 3. Urban Growth along the Axis between Gedung Sate and the Monument

The importance of *Gedung Sate* is very much so relevant and essential to the city of Bandung, even though it is not located in the center of Bandung it still has a significant impact on Bandung overall. Jan Jacobs explains that removing or forgetting an infrastructure can create a disruption on the balance of society, it removes community and even worse potential community(Jacobs, 1992). Aldo Rossi also stated that Urban Artifacts such as *Gedung sate* are essential because it is a complex structure of a city's identity which is not connected to a single person but connected to a community (Rossi & Eisenman, 2007) . This area is so important because it is a propelling within the bandung, where *Gedung Sate* is a potential driving force for development in a built in infrastructure (Spencer & Zwicky, 2008). Although to determine if *Gedung Sate* really is being devoured, first we need to understand what is junkspace and what are the primary suspects to create junkspace. These primary suspects derive from the propelling of that area, the visibility, and the human behaviour within the area of *Gedung Sate*.

Junkspace, as conceptualized by Rem Koolhaas (Koolhaas & Foster, 2016) refers to the chaotic, fragmented, and residual spatial condition produced by globalization, technological advances, and late capitalism, where architecture is reduced to an incoherent accumulation of impermanent, commodified spaces dominated by spectacle and sensory overload. These environments fuse disparate functions, lack meaningful boundaries, and overwhelm users with branded visuality, creating flamboyant yet forgettable spaces devoid of authentic social and cultural significance. Koolhaas's analysis in The Generic City (Koolhaas, 2008) underscores how junkspace becomes the defining condition of contemporary urbanism through endless repetition, hollow interiors, and banal monumentalism, with features like atriums functioning as "diabolical devices" that give form to otherwise insubstantial volumes. This critique extends from earlier architectural concerns with space and place, which initially evolved from aesthetic empathy theories toward notions of identity and rootedness in the built environment. However, these concepts later became commodified and detached from lived experience. In response, Marc Augé (Yalçın, 2022) introduced the idea of "non-place" to describe placeless environments like malls and airports that lack relational and historical meaning, a condition that junkspace amplifies through visual and functional excess. Collage City (Lefaivre & Tzonis, 2003) adds to this critique by showing how modernist planning and autonomous architectural objects fragment the urban fabric and disconnect it from social life. These critiques advocate for collage-based approaches that integrate complexity and historical layering to counter the superficiality of junkspace. Ultimately, junkspace is not only a symptom of market-driven urbanism but also a reflection of the theoretical failure to embed architecture meaningfully within the urban context. To move beyond junkspace, scholars call for a deeper understanding of how propelling

forces, visual cues, and social dynamics contribute to the shaping of environments that are resilient, meaningful, and collectively experienced.

The concept of propelling in urbanism captures the active forces and dynamics that drive the formation, transformation, and persistence of urban form. In Urban Morphology Theory, propelling refers to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental drivers that initiate spatial changes in the built environment, explaining how individual and collective actions generate emergent patterns over time (Spencer & Zwicky, 2008). This idea expands in the context of cities as complex adaptive systems, where propelling is seen as the city's capacity to "bounce forward" through internal adaptations and transformations, ensuring resilience and continued evolution rather than static recovery (Romice et al., 2020). Meanwhile, in the Indonesian context, urban development is propelled by patrimonialism, where informal relationships between state actors and property developers enable spatial growth through unofficial negotiations and privileged access, shaping the urban fabric through patron-client dynamics rather than transparent governance (Wiryomartono, 2020). Aldo Rossi's notion of propelling permanences (Rossi & Eisenman, 2007) further highlights how enduring urban artifacts like monuments and housing actively structure transformation by linking memory with adaptation. Complementing these macro-urban perspectives, the conservation study on Gedung Sate exemplifies how propelling forces operate at the architectural scale. Preservation efforts for this national heritage building are driven by regulatory mandates, spatial performance needs, and historical value, prompting a careful balance between heritage integrity and adaptive reuse. Through layered visual and historical analysis, the study guides how selective preservation and reversible interventions can sustain the building's governmental function while honoring its architectural legacy. Collectively, these perspectives reveal that the shaping of urban and architectural form is never static but propelled by interwoven political, cultural, historical, and regulatory forces that ensure continuity through change.

According to Kevin Lynch (Lynch, 2006), poor visual control over elements such as parking, signage, and building bulk contributes significantly to junk space by introducing emptiness and visual chaos into the urban landscape. Requirements like off-street parking, although intended to manage circulation, often result in expansive parking lots that obscure storefronts and disrupt street continuity. This fragmented visual fabric is further critiqued in Jane Jacobs's The Death and Life of Great American Cities (Jacobs, 1992), where oversized uses such as gas stations and junkyards visually dominate neighborhoods, creating a sense of desolation and weakening the vibrancy of street life. The issue lies not in the function of these elements but in their overwhelming scale and visual impact. In contrast, Collage City (Rowe & Koetter, 1993) argues that informal urban elements, when supported by a stable architectural matrix, can enhance the richness and legibility of the city. The concept of poché at the urban scale allows buildings to serve as frameworks that accommodate spontaneity and local expression. Expanding on this, recent visual studies show how street trading activates dormant edges by introducing informal structures and displays that visually claim public space, despite creating clutter and tension with formal urban order. These informal appropriations challenge dominant aesthetic norms, often viewed by authorities as disruptive to the city's image, but they also reveal deeper socio-political struggles over visibility and access. Photographic juxtapositions and visual narratives further expose the layered, provisional, and contested nature of junk space, where informal and formal elements collide to create fragmented yet socially charged environments. Together, these perspectives emphasize that while visual incoherence and oversized design can foster junk space, a balanced integration of informality within a coherent urban framework can produce vibrant, adaptable, and visually engaging cities.

The concept of social space emerges across multiple discourses as a layered, dynamic field where human interaction, perception, and power relations are embedded within the built and lived environment. In the ecological psychology perspective discussed in affordance theory (Gibson, 1986), social space is defined through the affordances provided by other animate beings, emphasizing reciprocal interactions and direct sensory perception as fundamental to social behavior. People are not merely objects in space but active entities whose bodies and movements afford cooperation, conflict, and communication within an ecologically grounded spatial system. This is echoed in *kampung* contexts, where social space is shaped by flexible, negotiated boundaries that emerge through collective practices, particularly among children who activate alleys and shared paths through invisible rules and mutual recognition, creating multifunctional zones that blur distinctions between circulation and play. Similarly, everyday interactions among residents, vendors, and passersby continuously redefine spatial ownership based on trust and collective agreement, as seen in the use of shared territories such as neighborhood gathering spots or soccer fields. From an ecological standpoint, these behaviors reflect the direct perception of social affordances that guide action and enable meaningful engagement. In contrast, Michel de Certeau's The Practice of Everyday Life(Certeau, 2013) conceptualizes social space as a "practiced place," not a fixed geometric form but a constantly re-inscribed environment shaped by daily bodily acts such as walking or dwelling. These practices tactically appropriate and subvert institutional order, exposing the political dimensions of spatial production. Extending this further, The Everyday and Architecture (Wigglesworth & Till, 1998) frames social space as a site of contestation where everyday life, identity, and informal uses challenge formal architectural norms and highlight the role of ordinary spaces in

shaping lived experiences. Together, these perspectives affirm that social space is not passively received but actively produced through perception, use, negotiation, and collective memory - grounded in the intertwining of physical form, social interaction, and lived meaning.

METHODS

To explore and critically understand the potential of heterogeneity, particularly through the lens of junkspace, this study employs a qualitative research method. As Wang and Groat(Wang & Groat, 2013) describe, qualitative research is inherently multi-method, relying on an interpretive and naturalistic approach to examine its subject matter. According to Creswell(Creswell, 2009), the process involves emergent questions and procedures, with data typically gathered in the participant's natural setting. Analysis is conducted inductively, moving from specific observations to broader themes, while the researcher interprets the meaning embedded in the data. Lucas(Lucas, 2016) further emphasizes that qualitative research centers on understanding the nature and quality of phenomena. Figure 6 illustrates the step-by-step process of this research approach.

A comprehensive literature review was done to understand the research gaps around the concept of Junkspace. This is to gather insights from previous studies and related works. Figure 7 displays the conceptual framework that relates this research, aiding in theory refinement. The research seeks to describe Junkspace by analyzing three spatial elements: Propelling, Visual, and Social. These criteria are applied to determine if *Gedung Sate* can be classified as a Junkspace. Primary data is collected through photography, which captures existing conditions and serves as an illustration for more simplified sketches of the structure. Using Google Maps, aerial pictures, and spatial information, I convert gathered data into social interaction patterns which are illustrated as diagrammatic sketches. The results are integrated into comprehensive qualitative analysis that presents conclusions about the site's features.
Figure 8. shows the main issues that were formed, this is also a framework that creates a more detailed understanding of the main issue so that we can identify it.

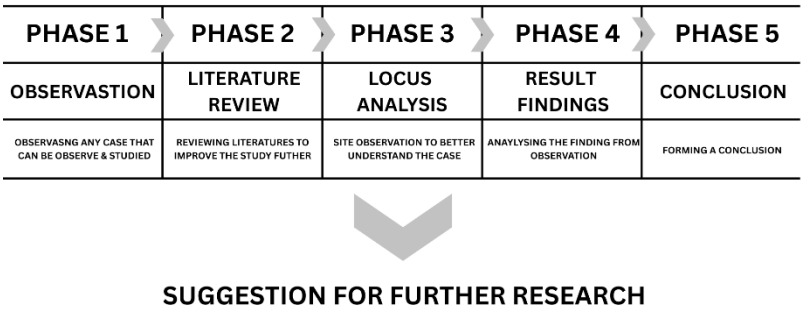

Figure 4. Research Stage Scheme

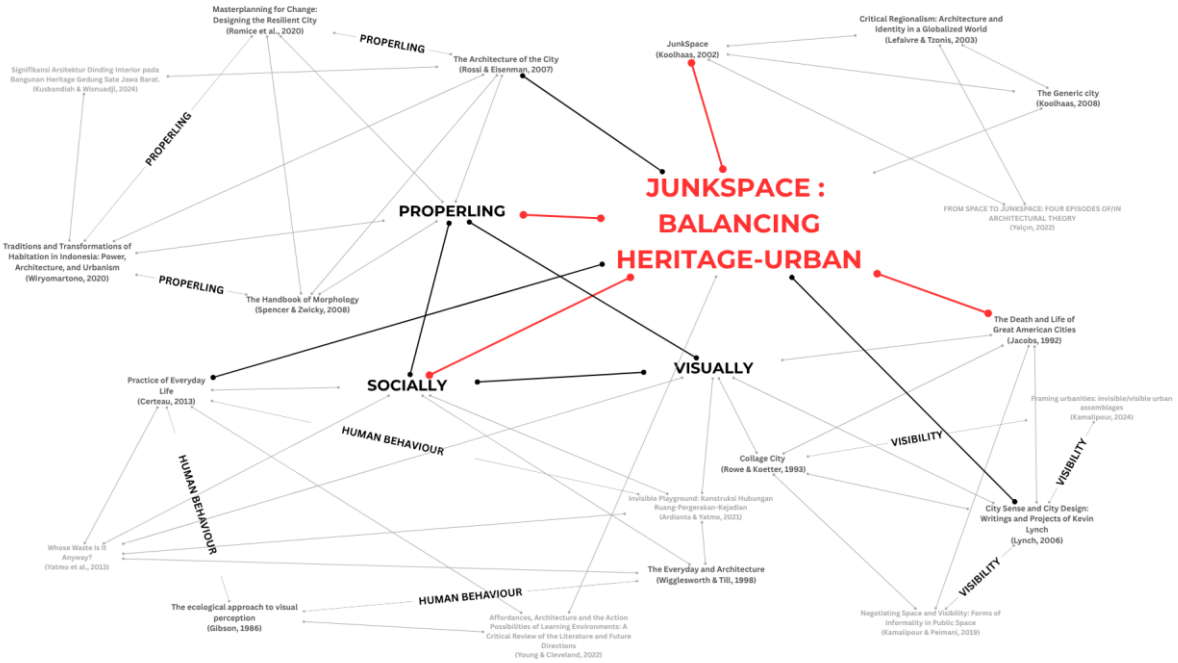

Figure 5. Thinking Framework on the main subject

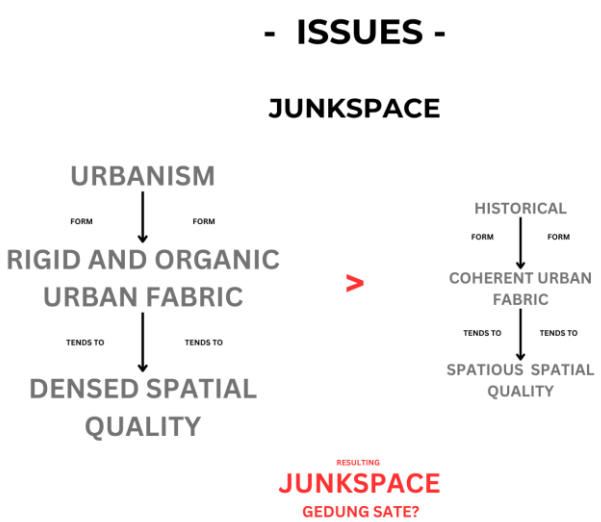

Figure 6. Main Issue Diagram (source by Author, 2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bandung, as one of the fastest growing cities on the Java island underwent an outstanding amount of development,This development can be seen everywhere throughout Bandung, especially on the north side of Bandung with the presence of *Gedung Sate* creating almost a garden city like environment.This locations will be the main object of the locus, which will determine if junkspace are present in Bandung. Using Morphology Analysis and Street view Analysis to collect the data then reanalyzing those data by looking through the lens of rem koolhaas with his theory junkspace the characteristic will be identified using 3 conditions, propelling; Visual; and Human Behaviour. Using Morphology analysis to further understand how it has progressed from the 1800's till the 21st century. After finding the result it'll determine if *Gedung Sate* is considered to be a junkspace and is it propelling and how it affects the area.

Morphology Analysis

Using top-down analysis using a study approach like figure ground we can determine how the area develops throughout the years. Starting from looking at the urban tissue, natural context, blocks, streets, and the buildings. Figure-ground itself is a study of the relative land coverage of buildings as solid mass "figure" to open voids "ground". It is a two-dimensional abstraction in plan view that clarifies the structure and order of urban spaces by illustrating mass-void relationships (Trancik 1986).

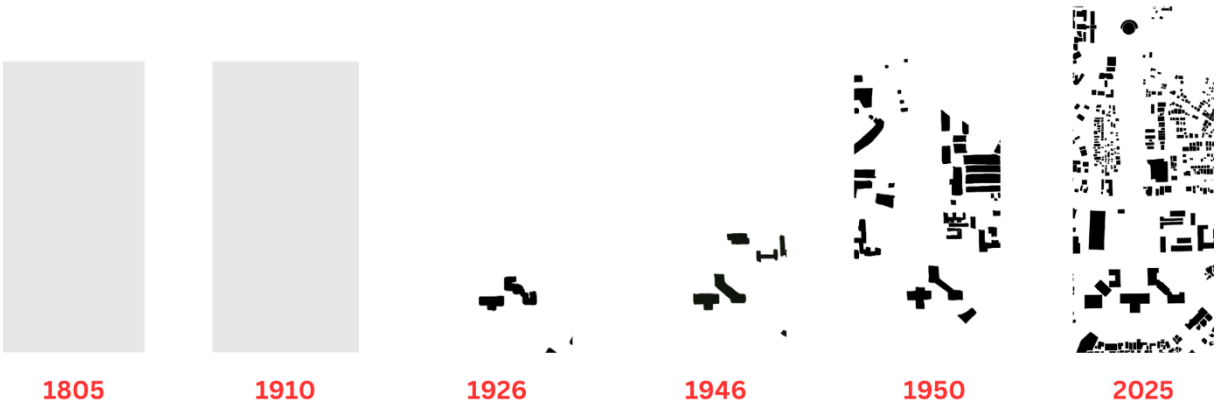

Figure 7. Bandung building Development 1805-2025

Between 1800 and 1910, the region was practically barren, devoid of any permanent or large-scale structures. Construction activity only began with the colonial expansion which included the initial stages of *Gedung Sate* because the Dutch wanted Bandung as a new administrative center. In the following years, there was an increasing number of buildings in *Gedung Sate*'s vicinity, many of which served government purposes. Along with urbanization came an increase in settlements, and the Art Deco architectural style became more pronounced all over the city. The rapid

population growth in Indonesia caused a steep increase in demand for housing figure 9. Though remnants of Art Deco architecture are still visible, it has been overtaken by dense urban housing that characterizes the city's effort to meet modern residential requirements.

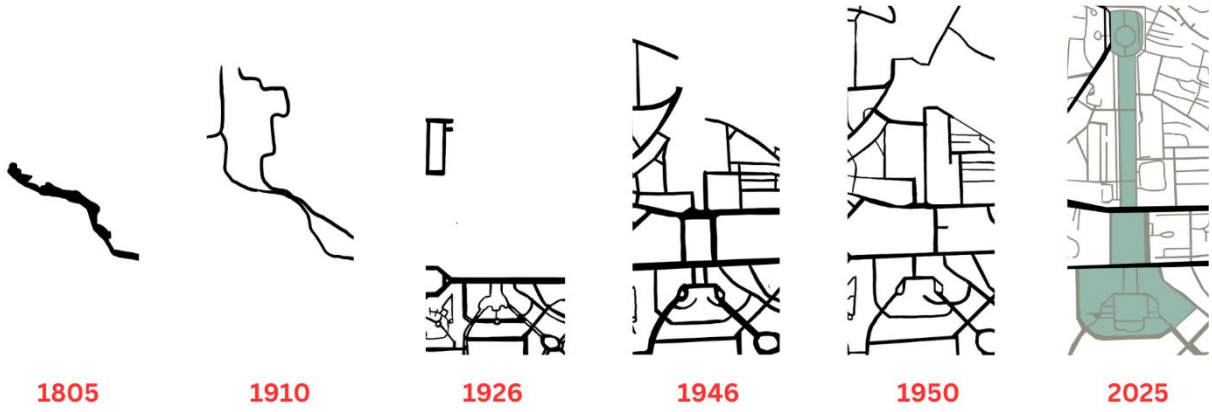

Figure 8. Street evolution throughout 1805-2025

In eighteen hundred, the region only had a tiny area with dirt pathways that perhaps served a walking purpose. A similar aligned pattern was seen in 1910 where the pathways were more polished than before and expanded in coverage. Significant changes began to occur by 1926 as the colonial government began urban development for the area's traffic infrastructure expansion. There was further expansion during this time period, which also had features of the Garden city concept, adding more roads with symmetrical planning as well as boulevards. In 1950 additional smaller roads were added splitting parts of land into blocks, enhancing the version of Garden City. By 2025 while not fully realizing all aspects of the plan, Garden City was partially functional enabling its street layout to retain some elements such as wide corridors and boulevards which grant it its present character and are still very important to shape what it is today, figure 9.

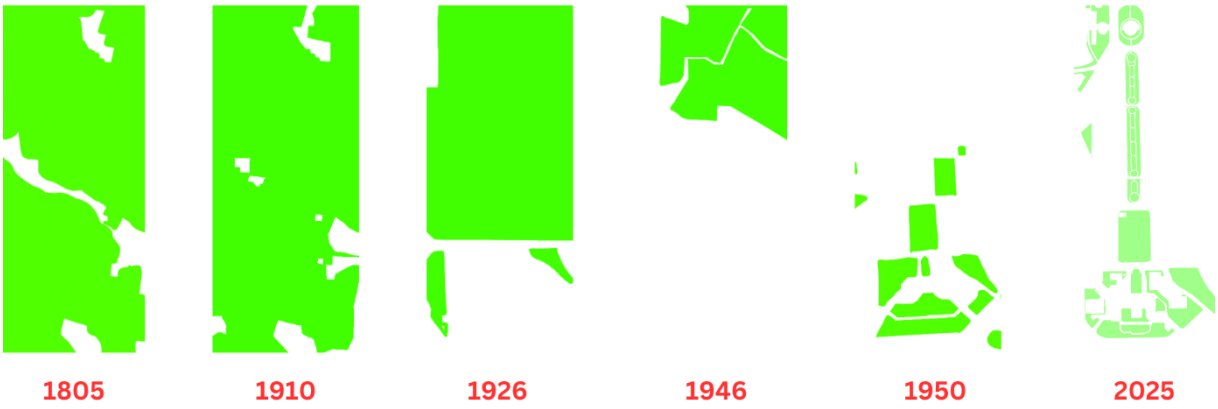

Figure 9. Natural Context from 1805-2025

Figure 10 shows the process of natural context on this area throughout the year. In the 1800s, the region around what is now *Gedung Sate* was undeveloped with plenty of natural greenery, small paths, and sparse huts. By 1910, this landscape had not changed much since the colonial government still focused on trade and military activities instead of city planning. However, in the years that followed, especially toward the southern side of *Gedung Sate*, some development began to take shape which resulted in deforestation. Much of the greenery was cleared by the mid-1940s as an urbanizing shift took place by colonial administration. In response to such changes, zone elements of Garden City movement were incorporated into the design plan which intended rebuilding lost nature with human-made landscapes. Though only partially realized, all these efforts have successfully introduced a lot of greenery into urban areas and continue to define the character of this region today.

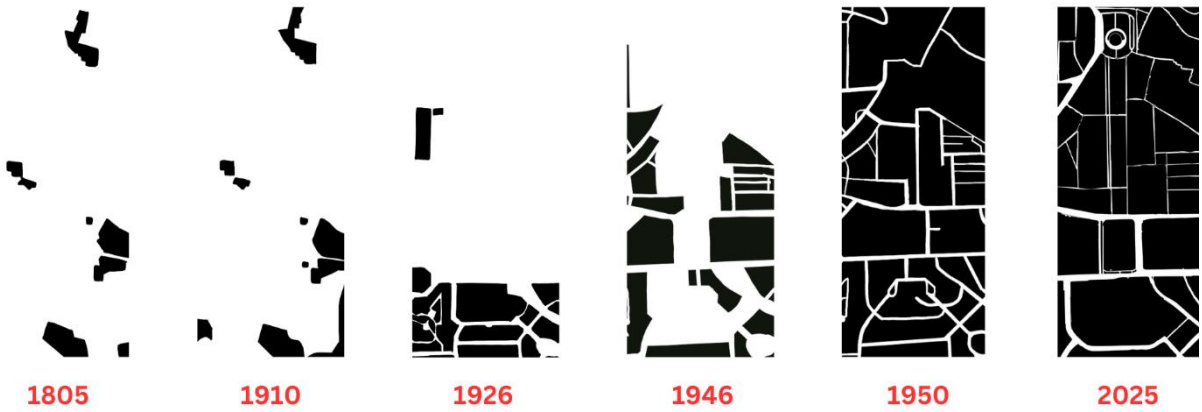

Figure 10. Blocks evolution 1805-2025

During this period, the block was partly inhabited and took a fragmented, irregular form. Like the preceding year, this area showed neither substantial progress nor notable development because it remained stagnant. As soon as the colonial government started extending Bandung toward the north, some sections of the primitive block were cut out to be filled with levelled plots or *kavling*. Roads also advanced further which facilitated more construction in accordance with colonial city-planning of Bndung Bandar. Eventually, large portions of the blocks turned into fully developed residential and government structures. Even though some parts incorporated elements of a Garden City Boulevard design, further work came to a standstill. The explosive growth of Indonesia's population shifted focus towards meeting needs for urban accommodation and curtailing the fulfillment of the initial Garden City blueprint, figure 11.

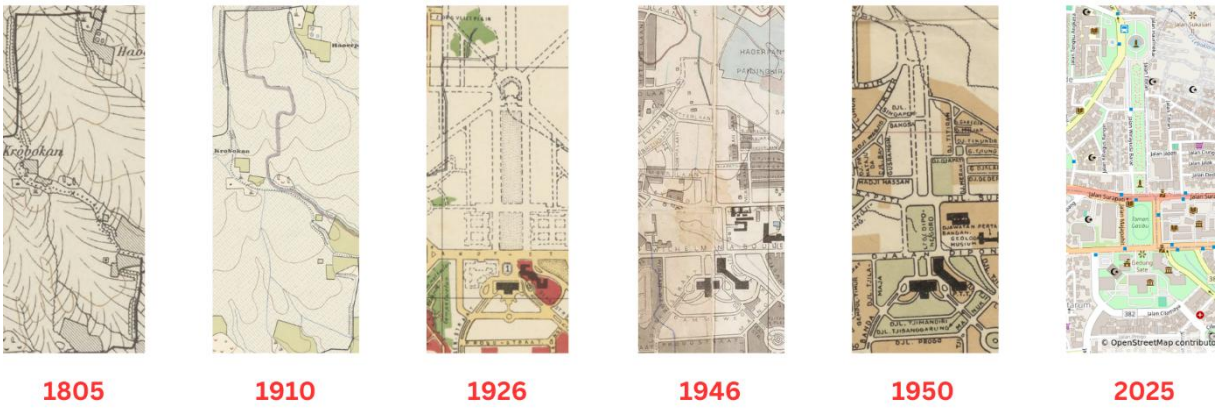

Figure 11. Bandung Urban Tissue Development 1805-2025

Figure 11 shows in the year 1800, the region was still largely covered with natural forests and bush with only little development consisting of small huts and low trails. Improvements to pathways were made during this period, but by the year 1910, very little had changed. In 1926, the colonial government started to further extend Bandung using the principles of Garden City planning that sought to blend green areas with planned urban expansion. This vision began to partially materialize by 1946, where sections of the grid layout were altered in favor of more free-form symmetric shapes typical of Garden City designs. From 1950 onwards, enhanced construction visibility was noted including blocks, new roads, new structures as well as a planned return of greenery. Portions of the original plan set for 2025 were not accomplished but some parts were adjusted due changes in demand for housing while other portions remained unaltered

Street View Analysis

Implementation of place theory is crucial to analyze the view streetwise. Using this theoretical thinking we can determine the condition not from the top but in a more grounded place to see the unseeable. place theory according to christian norberg place theory as the understanding of "place" not merely as an abstract location but as a qualitative, total phenomenon characterized by concrete things with material substance, shape, texture, and color, which together create an "environmental character" or atmosphere (Norberg-Schulz 1984).

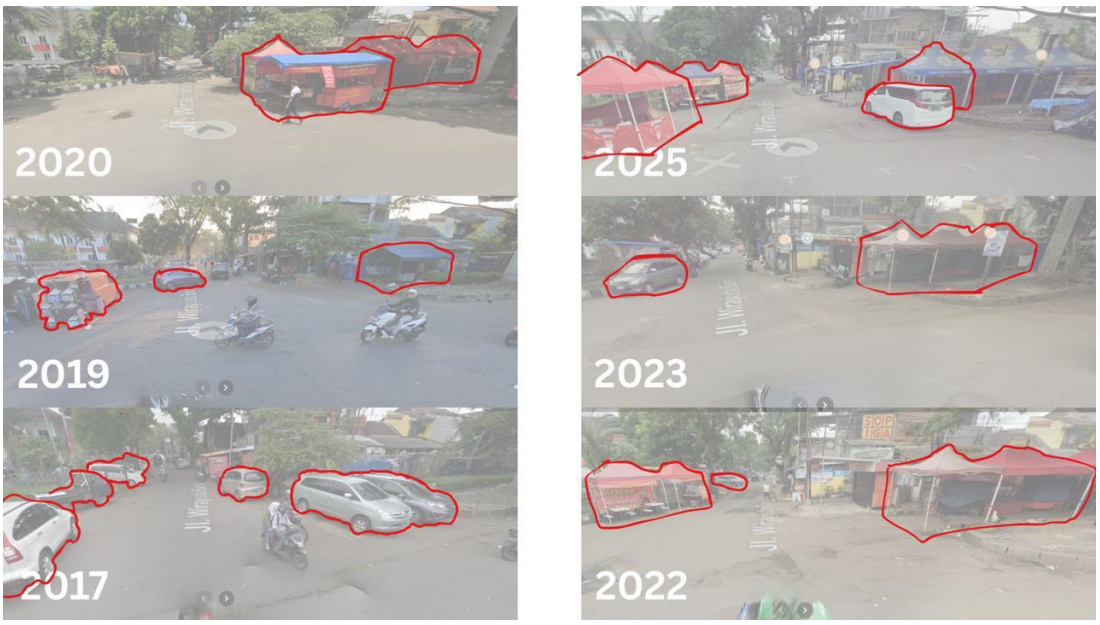

Figure 12. Street view analysis (source Modified by Author, 2025)

Analyzing the figure 12, we notice an increasing trend in informality within the *Gedung Sate* region between 2017 and 2025. There were no street vendors or hawkers operating in 2017, however, a different form of unofficial activity was beginning to emerge, illegal parking terming the beginning of spatial misuse. The emergence of street vendors by 2019 suggested that there was a greater acceptance, passive or otherwise of informality within the space. This marked a move towards a blend between regulated and unregulated urban conduct. Given the restrictions during the pandemic in 2020, one would expect informal activities to cease or at least diminish; on the contrary, informal vendor activity continued reflecting what can be termed as persistent illegal occupation even amid public crisis. Such movements point not just to physical persistence of informality but also waning control over space management in one of Bandung's most iconic urban areas.

Propelling Analysis

Analyzing the figure 15, by identifying using the natural context, street square, block-*kavling*, buildings, and urban tissue, we can determine which "entity" is propelling and which is not. From the natural context itself the current location of *Gedung sate* show how originally it was form from luscious forest but as urbanization came into the playing field forest became an extinct entity, but as the area rebuilt itself man-made natural environment became more present till this day. These man-made areas are used often enough that it creates a community which makes this area into a propelling area. For street and squares elements like streets, pedestrian, and square can be seen was mostly developed in the early 19th where it kept growing and morphing till this day many of this street convert into alternative activity where formality and informality meets such as pedestrian where it intended use is no longer as a pathway but also as a spot for vendor and hawkers which make this area more alive than ever, thus making this area into a propelling area. For block and *kavling* it is still morphing till this year 2025 where most of the district are morphing and growing with more community and organization, making this area a propelling area where most of it is still alive. Then there are buildings which are constantly changing like *Gedung Sate* itself where the functionality was morphed from government use to museum. This is done so that this area can be alive and create community, which makes this area a propelling area that is modified. As for urban tissue it keeps growing but it is propelling with the amount of activity whether that is formal activity and informal activity.

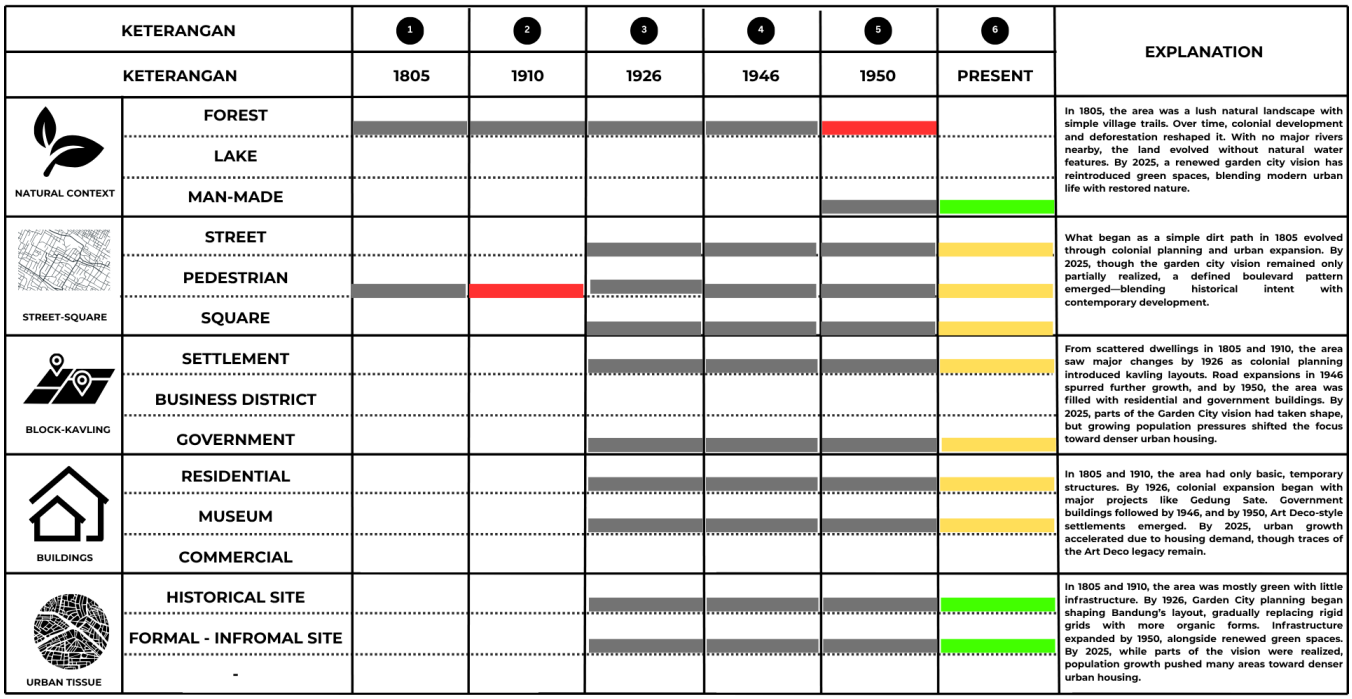

Figure 13. Propelling Table

Visual Analysis

From a visual standpoint we can identify how visually it can contribute to the existence of junkspace. By collecting data from google street images and birds eye view images and converting them to Chatgpt, where it is instructed to show how the data can identify how from a visual perspective it is junk space. Figure 16 shows how *Gedung sate* as a historical landmark and Pullman hotel have a contrasting image, where *Gedung sate* has more identity then its counterpart, where pullman itself have a more dull image/shape. Figure 17 shows how informality also obstructs the former intended visual where vendors and illegal street parking are ruining the image of *Gedung sate* which creates a contrasting space. These representative images show how visually it can create junkspace.

Figure 14. Contrasting representation of *Gedung sate* and High-Rise buildings
(Source: meta-analysis by Author, 2025)

Figure 15. Contrasting representation of *Gedung sate* and informal activity
(Source: meta-analysis by Author, 2025)

Human Behaviour Analysis

Human behaviour can be identified into two types of behaviour: formal behaviour or activity which can be considered activity that is done in places that are meant for a specific activity and informal behaviour or an activity that is not intended to be in a specific place. Using the data that was collected and converting the image into chatgpt, Figure 18. shows how the informality that is vendors and hawkers are producing more informal activities and the formal activity such as jogging at the track creates a contrasting human behaviour. Although there are contrasting activities between the two activities, there is a mutualistic relationship between formal architectural structures and informal activities, where each adapts to and reinforces the other, creating a dynamic urban environment that balances order with spontaneity.

Figure 16. Contrasting representation of formal and informal activities.
(Source: meta-analysis by Author, 2025)

CONCLUSION

There is no denying the existence of junkspace in the *Gedung Sate* neighborhood around *Gedung Sate*, as shown by the growth of unofficial vendors, impromptu parking, and changing urban tissue, all of which work against the historic garden city plan's intended formality. However, a mutualistic relationship that goes beyond the negative connotations of Koolhaas' junkspace can emerge from this seeming chaos. The juxtaposition of formal governance spaces with informal social and economic activities in *Gedung Sate* creates a layered urban environment where contrasting elements not only coexist but actively reinforce each other's vitality, demonstrating Jane Jacobs' claim that vibrant cities thrive on diversity and complexity.

According to the morphological and behavioral analyses, historical formality and informal encroachment do not simply collide; rather, they participate in a dynamic and reciprocal process that creates new social spaces that are resilient and adaptive. Lefebvre's idea of social space as a dynamic, practiced domain where meaning arises from the meeting point of daily existence and spatial form is reflected in this synergy. This changing landscape is stabilized by the historic Gedung State's architectural permanence, while the informal economy and impromptu appropriations provide flexibility and immediacy, guaranteeing ongoing social relevance.

Thus, the *Gedung Sate* region serves as an example of how junkspace can enhance rather than detract from urban life when interpreted critically using theories of mutualism and spatial heterogeneity. A resilient urban fabric that respects heritage while embracing modern socioeconomic realities is made possible by Bandung's ability to combine past legacies with present needs, as evidenced by the beautiful and productive collision of formal, informal, and historical elements. The region should be embraced as a dynamic, mutualistic ecosystem where structured permanence and unofficial adaptability come together to create a more vibrant and inclusive urban experience rather than being written off as degraded.

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