



Original Article

URBAN SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CULTURAL
RITUALS AND AN ANALYSIS OF TEMPORARY PUBLIC SPACES
IN THE KIRAB DANDANGAN TRADITION IN KUDUSAvinda Mumtaz Ziauddin Ahmad^{1)*}¹⁾Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author, E-mail: avinda.mza@gmail.com

Submitted: 9 August 2026, Revised: 14 September 2026, Accepted: 22 September 2026.

ABSTRACT

Background. The Dandangan tradition is an annual cultural event held in the city of Kudus, Central Java, ahead of the month of Ramadan. This tradition not only holds historical and religious significance but also creates an intriguing dynamic in the urban space, particularly along Sunan Kudus Street and the surrounding areas. During the Dandangan event, public spaces that typically function as vehicle lanes are transformed into cultural spaces filled with social, economic, and religious activities.

Research Purpose. This study aims to examine the transformation of temporary public spaces during the Dandangan Procession in Kudus City and to evaluate its impact on the quality of space and user behavior.

Research Method. This study employs a qualitative approach through literature review, digital media observation, and analysis of secondary data such as urban spatial maps and planning documentation.

Findings. Public spaces undergo an adaptive transformation into temporary cultural spaces rich in social, economic, and religious activities. This transformation demonstrates the potential for the simultaneous integration of mobility and cultural functions, while strengthening the community's emotional attachment to urban spaces. The importance of temporary public spaces in strengthening a sense of place and as a form of resistance against phenomenon of placelessness resulting from modernization. Therefore, the management of public spaces that is responsive to local cultural values is key to maintaining the sustainability of the city's identity urban spaces.

Conclusion. Temporary public spaces counter *placelessness* through cultural revival, but require integrated urban planning and community participation for long-term spatial sustainability.

Keywords: Temporary Public Space, Spatial Transformation, Dandangan Tradition, Cultural Space, Kudus City

BACKGROUND

Public spaces play a vital role in urban life as the primary venues for social interaction, cultural expression, and community economic activities [1]. The existence of public spaces is not merely physical but also dynamic and flexible, capable of evolving to meet the needs of a community that changes over time[2]. Particularly in communities that still hold fast to cultural traditions, public spaces often transform into temporary spaces rich

in symbolic and cultural meaning. Understanding these dynamics is essential so that urban planning can be designed not only to be function-oriented but also meaningful and rooted in local identity[3].

Vernacular architecture serves as a crucial foundation for understanding the relationship between people, culture, and space. This architectural form emerges organically from the needs of local communities and is influenced by local environmental, social, and cultural conditions[4]. Through vernacular architecture, spaces and buildings serve as repositories of traditional values and symbols of community identity passed down through generations[5]. Therefore, public spaces that develop within a traditional cultural context are not merely physical entities but living manifestations of a community's collective values and identity[6]. The temporality urbanism approach offers a perspective for understanding urban spaces as dynamic entities that temporarily shift functions in accordance with social and cultural activities[7]. Temporary public spaces, such as night markets, cultural festivals, or religious rituals, serve as arenas for collective experiences distinct from everyday uses of space and enrich the city's sociocultural quality[8]. This temporality in urbanism reflects the city's social and cultural vitality while demonstrating how space can be created and experienced across layers of time[9].

This conceptual framework is reinforced by Edward Relph's theory of "place" and "placelessness," which views "place" as a meaningful space emotionally rooted in and tied to human identity[10]. "Place" is the result of the interaction between humans and the physical environment, shaping collective experiences and local identity. Conversely, placelessness refers to a condition in which a space loses its unique characteristics and becomes generic as a result of modernization and homogenization[10, 11]. The phenomenon of a "sense of place" is key to maintaining the sustainability of community identity and the quality of. Therefore, temporary public spaces, understood as part of cultural traditions, serve as a bulwark against homogenization and the loss of spatial meaning[12].

The city of Kudus, as a historic city and center of Islamic culture in Central Java, possesses a unique urban character marked by a strong blend of religious and social values[10]. One cultural tradition that is regularly held is the Kirab Dandangan, an annual ritual held before Ramadan that serves as a spiritual practice while also revitalizing the social and cultural interactions of the people of Kudus[13]. The Dandangan tradition was first held in the year 1459 Hijri, or around 454 CE. Initially, this tradition was a gathering of Islamic boarding school students in front of the Menara Kudus Mosque every year before the month of Ramadan[14]. However, as time went on and the number of students gathered increased, merchants began to take advantage of the occasion to sell goods around the mosque. Consequently, Dandangan became not only an event marking the start of the fast but also evolved into a festival celebrated in the lead-up to Ramadan. To this day, the Dandangan tradition continues to be preserved by the people of Kudus Regency every year. This tradition has become a tourist attraction, drawing many visitors from outside the region who come to join in the festivities or simply enjoy the atmosphere. The Dandangan tradition has evolved into a festival that takes place over 10 days before the start of Ramadan, serving as a distinctive cultural hallmark and a source of pride for the people of Kudus[15].

During the Dandangan Procession, the main public space on Sunan Kudus Street undergoes a significant transformation from a vehicular thoroughfare into a cultural space filled with social, economic, and religious ritual activities[16]. The temporary transformation of the Sunan Kudus Street corridor during the Dandangan Procession demonstrates the flexibility of urban space in accommodating cultural needs while maintaining its urban functions. This phenomenon underscores the role of public space as a collective arena that provides physical access while strengthening the community's sense of place[17, 18]. Amid

the pressures of urbanization and modernization which have the potential to create a sense of placelessness understanding and managing these temporary public spaces are crucial for preserving the identity and quality of urban spaces.

This study aims to examine in depth how temporary public spaces along the Sunan Kudus Street corridor transform during the Kirab Dandangan, as well as to o examine the socio-spatial transformation and sense of place formation atau spatial adaptation and community attachment. This approach is expected to contribute to responsive and adaptive public space planning that takes into account the cultural context and social needs of the local community.

Although there have been numerous studies on public space in urban contexts and vernacular architecture, most of these studies tend to focus on permanent and functional spaces and have not specifically addressed the dynamics of temporary public spaces that emerge in the context of local cultural rituals. Studies on temporality in urban space are still dominated by the contexts of large cities and commercial activities or national-scale festivals, 6 while the transformation of space on the scale of small cities with strong cultural backgrounds, such as The Dandangan Procession in Kudus has rarely been examined in depth, particularly in relation to Edward Relph's theory of place and placelessness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using literature review and secondary data analysis to understand the transformation of temporary public spaces in the Kirab Dandangan tradition in Kudus City. This approach was chosen to provide conceptual and empirical analysis based on widely available sources, making it relevant for the study of cultural and spatial phenomena that are both historical and contemporary.

Data Collection Techniques

1. Literature

Literatur Data collection was conducted through an in-depth review of scholarly literature related to Edward Relph's theory of "place and placelessness," vernacular architecture, temporary urbanism, and previous studies on public spaces and cultural traditions. Primary sources included academic journals, books, and official publications accessible online or digital.

2. Observations via the Internet and Digital Media

Observations were conducted by collecting and analyzing visual and descriptive data from various online sources, such as video documentation of the Kirab Dandangan, photos of the event, and local and national media coverage that captured the dynamics of the event and the use of temporary public spaces. This technique was chosen to help understand spatial aspects, activity patterns, and social interactions indirectly when on-site access was not possible. However, this method has several limitations that need to be considered. First, digital content is selective and limited to the perspective of the media creator, thus potentially leading to representational bias. Second, due to its passive and non-participatory, online online does not allow researchers to interact directly with the actors or users of the space, so subjective meanings and emotional experiences cannot be explored in depth. Therefore, the results of this observation are not used as the sole source of data but are combined with a literature review and other secondary data through triangulation techniques to ensure the accuracy of the analysis and avoid that are not proportional.

3. Analysis Data Secondary

The study also utilized secondary data in the form of Kudus City spatial planning maps, urban planning documents, and news articles related to the Kirab Dandangan event and the management of public spaces in the study area. This data was used to examine spatial and contextual changes in the urban landscape and to strengthen the analysis of temporary phenomena.

Research Location

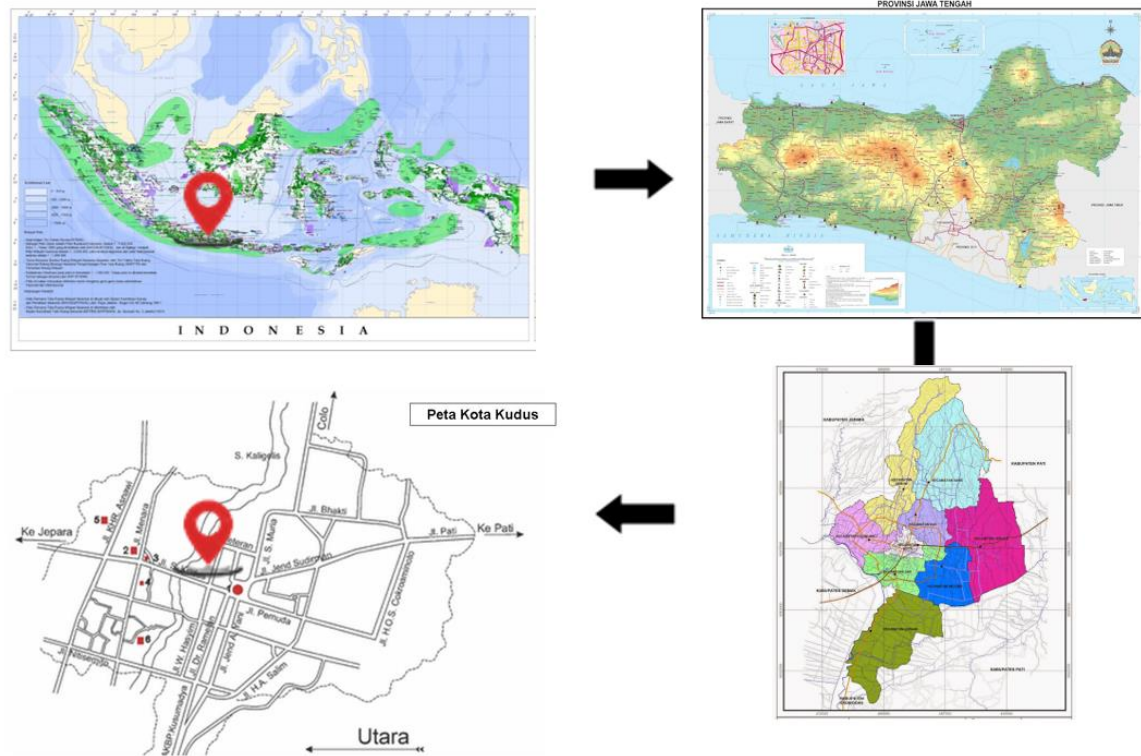


Figure 1 Map of the research location along the road corridor around the Kudus Tower,

Central Java[20]

The research location is situated along the Sunan Kudus Road corridor in Kudus Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. This area serves as the center of activities for the Kirab Dandangan tradition, an annual cultural ritual held in the lead-up to the month of Ramadan. Administratively, Sunan Kudus Road stretches between the Kudus Tower area and the historic old town of Kudus, and is directly connected to commercial zones, religious spaces, and densely populated residential areas.

This street serves as a primary route for daily transportation; however, during the Kirab Dandangan, the space undergoes a functional transformation into a temporary public space that accommodates a variety of activities, such as ritual processions, cultural performances, informal trade, and social interactions among residents. The space's flexible nature and its connection to historic buildings particularly the Menara Kudus Mosque as the city's primary symbol make this location highly significant in the context of research on vernacular architecture and the dynamics of public spaces rooted in local traditions.

The selection of this location is based on its strong connection to the cultural, historical, and symbolic significance of the Kudus community, as well as its role as a concrete example of an urban space undergoing temporary shifts in function and identity. This phenomenon is highly relevant for analysis within the theoretical framework of “place and placelessness” and the concept of “urban temporality,” in order to understand how physical space transforms into meaningful space that reinforces community identity and resistance to the homogenization of urban space.

FINDINGS

1. The Transformation of Temporary Public Space in the Dandangan Procession Tradition

The Kirab Dandangan tradition, held annually in the lead-up to Ramadan in the city of Kudus, is a concrete example of the transformation of temporary public spaces within a traditional urban context. The main corridor of Sunan Kudus Street which under normal conditions functions as a transportation route and vehicle thoroughfare undergoes a temporary shift in function, becoming a dynamic cultural space. This transformation involves various social, economic, and religious ritual activities that not only alter the physical use of the space but also revitalize the meaning and identity of the place.



Figure 2 The street corridor used for activities during the Kirab Dandangan. [21]

During the Kirab Dandangan, public spaces which are usually dominated by vehicular traffic transform into pedestrian areas filled with people participating in or

watching the procession. Streets that were originally transit spaces become spaces for social and economic interaction, where street vendors, traditional art performances, and various religious activities create a very different pattern of space use. This transformation reflects the flexibility of urban space, which allows different functions to alternate according to the temporary needs of the community[22].

The Kirab Dandangan tradition, held annually in the lead-up to Ramadan in the city of Kudus, is a concrete example of how public space undergoes temporary transformation within the context of vernacular culture. The Sunan Kudus Street corridor, which functionally serves as a primary daily transportation route, undergoes a complete transformation into a dynamic cultural space teeming with social interaction. This transformation lasts for approximately ten days, with the space becoming active daily from 3:00 PM until late at night, based on predetermined operating hours. During this period, the road section is gradually closed by local authorities in the late afternoon, and activities begin to be distributed according to zones and time slots. In the early hours (3:00–5:00 p.m.), the corridor begins to fill with street vendors setting up their stalls and an increase in pedestrian traffic. As evening approaches (6:00–10:00 p.m.), the crowd reaches its peak, with visitor density hitting up to 40,000 people per day on weekends and an average of 38,000 visitors on weekdays. Even when it rains, this number remains above 20,000 people per day.

Spatially, Sunan Kudus Street is transformed into a multi-zone corridor:

- The street vendor tent zone is occupied by 450 vendors, consisting of 380 local business owners and more than 70 vendors from outside the region,
- the “lesehan” zone or roadside area is filled with more than 600 informal vendors who extend all the way to the Jember Market area,
- At several points, open spaces are available for viewing and traditional art performances,
- Meanwhile, the area near the Menara Kudus Mosque serves as a sacred site for ritual processions and the starting point of the parade.

This transformation mechanism demonstrates the existence of a spatial and social structure that is organized organically and collectively, even though it is temporary. The intense commercial activity generates an economic turnover of up to 2 billion rupiah per day, as explained by the Head of the Kudus Trade Office, Andi Imam Santoso. In his interview, he stated:

“Yesterday, I took a sample of one day’s sales, and vendors were able to achieve a turnover of around Rp 4 million to Rp 6 million.”

Furthermore, Imam Prayitno, Head of the Kudus Street Vendor Division, added:

“There are about 450 vendors occupying the street vendor tents, consisting of 380 vendors from Kudus and 80 from outside Kudus. This does not include the roughly 600 street vendors setting up on the ground, whose numbers continue to grow every night.”

This description illustrates that the transformation of space is not merely a physical change but also the activation of socioeconomic and cultural dimensions. A street that is typically a transit space transforms into a collective space with a high intensity of social activity: transactions, entertainment, interactions among residents, and even expressions of religious devotion.

This phenomenon reinforces the relevance of the concept of urban temporality and Edward Relph’s theory of place that urban spaces have the capacity to dynamically transform

into meaningful places rooted in local identity. This process highlights the potential for integration between modern urban functions and traditional values, as well as the importance of managing temporary spaces in inclusive and adaptive urban planning. This phenomenon of the transformation of temporary public spaces aligns with the concept of temporary urbanism, which emphasizes urban space as a dynamic entity capable of changing its function and meaning according to the context of time and socio-cultural activities[7, 8]. In this regard, the Kirab Dandangan is not merely a ritual event but also a social practice that revitalizes urban spaces as centers of cultural life and strengthens community identity.

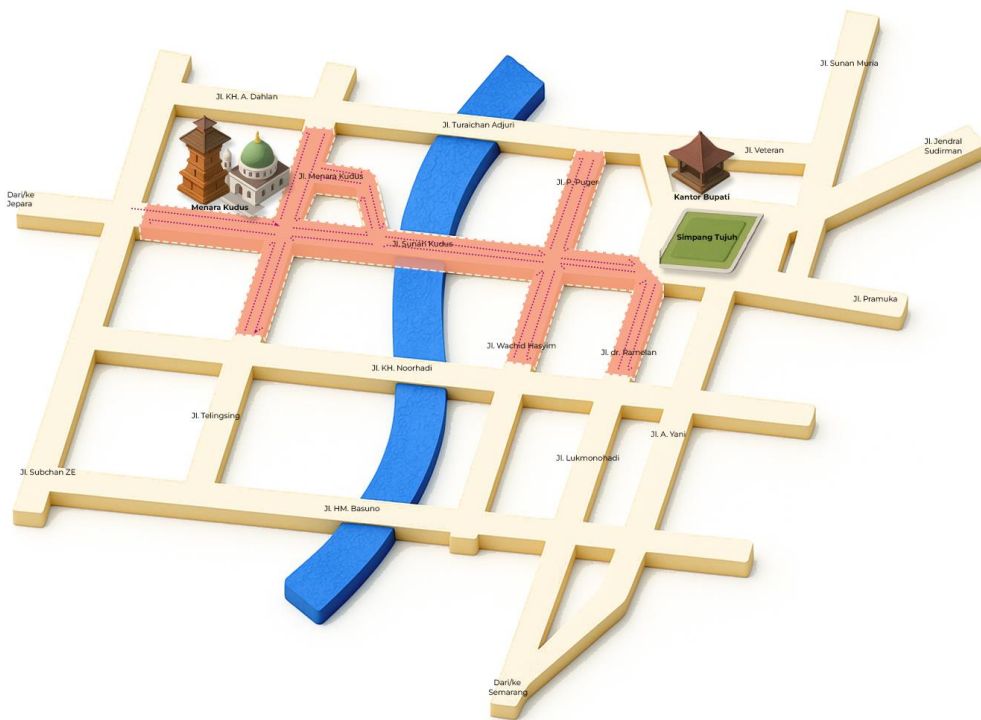


Figure 3 The street corridor used for activities during the Dandangan Parade
(source: primer data, 2026)

Furthermore, this transformation of space's function also demonstrates the adaptive mechanisms of physical and social spatial planning that enable public spaces to meet temporary collective needs without permanently altering their fundamental functions. The management of space during the procession such as closing off vehicle access and organizing activity zones reflects the collective efforts of the community and local authorities to create comfortable and meaningful spaces.

This transformation not only adds social and cultural dimensions to urban space but also underscores the importance of temporary public spaces as a medium for preserving traditions and cultural heritage within the context of modern urban life. The temporary spaces activated by the Dandangan Procession demonstrate how urban spaces can serve as venues for activities that strengthen a sense of place and sustain local identity amid the challenges of homogenization and modernization[10].

Thus, the transformation of temporary public spaces in the Kirab Dandangan not only facilitates ritual and social activities but also demonstrates the capacity of urban spaces to adapt and transform in accordance with the cultural needs of the community, making it a

significant phenomenon in the study of urban planning, architecture, and urban anthropology.

2. Sense of Place and Community Bonding in Temporary Spaces

A sense of place is a central concept in understanding how individuals and communities form emotional connections and identities with the spaces they experience. In the context of the Kirab Dandangan in Kudus, the temporary public spaces formed during this tradition are not merely physical spaces but arenas of collective experience rich in meaning and socio-cultural bonds.

According to Edward Relph (1976), a sense of connection to a place, or “insideness,” encompasses various levels, ranging from a profound existential experience (“existential insideness”) and reflective awareness (“empathetic insideness”) to active engagement in daily activities (“behavioral insideness”). In the Kirab Dandangan, these levels of insideness are clearly evident when the community collectively experiences and interprets this temporary space as part of their cultural identity.



Figure 4 Sense of Place in Five Diagrams[19]

At the level of existential insideness, many residents of Kudus experience the Kirab Dandangan as a sacred moment that connects them to the roots of their community’s traditions and history. The sense of “being at home” within this temporary space fosters a strong emotional bond and reinforces the community’s collective identity[10]. This bond is not merely individual in nature but is socially reinforced through participation in rituals, interactions among residents, and shared celebrations.

Furthermore, at the level of empathetic insideness, participants in the Kirab Dandangan demonstrate critical awareness and appreciation for the cultural values and symbolism inherent in the space and activities of this tradition. They consciously preserve and nurture the meaning of this temporary space, so that the Kirab is not merely a ritual activity but also a form of cultural preservation that enriches the city’s identity.

Additionally, “behavioral insideness” is reflected in how the community actively uses the corridor along Jalan Sunan Kudus during the Kirab for various social and economic activities. The intense interactions within this space strengthen a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for the space being used, while also demonstrating the flexibility of space as a social entity that can be shaped and interpreted by its users.

The spatial experience during the Dandangan Procession thus reveals an authentic “sense of place” a space that is culturally meaningful and vibrant, distinct from spaces that

are merely physical and functional[10]. This cultural significance serves as a source of strength in sustaining local traditions and identity amid increasingly modern and homogenized urban dynamics.

The community bonds formed through these temporary spaces also play a role in strengthening social cohesion, fostering solidarity, and deepening a sense of responsibility toward the preservation of culture and urban spaces. This demonstrates that the temporary public spaces during the Kirab Dandangan are not merely physical arenas but symbolic social spaces that reinforce collective identity and enrich the overall urban experience.

3. Temporary Public Spaces as an Antidote to Placelessness

Edward Relph (1976), in *“Place and Placelessness”*, describes the phenomenon of placelessness as a condition in which a space loses its unique characteristics and local meaning, thereby transforming into a generic, culturally homogenized, and bland space. This phenomenon is closely linked to modernization, globalization, and urban planning standards that prioritize functional efficiency without regard for cultural values and local identity. Placelessness negatively impacts the community’s connection to space, weakens the sense of place, and erodes social bonds and community identity.

In the context of Kudus City, the temporary public spaces formed during the Kirab Dandangan serve as a tangible antidote to placelessness. The transformation of the Sunan Kudus Street corridor which typically functions as a vehicular thoroughfare into a cultural space rich in social activities and traditional rituals creates a space imbued with strong cultural significance. The activities taking place in this temporary space reinforce local identity and enrich the spatial experience, ensuring that the space is not merely a place of passage but becomes a center of unique and authentic cultural life.

The existence of temporary public spaces during the Kirab Dandangan creates an “authentic place” as described by Relph that is, a space that is deeply emotionally connected to and identifies with its community[10]. Thus, this space resists the homogenization characteristic of placelessness by preserving local rituals and values that bring the space to life both symbolically and practically.

The concept of “placelessness” proposed by Edward Relph (1976) refers to a condition in which spaces lose their uniqueness, local meaning, and emotional attachment due to the pressures of modernization and cultural homogenization. In the context of contemporary urban life, public spaces that once accommodated expressions of local culture often shift into generic spaces containing similar elements across various cities, lacking contextual uniqueness. The Dandangan Parade in Kudus presents a very tangible spatial and social contrast to this phenomenon.

4. Before-and-After Contrast: From a Transportation Corridor to a Symbolic Space

Before the Dandangan event, the Sunan Kudus Street corridor was merely a space for daily circulation, congested with vehicles and with minimal pedestrian activity. There were no visual or symbolic elements that explicitly reflected local cultural values. Residents tended to treat this space functionally as a place to pass through, not to experience.

However, during the Kirab period, this space transforms into a hub of collective cultural expression. Decorative gateways, Javanese-Islamic visual elements, community tents, and local entertainment stages are arranged cohesively, reinforcing the space’s identity. A local narrative also emerges, with visitors referring to the place as “pasare mbalik

nalar” (a market that evokes memories). As Pak Hasyim, a resident of Damaran village, put it:

“Usually, we just walk by. But during Dandangan, this street comes alive. It’s like going back in time. You run into old acquaintances; the atmosphere is lively yet peaceful.”

This testimony illustrates residents’ existential experience of a meaningful space, as opposed to a space that is emotionally “flat.”

However, to ensure that temporary public spaces can effectively function as a countermeasure against placelessness, support is needed from planning and management that are sensitive to the cultural and social values of the community. Without recognition and protection of these cultural functions, spaces risk losing their meaning and ultimately transforming into places devoid of identity a form of placelessness that erodes the sustainability of traditions and community bonds.

Temporary public spaces, such as those that emerge during the Kirab Dandangan, do indeed possess strong potential to counteract the homogenization of urban spaces. However, this potential is not automatic and must be sustained through policies, design, and ongoing cultural participation. Otherwise, festivalization devoid of meaning could give rise to a new form of placelessness that not only loses its form but also its meaning.

5. Implications of the Theory of Place and Placelessness for Public Space Planning in Kudus City

The theory of “place and placelessness” proposed by Edward Relph (1976) has important implications for the planning and management of public spaces in Kudus, particularly in addressing the dynamics of temporary public spaces during the Kirab Dandangan tradition. Relph emphasizes that meaningful space (place) must be able to accommodate the experiences, meanings, and identities inherent to its community, while placelessness must be avoided by preserving the uniqueness and cultural ties of that space.

In the context of public spaces in Kudus City, this understanding highlights the need for a design approach that is sensitive to local cultural values and flexible in responding to changes in the space’s function, especially when the space transforms into a temporary space, such as during the Kirab Dandangan. Successful planning is that which can integrate everyday functions such as circulation routes with temporary cultural and social functions, without sacrificing either function. Furthermore, Relph’s theory emphasizes the importance of preserving the authenticity of a space that is, a space that not only meets functional needs but also reflects the history, traditions, and identity of the community[10]. In the case of Kudus, preserving the authenticity of public spaces means designing spaces capable of accommodating and reinforcing cultural practices such as the Kirab Dandangan, while still prioritizing user comfort, safety, and accessibility.

The implementation of this approach involves providing modular and semi-permanent infrastructure that allows the function of a space to change in accordance with cultural cycles. For example, the use of foldable architectural elements such as traditional tents, historical narrative panels, and pedestrian paths featuring local motifs can support the sustainability of public spaces’ visual and functional identities throughout the year. Such flexible spatial designs have been effectively implemented in several other cities. In the city of Solo, the Gladag Langen Bogan (Galabo) area has been developed as a nighttime culinary hub with modular infrastructure, allowing the space to remain economically active while preserving its traditional character. Meanwhile, George Town in Malaysia implements a temporary zoning policy during the George Town Festival, which legally regulates the use of heritage spaces for cultural activities without compromising the integrity of historic sites.

Beyond design approaches, the planning of temporary public spaces must also consider regulatory and institutional governance dimensions. Spatial planning grounded in cultural values can only be realized with the support of specific, cross-sectoral, and integrated policies. Therefore, the Kudus Regency Government should consider drafting a local regulation (Perda) governing the protection and utilization of public spaces for temporary cultural activities. As part of a long-term strategy, culture-based public space management can be integrated into an annual adaptive planning framework that responds to local cultural cycles. Within this framework, the implementation of the Kirab Dandangan is not treated merely as an annual event, but as part of an urban spatial system that is continuously planned, evaluated, and refined. Each year, the planning process can begin with the identification of spatial needs (pre-Kirab), community consultation, implementation, evaluation, and finally, the revision of regulations and policies. In this way, the social and cultural significance of temporary public spaces can be consistently preserved, and the risk of them becoming generic spaces due to economic pressures or mass tourism can be avoided. The implications of Relph's theory in the context of Kudus point to the importance of establishing a spatial planning system that is not only responsive to functional needs but also capable of preserving the cultural values that shape the community's collective identity. Through a combination of adaptive design, regulations grounded in cultural values, and meaningful community participation, temporary public spaces like Dandangan can continue to thrive as representations of an "authentic place" amid the city's accelerating pace of change.

DISCUSSIONS

The temporary transformation of public space that occurs along the Sunan Kudus Street area during the Dandangan procession tradition reflects a manifestation of the concept of "place" according to Edward Relph (1976). In his theory, "place" is not merely a physical space but a location imbued with meaning, identity, and emotional attachment for the community that uses it. During the Dandangan procession, the space which is typically used as a vehicle thoroughfare transforms into a cultural space rich with social, economic, and religious activities. This shift in function revitalizes the space's meaning and identity, so that the community uses it not only functionally but also symbolically and culturally. These temporary ritual and social activities strengthen the sense of place because the community collectively experiences, maintains, and interprets the space as part of their cultural heritage. However, Relph also warns of the potential for "placelessness" a condition in which a space loses its unique characteristics and its meaning becomes generic due to processes of modernization and homogenization. If the cultural significance and ritual functions of public spaces in this area are neglected, and the spaces are oriented solely toward transportation or commercialization, they risk falling into placelessness, which ultimately weakens community bonds and the quality of the space. Therefore, the adaptive integration of spatial functions during the Dandangan procession tradition demonstrates that temporary public spaces can serve as a solution to preserve the sustainability of local identity while simultaneously meeting modern urban needs. Thus, the management of public spaces that considers cultural and social aspects as integral to their function is crucial for preventing placelessness and reinforcing "place" as a space that is meaningful and culturally vibrant.

According to Edward Relph (Seamon et al., 2008), a place has three main elements or dimensions that define its identity: the spatial (physical) dimension, the temporal (historical) dimension, and the social (cognitive or mental) dimension, as shown in Figure 1. In the spatial dimension, the physical elements of space are represented through maps, which serve as the basis for urban design and architectural decisions (Cighi, May 2008). The temporal

dimension of a place emphasizes the sense of place that forms over the time people spend in that space. People develop their own understanding of a place through the time they spend there during various public events or activities, thereby creating personal meanings, memories, and emotions. Engagement at this temporal or historical level builds a sense of place. The social dimension relates to human behavior and activities; it includes impressions, feelings, meanings, emotions, perceptions, and cognition, both individually and in groups. A sense of place is formed through human interactions in various social activities and different events. This dimension connects the concepts of “space” and “place,” making it an essential part of a place’s identity. The importance of spatio-temporal analysis lies in its ability to integrate these three dimensions the spatial (physical) dimension with the temporal (historical) dimension to interpret and deeply understand the socio-mental dimension, where various social events take place in urban public spaces, thereby giving that place its own distinct identity.

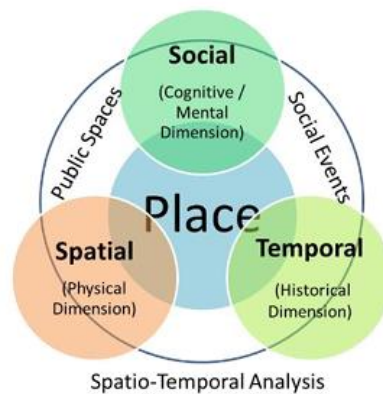


Figure 5 Three dimensions of place: Spatial, Temporal and Social. [19]

In the context of this study, the concept of the production of “place” as social “space” is highly relevant for understanding the dynamics of the transformation of temporary public spaces during the Kirab Dandangan tradition in Kudus City. As previously outlined, urban public spaces such as the Sunan Kudus Street corridor play a central role in city life and reflect the complexity of the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the communities that use them.

These public spaces do not merely function as physical spaces or vehicle circulation routes; rather, through a process of social production, they are temporarily transformed into meaningful and culturally vibrant “places.” This process of “place” production occurs when the community actively fills the space with ritual, social, and economic activities during the Kirab Dandangan, thereby transforming what was originally a neutral physical space into one imbued with a deep social identity and value.

This understanding requires a comprehensive spatio-temporal analysis, as the phenomenon of temporary spatial transformation in the Kirab Dandangan involves changes in function, social interactions, and differing meanings at specific times. Thus, temporary public spaces become arenas where “space” is physically re-produced into a “place” that is memorable, accessible, and meaningful, in accordance with Edward Relph’s theory of “place” and “placelessness.” This approach is crucial for examining how socio-cultural activities can enrich the quality of urban space while preserving the sustainability of local identity in the face of modernization pressures.

The phenomenon of the transformation of temporary public spaces during the Dandangan Parade in Kudus City reveals the complexity of the interaction between

traditional culture, urban space, and the dynamics of modernization. In the context of Edward Relph's theory, meaningful space (place) is heavily dependent on emotional attachment, cultural meaning, and community identity built through direct experience. However, contemporary urban reality often faces the challenge of spatial homogenization, which can lead to "placelessness" spaces that lose their unique characteristics and become generic, devoid of local meaning.

The transformation of public space during the Kirab Dandangan is a collective effort that temporarily resists this homogenization by reviving cultural meanings and functions. Nevertheless, the sustainability and effectiveness of these temporary spaces as a countermeasure against placelessness cannot be taken for granted. Critical discourse reminds us that without structural support from urban planning and policies oriented toward the preservation of cultural values and community participation, temporary spaces risk becoming a fleeting phenomenon that fails to take root in the comprehensive management of public space.

The potential conflict between the function of public space as a modern circulation route and its temporary cultural function highlights a classic dilemma in urban planning. When public space is repurposed for cultural activities, questions often arise about how to maintain the space's basic function as an urban facility without sacrificing cultural values. In the context of the Kirab Dandangan, unresponsive spatial management can lead to discomfort, accessibility issues, and even the marginalization of certain groups not involved in the tradition, thereby making temporary public spaces a potential source of social tension.

In relation to existing scholarship, these findings show clear alignments with the principles of temporary urbanism articulated by Haeckel and Carmona et al., which demonstrate that temporary public activities can effectively reactivate mono-functional thoroughfares into socially dense arenas. Similar spatial dynamics have been documented in studies of traditional religious markets in Java, such as the Sekaten festivities in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, where temporary road closures transform utilitarian transit channels into vibrant hubs of informal commerce and shared civic encounters. In accordance with Relph's construct of insideness, the active engagement of street vendors, pilgrims, and local residents during Dandangan cultivates behavioral and empathetic insideness, validating Lefebvre's, notion of spatial production wherein space is continually lived and remade through grassroots social practice rather than mere architectural form.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Relph's theory, placelessness arises not only from physical changes to space but also from a loss of meaning and psychological attachment. Therefore, the transformation of temporary spaces must be accompanied by the strengthening of cultural narratives and practices that consciously instill meaning and identity. Without this, temporary spaces become merely physical spaces devoid of meaning, thereby minimizing their impact on fostering a sense of place.

Critical discussions must also consider the challenges of the digital age and globalization, which are increasingly influencing urban culture and space. Standardized information and lifestyles have the potential to erode local uniqueness, making temporary public spaces as vessels for tradition both critically important and vulnerable to erosion by the tide of cultural homogenization. The active role of communities in preserving and transmitting cultural values through temporary public spaces is key and must be supported by policies and designs sensitive to the local context.

Finally, although the temporary public spaces in the Kirab Dandangan demonstrate strong potential as a countermeasure against placelessness, the development of public spaces in Kudus City as a whole must adopt a holistic approach that not only accommodates

temporary functions but also sustainably preserves the meaning, sense of connection, and diversity of the spaces' identities. This requires synergy between theory, planning practices, community participation, and the preservation of traditions as the foundation for humane and culturally rich urban development.

While this study offers empirical and theoretical insights into the socio-spatial transformation and sense of place dynamics during the Dandangan tradition, several methodological and contextual limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Reliance on Digital and Secondary Data Sources:** The empirical investigation predominantly utilized digital media observations, published documentation, municipal spatial plans, and secondary literature. Although triangulation was conducted across municipal reports and media archives, the non-participatory nature of digital observation restricts the direct capture of spontaneous, unmediated spatial encounters and micro-scale physical adaptations that occur along the corridor.
2. **Absence of Direct Behavioral Mapping and Psychological Metrics:** Because direct on-site empirical interactions (such as structured behavioral tracking, pedestrian counts, and psychometric surveys on place attachment) were not conducted, evaluations of user behavior and experiential depth rely on qualitative proxies and secondary testimonies. Future research would benefit from incorporating empirical spatial tracking, cognitive mapping, and validated place attachment scales (e.g., place identity, place dependence, and social bonding) to quantify experiential variations among diverse demographic cohorts.
3. **Temporal Specificity and Seasonality:** The findings reflect spatial and socio-cultural dynamics confined strictly to a brief ten-day pre-Ramadan window. This episodic snapshot does not fully capture post-event spatial recovery, lingering collective memories throughout the remaining eleven months, or the longitudinal evolution of community place attachment across multiple years.

Addressing these limitations through mixed-method post-occupancy evaluations, longitudinal spatial tracking, and comparative studies across different traditional festivals will further enrich the scholarly discourse on temporary urbanism and heritage-based placemaking.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the Dandangan tradition significantly creates meaningful spaces through the activation of religious rituals, grassroots economic activities, and collective social interactions. This transformation strengthens the community's sense of place while also serving as a mechanism of resistance against the homogenization of urban space (placelessness). This study demonstrates that the Dandangan tradition temporarily reclaims the Sunan Kudus arterial corridor, transforming a utilitarian transit route into an authentic, culturally vibrant public space through religious rituals, informal commerce, and collective civic encounters. This socio-spatial transformation actively counters urban homogenization (placelessness) by reinforcing local place attachment and communal identity.

Theoretically, these findings extend Edward Relph's construct of place and placelessness to culturally grounded temporary spaces in secondary historic cities, establishing that temporality can serve as a catalyst for collective place-making rather than an urban vulnerability. Practically, this research advocates for adaptive urban governance

that integrates flexible zoning, modular infrastructure, and cultural calendar-based planning. Ultimately, institutionalizing participatory management is essential to safeguard the authenticity of such temporary public spaces against the homogenizing pressures of modernization and unchecked commercialization.

REFERENCES

- [1] Gehl J. *Cities for People*. Island Press, 2010.
- [2] Whyte WH. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Project for Public Spaces, 1980.
- [3] Carr S, Francis M, Rivlin LG, et al. *Public Space*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- [4] Oliver P. *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- [5] Rapoport A. *House form and culture*. Prentice-Hall, 1969.
- [6] Tweed C, Sutherland M. Built Vernacular Environments: Informal and Formal. *Progress in Human Geography* 2007; 31: 231–251.
- [7] Zukin S. *The Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- [8] Haeckel SH. Temporary Urbanism and the Future of Cities. *Urban Studies Journal*.
- [9] Carmona M, Heath T, Oc T, et al. *Public Places, Urban Spaces*. Routledge, 2010.
- [10] Relph E. *Place and Placelessness*. Pion Limited, 1976.
- [11] Cresswell T. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- [12] Giuliani MV. Theory of Attachment and Place Attachment. *Psychology of Place*, 2003.
- [13] Suryanto. *The Dandangan Procession Tradition in Kudus*. 2010.
- [14] Hasbullah. *Kudus from a Historical and Cultural Perspective*. 2002.
- [15] Aditya E. The Dandangan Tradition as a Learning Study in Support of Achieving the Vision of the University of Culture. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*; 10.
- [16] Nugroho A. The Transformation of Urban Space within Local Traditions. *Indonesian Architecture Journal*.
- [17] Jacobs J. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Random House, 1961.
- [18] Lefebvre H. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Publishing, 1991.
- [19] Seamon, Sowers. *Place and placelessness, Edward Relph*. London: SAGE Publications, 2008.
- [20] <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/215453/perda-kab-kudus-no-1-tahun-2022>.
- [21] <https://joglojateng.com/2024/02/29/tradisi-dandangan-tujuh-ruas-jalan-di-kudus-akan-ditutup/>.
- [22] Muniroh. *Dandangan: A Tradition to Welcome the Holy Month of Ramadan in the City of Kudus*. Walisongo State Islamic University, 2016.



Copyright and Grant the Journal Right under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

Copyright © 2022 SYNTIFIC PUBLISHER