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Transit Accessibility and the Emergence of Community-Driven Social Nodes

Adaptive placemaking and everyday space appropriation around Jakarta's Blok M transit area

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WHY IT MATTERS

Jakarta's TOD situation

- 1 TOD anchors Jakarta's response to congestion and car dependence
- 2 MRT, LRT, KRL and BRT recast station areas as activity centers
- 3 TOD design approach to the transportation performance. Yet the everyday, bottom-up making of space stays under-examined

HOW TRANSIT AREAS ARE FRAMED

Dominant lens

Formal TOD planning often emphasizes top-down physical indicators (density, connectivity, mixed-use) but overlooks the social production of space

Overlooked

The social production of space
how people activate transit areas
in daily practice

The overlooked social life of transit areas

TOD research in Jakarta and many developing cities concentrates on: Transportation, Land values, Policy effectiveness, Density.

How does increased transit accessibility form new social spaces

Spaces produced organically through the interaction of formal and informal actors?

AIM

Examine how enhanced transit accessibility facilitates adaptive placemaking and the emergence of community-driven social nodes through bottom-up, collaborative spatial practices.

RQ1 How does increased transit accessibility influence adaptive placemaking?

RQ2 How do local and informal actors reshape space through everyday practice?

RQ3 How does this produce social nodes that support vitality and resilience?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Four lenses, one socio-spatial outcome

Transit Accessibility

Reach to activities and encounters, not just proximity



Node-Place Model

Movement strength vs. quality of place



Adaptive Placemaking

Place made through social use, not only design



Community-Driven Urbanism

Space produced by everyday actors from below

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SOCIAL NODES

Inclusive, adaptive and socially vibrant transit space, continuously produced through formal + informal interaction

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative case study

Field observation

In-depth interviews

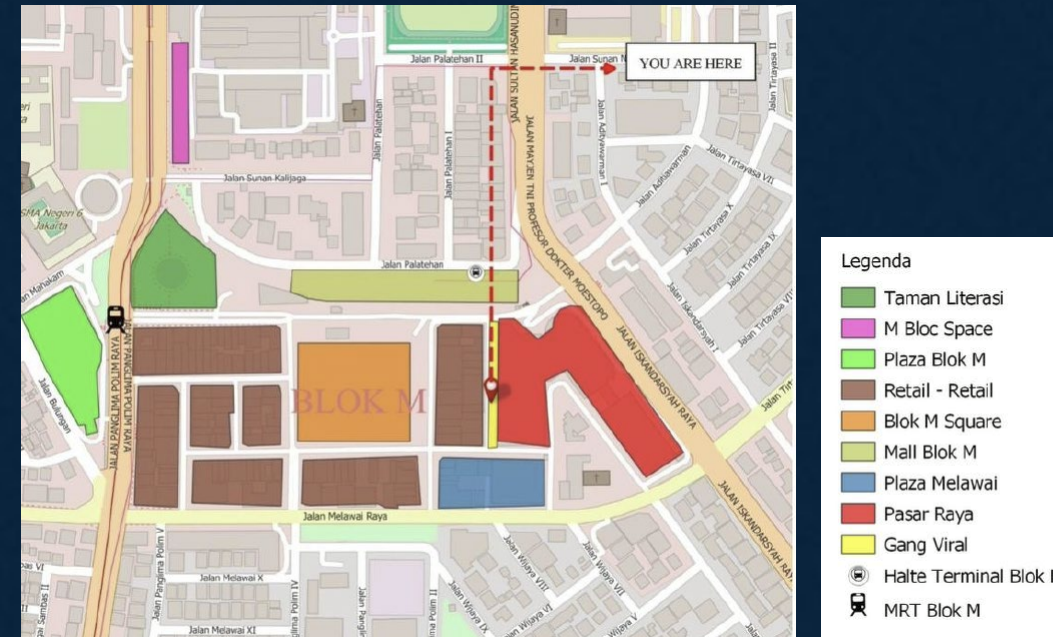
Visual Documentation

Document Review

Thematic analysis linking accessibility → adaptive
 placemaking → social nodes

Actors Engaged Local communities,
 Small business owners
 Transit users
 Informal actors
 Government

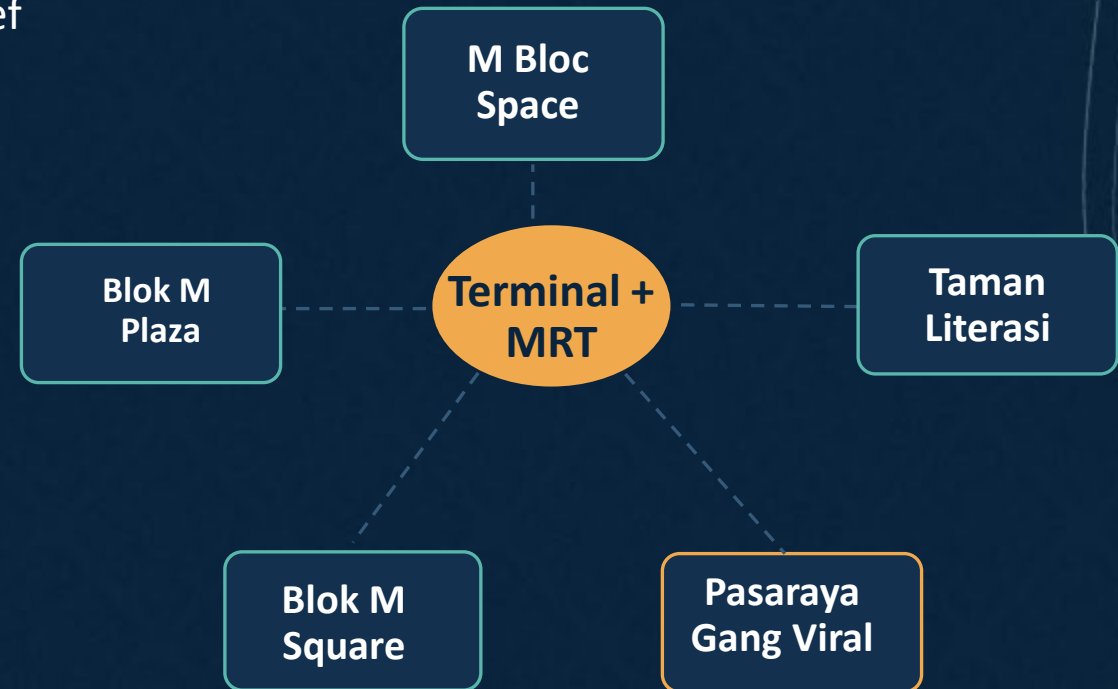
Case selected for high transit accessibility, intense commercial activity, and strong formal–informal dynamics.



Blok M : a transit-linked node in South Jakarta

Pasar Raya Blok M is one of the most iconic shopping centres and business districts in South Jakarta, 1974 by Abdul Latief

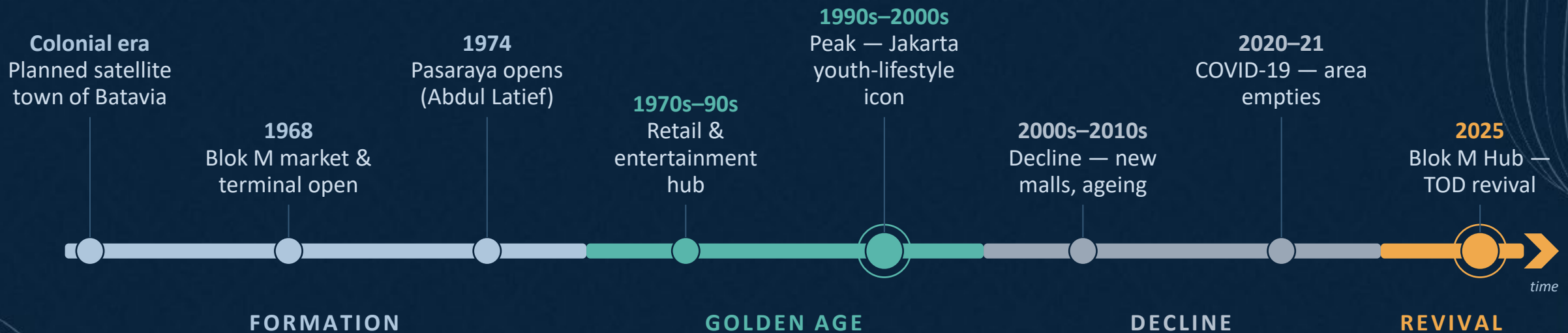
- **High transit access** — MRT Blok M, Trans Jakarta and the terminal area
- **Historic commercial core** — Pasaraya, Blok M Plaza, Blok M Square
- **Recent activation** — M Bloc Space, Taman Literasi, Blok M Hub
- **A connected ecosystem** — A chain of destinations, not isolated objects
 - Blok M represents an active transition from an older commercial-transport node into a socially vibrant node-place.



Schematic node network — organically directed pedestrian flow

History of Blok M: rise, decline and TOD-driven revival

A chronological account, from a colonial-era satellite town of Batavia to a transit-oriented urban node



SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION

From declining retail district to node-place



Gang Viral: an edge space turned social corridor

Underused edge Outer corridor of Pasaraya: secondary, not formally planned

A single trigger Small tenant Little Salt Bread draws attention and social-media buzz

Viral clustering More tenants enter; a dense culinary-lifestyle strip forms

Spillover revival Previously underused floors of the complex recover

BEFORE

- Enclosed retail and conventional transport node
- Competition from newer malls, changing habits
- Decline deepened during COVID-19
- Isolated commercial objects

AFTER

- Mixed pattern: transit, public space, F and B, creative use
- MRT and pedestrian flow knit destinations together
- A broader urban ecosystem for movement + presence
- Mobility and urban experience reinforce each other

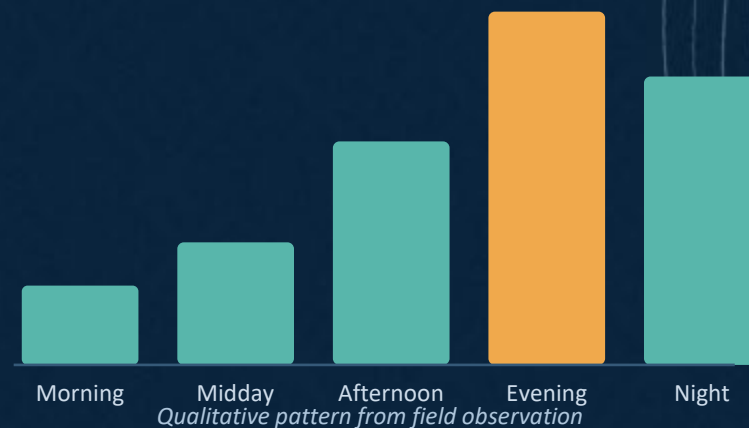
EVIDENCE — ADAPTIVE PLACEMAKING

Indications of adaptive placemaking across Blok M

Understood not only as a mobility node, but as a social space shaped by formal intervention and adaptive daily use.

Urban element	Observed use	Spatial adaptation	Social-node indication
Transit / interchange	Waiting, meeting, short stays	Mobility space also a space of pause	Temporary high co-presence points
Taman Literasi	Reading, gathering, community	Green space → social-cultural space	Longer stays; stronger place function
Blok M Hub	Transit, consumption, economy	Interchange → activity space	Socially & economically intense node
Blok M Square / M Bloc	Hanging out, eating, meetups	Retail → fluid social space	Mixed social-commercial node
Sidewalks / frontages / edges	Waiting, spontaneous interaction	In-between space appropriated	Micro-social nodes from daily use

INDICATIVE ACTIVITY INTENSITY



GANG VIRAL



Pasaraya



Taman Literasi



M Bloc

KEY FINDING · STAKEHOLDER DYNAMICS

A bottom-up transformation: community-led regeneration of Blok M

Local actors' initiative programs, reinforced by public support



OUTCOME A new identity : Blok M as a creative hub and urban-interaction space: **community-led urban regeneration.**

ROLE

Government shifts from dominant actor to enabler, visitors from consumers to co-creators.
 Transformation grows organically from community demand not from top-down megaprojects.

FINDING

How does transit accessibility influence adaptive placemaking?

- Improved transit accessibility acts as an enabling catalyst rather than a direct driver of placemaking.
- Greater accessibility raises footfall and opens opportunities to use space in new ways.
- Placemaking emerged through an adaptive process in which local stakeholders appropriated existing spaces and gradually transformed them into socially meaningful places
- Adaptive spatial transformation occurred incrementally

MECHANISM

Transit access → ↑ footfall →
new space-use opportunities

How do local and informal actors reshape space through everyday practice?

- Local and informal actors reshape urban space through a continuous process of everyday adaptation rather than through formal planning interventions.
- Everyday adaptation, creative entrepreneurs, small businesses, local communities, and everyday users who introduced new economic, social, and cultural activities Redefines the meaning and function of space; incremental and self-reinforcing.

MECHANISM

Space occupation → adaptation
→ reproduction

How does this produce social nodes that support vitality and resilience?

Overlapping activities turn corridors into social nodes — lifting vitality; resilience comes from many small, adaptive actors.

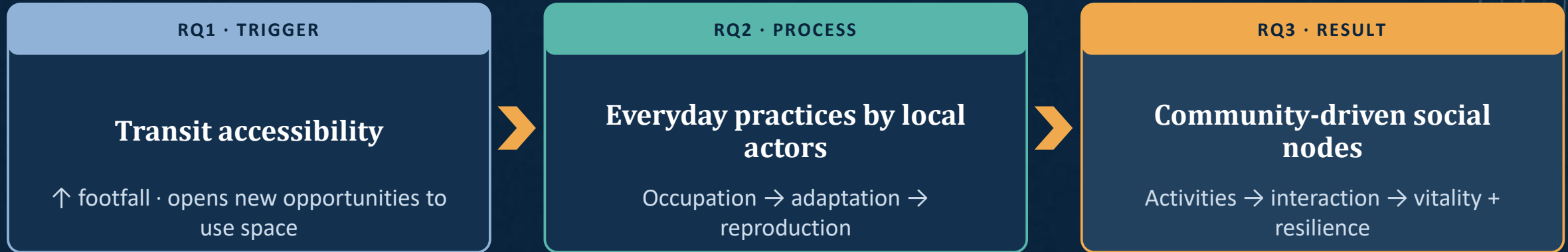
MECHANISM

Adaptive placemaking → social
nodes → vitality and resilience

SYNTHESIS · INTEGRATED NARRATIVE

TOD is not only mobility efficiency. It is the capacity to produce inclusive, adaptive and socially vibrant space

Transit accessibility creates opportunity; everyday practice makes it meaningful; social nodes are the result



WHY VITAL

Functional diversity · activity all day and evening · social interaction · community events · richer tenant mix · informal public space · pedestrian life

WHY RESILIENT

Not new buildings but many small actors, diverse activities, continuous adaptation, tenant turnover and flexible space use → **an adaptive urban ecosystem.**

Causal narrative: transit accessibility (opportunity) → everyday practice (meaning) → community-driven social nodes (vitality and resilience).

THANK YOU