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The Political Dynamics of Space Behind the Jakarta–Bandung High-Speed Rail (Whoosh) Megaproject Development

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Abstract

This paper explores the Jakarta–Bandung High-Speed Rail (HSR) megaproject, which began in 2016 and was completed in 2023. Currently, the high-speed train, known as "Whoosh," operates, connecting Jakarta and Bandung in just 30 minutes. The project highlights the competition between China and Japan in asserting their leadership in Asia's infrastructure investments. Under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the financing for this HSR project was sourced 75% from the China Development Bank, with the remaining 25% came from equity contributions made by Indonesian stateowned enterprises (BUMN) and the Chinese railway company Beijing Yawan HSR Co. Ltd. This study seeks to examine the impacts of the Indonesia—China HSR construction and analyze them through Henri Lefebvre's Theory of the Production of Space (1991). The HSR requires space that it passes as well as train stations it stops. The location around train stations later transformed into a new economic zone. Thus HSR created physical and social spaces, including the process of meaning-making and control over representational of space. Using a qualitative approach, the study finds that the project has triggered significant spatial changes, transforming previously loweconomic-value areas into high-value (capitalist) zones, marked by the dominance of capital owners and resource control, ultimately leading to conflicts over land rights at the community level. Global capital actors play a crucial role in the space shaping and making, and transportation technology serves as a entry point strategy.

Keywords: Production of space, Sphere of Influence, Jakarta -Bandung High - Speed Rail, Belt and Road Initiative

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Introduction

ASEAN countries. Many includina Indonesia. are interested in the Belt & Road Initiative megaproject (hereafter "BRI") (Sang, 2021). This is due economic opportunities, to infrastructure development, and diversification of bilateral relations. One example is the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail (hereafter as KCJB, Kereta Cepat Jakarta Bandung), known "Whoosh". This as project involved competition between capital from China and Japan, with China emerging as the main investor. The interaction between these two countries reflects a political-economic, marked by power exertion and the pursuit of wealth. China is currently the most influential country in Asia. Under Xi Jinping's leadership, the BRI policy positions ASEAN as a key foothold in the study of the sphere of influence (Kejin & Xin, 2015). The KCJB project

represents China's initial strategic move to expand its influence in Southeast Asia. Through this program, China also exports its construction expertise to develop infrastructure in BRI partner countries (Octorifadli et al., 2021).

influence China's growing in ASEAN has raised concerns about the dominance of China's economic and political interests in its efforts to displace Japan's leadership (Bajpaee, 2016: Murashkin, 2018). Large-scale transportation megaprojects can create spatial control and domination that intersect with society, corporations, and the state. As argued by Harvey (2001)regarding perceived space, capitalist control transforms space into a tool of capital, turning abstract space into a means of production that ultimately creates vulnerabilities for citizens affected by such collaborations. Based on this



perspective, KCJB is not merely a milestone in railway development but also a moment of spatial production and reproduction.

From Indonesia's perspective there is a broader economic context. In recent decades, the government has focused on structural reforms, regulations, and fiscal policies to support growth. The BRI economic has secured program one of infrastructure national projects. The funding for the project, 75% comes from China Development Bank (CDB), and is complemented by contributions Indonesia-China from the consortium (KCIC, 2021). The Indonesia-China consortium itself consists of Indonesian state-owned enterprises (SOEs), namely PT Pilar Sinergi BUMN, and is led by several SOEs, including PT KAI, PT WIKA, PT Perkebunan Nusantara VIII, and PT Jasa Marga. On the Chinese side, the project

Beijing Yawan HSR involves Co. Ltd., China Railway Group Limited, Sinohydro Corporation Limited. CRRC Corporation Limited. and China Railway Signal and Communication Corporation (CNN, 2023). The rationale behind this project is that Jakarta and Bandung, two major activity centres in Java and Indonesia. have high experienced mobility across various sectors, such industry, as government, and tourism.

The KCJB project is expected to increase investment in Indonesia and strengthen economic cooperation between After Indonesia China and intensive discussions. both parties agreed on a "businessto-business" (B2B) scheme without government guarantees. However, in practice, Indonesia utilised the state budget (APBN) due to the pandemic situation to cover the cost overruns.



The Chinese companies are responsible for the infrastructure facilities of the and hiahspeed railway project, while the Indonesian companies manage aspects such as land acquisition, local procurement, and project management. Additionally, this cooperation promises ease in the transfer of technology and knowledge sharing between the companies.

This paper explores how the KCJB project is not merely about constructing transportation infrastructure but also about how space is organised, controlled, and utilised by powerful entities. The production of space is not just the result of social interaction, but also a product of the political and economic dynamics involving investors, governments, and society. The development of areas around the project, such as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) at four major station sites, where new residential apartments have been built, illustrates how space is produced and reproduced with an economic orientation. While it appears to benefit all parties, in reality, the space tends to conceal power imbalances and disparities in access to urban infrastructure.

This study aims to answer what and how the emergence of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail project impacts Indonesia in the context of Indonesia-China cooperation from the perspective of Henri Lefebvre's Theory of Spatial Production. Furthermore. this paper also addresses the spatial implications of Indonesia-China cooperation and the benefits Indonesia. The gained for research adopts a qualitative approach, focusing on causeand-effect relationships, with data collected through in-depth interviews. observation. and archival research.



Conceptual Framework

This study uses Lefebvre's (1991) Theory of Spatial Production as the primary framework. His theory consists of a trichotomy of space, which includes the representation of space, spatial practice, and representational space. The concepts of spatial experience encompass conceived. perceived. and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Through these concepts, Lefebvre seeks to explore the interconnections between the production of space, capital, and their impact on societal life (Lefebvre. 1974). Furthermore, through the production of space, it is possible to understand how both physical and social spaces are produced, controlled, and utilised within the context of infrastructure projects 1999). Perceived (Shields, space is referred to as spatial practice because in daily life, people constantly engage in

activities across various spaces. Spatial practice refers to social processes that reproduce space, acting as both a tool and a result of human activity (Mansvelt, 2005: 57). In the context of the KCJB, spatial practices include activities and interactions within the infrastructure, leading to how local communities interact with the KCJB and shaping complex dynamics that become indistinguishable from social practices (Wilson, 2013: 367). By combining these two practices, Lefebvre emphasises that only through a sociohistorical relationship can new space be formed.

The second concept is conceived Although space. normative and ideal space is shaped by various factors such as architects, planners, technocrats, engineers, builders, Lefebvre and governments, argues that for many societies, space is both a system and



For а symbol. him. representational space is the "real space" that functions as a tool to seek and maintain dominance (Merrifield, 2006). For example, the urban renewal program initiated by architects and urban planners was originally designed to replace slums (occupied by the poor) with modern houses. As a result. marginalised communities were further displaced and neglected. Lefebvre notes that there is an intrinsic form of violence-not in a physical sense, but in the form of social and structural pressures that create injustice and inequality in society.

Lastly, the concept of is the lived space is associated with visual symbols and human interaction through practice (Lefebvre, 1991). This concept emerges from real experience involves dialectical and а relationship between space and the reality of spatial expression.

Lefebvre divides space into three components: absolute space (natural space), abstract space, and differential space. Absolute space refers to space that has not been influenced by economic or political forces (Lefebvre, 1974). Abstract space closely resembles the overall physical design created by urban planners. However, it is more than just idealistic, and it is not always marked by the absence of elements related to absolute space. It can also be occupied, dominated. and controlled. Differential space, on the other hand. emphasises freedom from control and domination (Lefebvre in Setiawan, 2017). Although space is predominantly produced, its actualisation is never static, as it is constantly contested by marginalised lack who groups power. Consequently, space remains in a state of ongoing tension.



KCJB Project and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is not merely a physical infrastructure development project. It has a profound impact on the dynamics of global (Zhang, 2017). This power initiative is an ambitious geoeconomic project, which, as of October 2023, involves 151 with combined countries а GDP of approximately \$41 trillion (CSIS, 2023), targeting a positive impact in achieving connectivity goals (Putri & Ma'arif, 2019). Another goal is to encourage global cooperation, enhance trade relations, develop infrastructure. and facilitate international market integration (Putri & Maarif, 2019).

The diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and China began when President Jokowi attended the 2014 APEC Summit. China caught Indonesia's attention in building bilateral relations. In the same year, during the Asian-African Conference (KAA) held in Indonesia. the two countries sianed several cooperation agreements, including the KCJB project. This collaboration became part of the celebration of 65 years of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and China (Adam, 2018). The established relationship between the two countries demonstrates a high level of cooperation, particularly in cultural exchanges and economic development. Chinese In recent vears, products have dominated major distribution networks. particularly within supply chains and marketing across various industrial sectors. In addition to collaborating economically, both countries are members of the G-20, ASEAN+3, and the WTO (Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2012).



The BRI not only serves as an ambition for China to become a global power, but also aims strengthen cross-border to infrastructure development and enhance connectivity (Anam & Ristiyanti, 2018). President Joko Widodo's proactive stance on cooperation is driven by shared vision and strategic а interests (Widhiyoga et al., 2024). Internal factors, such as the need for significant investment in infrastructure, as well as external factors, such as strengthening bilateral economic ties, have influenced Indonesia's foreign policy towards China.

a. China's Proposal is More Beneficial

The KCJB or Whoosh was preferred by Indonesian government due to technology offered by China, which was more affordable compared to that of other developed countries. Rini Soemarno, Minister of State Owned (SOEs) Enterprises between 2014 to 2019, viewed China as a strategic partner in the development of the high-speed railway due to its commitment to providing 100% full technology transfer, which would enhance Indonesia's technological drive independence and sustainable economic growth. On the other hand, Japan did not offer a business-to-business (B2B) scheme or concessional loans to foreign companies, instead relying on the state budget (APBN), which could potentially burden the country's finances. Moreover. Japan's feasibility study indicated that the cost of building the highspeed railway was more expensive than what China offered, amounting to US\$6.2 billion. The technology offered by Japan was also considered



less supportive of independence due to the limited technology transfer and low local content, which reached only about 40%.

Additionally, China did not impose land acquisition costs, unlike Japan, which proposed a less optimal route passing through densely populated areas, such as Manggarai in The Jakarta aerodynamic design of the KCJB is inspired by the Komodo dragon, while the seat interiors feature the Mega Mendung batik motif in red and yellow, reflecting local culture. KCJB also prioritises comfort and safety by using Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) trains in red for passenger transport and yellow inspection trains (CIT) to ensure the readiness of the tracks and supporting systems. To reduce noise, a 60-kilometre sound barrier has been installed, capable of reducing noise levels by 19-39 dB.

With these various advantages, the KCJB has become a symbol of progress in mass transportation in Indonesia.

Additionally, the reasons behind Indonesia's decision to choose China were outlined in an interview documented by CNN In-Depth: The Debate on High-Speed the Railway, the featuring Deputy for Investment and Mining Coordination at the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Investment Affairs and (Kemenkomarves) as follows:

"Therefore. the most significant development in this transportation project lies in its infrastructure and facilities. According to the proposal, China offers to include the entire financing in a joint venture, meaning the debt will be shared by KCIC, while Japan only covers the operation of the facilities. This implies that the debt for



the development of both facilities and infrastructure is borne by the Indonesian government, which does not reflect the spirit of business-to-business (B2B) cooperation," (Based on the interview documentation by CNN In-Depth: "The Debate on the High-Speed Railway" with Septian Hario Seto, Deputy for Investment and Mining Coordination at the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, on 29 May 2023).

The victory of China in shifting Japan's proposal for the KCJB project reflects the country's great ambition to expand its influence. Once known as one of the poorest countries in the world (Garnaut et al., 2018), China has now risen as an economic giant. Many experts predict that China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will continue to grow and could rival that of the United States by 2029-2030 (Scott & Sam, 2016; Kennedy, 2018). Through the BRI, China is further strengthening its role in the development of participating countries, including Indonesia. One of the impacts is the growing use of the Renminbi in global financing, gradually diminishing the dominance of the US dollar. While the BRI presents significant opportunities, projects such as the KCJB are not without criticism, particularly concerning their impact on local employment and the extent to which their economic benefits are genuinely felt by the public.

b. China's Strategy Behind the High-Speed Rail: Financial Dominance, Spatial Control, and Investment

China Development Bank (CDB) has become an alternative to the dominance of major



financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Frustrated with the limitations of these institutions. China uses CDB to finance projects within `the BRI, with a focus on infrastructure. particularly railways. ADB's 2016-2030 report shows that the investment need for this project is US\$22.6 trillion, with more than US\$14 trillion required for railway infrastructure (ADB, 2017). Since 2017, CDB has funded projects in partner countries amounting to US\$160 billion, with 8.1% allocated to railways (CDB. 2017). The IMF also noted that China has implemented financial reforms that have positioned the Renminbi as one of the main currencies in international trade (IMF, 2016).

This investment strategy, particularly in the development of high-speed rail technology and infrastructure, enables China to dominate the global market, including linking the economic corridor between Jakarta and Bandung. With extensive experience in operating high-speed trains, China has successfully expanded its reach. According to the Statistics of the International Union of Railways, by the end of 2013, China's highspeed rail operations spanned 11,028 km, and to date, this has grown to 25,000 km worldwide (Lanjian & Wei, 2015).

The KCJB project has sparked diverse opinions among the public and local governments. It involves privatisation with state capital participation, which ideally should be a shared asset. Tensions have emerged, especially concerning land claims between the military and KCIC (Indonesia China High-Speed Rail) at Halim Station, which is a central area for the development of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).



the Furthermore. dominance of Chinese companies in the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) sector, along with the use of foreign labor, has increased dependency on foreign technology. The influx of cheaper Chinese products, particularly following the devaluation of the Yuan in 2019, has threatened the stability of the local economy, as Chinese goods flood the Indonesian market. In this context, the project also includes provisions requiring Indonesia to purchase 70% of its raw materials from China, further exacerbating economic imbalances.

The shift in land use from non-capitalist to capitalist systems has led to social inequalities by commodifying urban land for economic gain. The financing for this project is predominantly sourced from the CDB, which controls 75% of the funding scheme, while Indonesia contributes through the involvement of state-owned enterprise (SOE) assets. This aligns with Lefebvre's concept of fixed capital, where land that was previously of little value becomes a significant source profit for stakeholders. of Despite an environmental impact assessment (AMDAL) having been conducted to mitigate environmental damage. the project still faces challenges in the development of the TOD area (Prasetiawan, 2016). According to PT Terra Lumen Indonesia, approximately 62.5% of the planned TOD area will provide economic benefits for political elites and developers, making KCJB not just a transportation project, but also a part of the political, economic, and social dynamics that affect community welfare (Terra Lumen, 2016).

This illustrates how space, initially abstract, evolves into a uniform and structured area, a process leveraged for financial



gain through global connectivity. In other words, investments are continually directed toward strategic locations with high market value and advantageous geographical positioning. According to China's financial magazine, Cixin, the US\$567 billion investment in high-speed rail infrastructure during 2016-2020 was greater than the US\$522 billion invested in 2010-2015 (Lanjian & Wei, 2015). The investment report from CRRC Corporation Limited, a leading Chinese railway company, highlighted that by 2020, the company had secured contracts totaling US\$150 billion. Despite this, the growth of domestic manufacturing remained relatively low at 0.9%, indicating market saturation. In contrast, foreign investments through joint venture schemes increased by 61% between 2015 and 2020, reflecting CRRC's strategic shift towards global expansion (Jian, 2016; CRRC, 2020).

c. Contested Spaces and Indonesia's Interests in the KCJB Project

The Whoosh high-speed rail project has led to a contestation of space, involving both Indonesian and Chinese interests. The four main stations being constructed not only transportation are hubs, but also integral parts of a modern economic zone expected to boost the surrounding area's economy. While the central government holds the authority to regulate spatial planning, China, as the primary funder, holds significant control over the project. This aligns with Government Regulation No. 26 of 2008, which permits adjustments to the National Spatial Plan (RTRW, Rencana Tata



Ruang dan Wilayah), ultimately granting China the power to modify strategic spaces within Indonesia.

This contestation is also linked to crucial economic aspects, as Indonesia holds significant bargaining power in its negotiations with China. In 2019, the Indonesian government announced 28 projects worth US\$91 billion, reflecting the country's immense need for investment to support national economic progress. On the other hand, China requires Indonesia to meet its economic objectives abroad. Reports by Moody's indicate that with the BRI. Indonesia's economy could grow faster, at a rate of 5.8% to 6% per year, compared to only 4.6% without BRI involvement (Kong et al., 2019). However, this project faces significant financing challenges. China imports highspeed rail technology, develops it into domestic products,

subsequently dominates and the market global through companies like CSR and CNR. In 2024, China will need to invest an additional US\$217 million to cover the project's costs, as loan interest rates are higher than Indonesia had anticipated. Meanwhile, as the train operator, PT KAI faces risks in debt repayment. The Indonesian government, through PT PII, has been designated as the state guarantor, showing the country's reliance on the national budget (APBN) to bear the project's debt risks (Media Indonesia, 2023). The discrepancies in this cooperation reflect how China's influence in investment could reshape Indonesia's industry, illustrating the power dynamics alter both space that and Indonesia's economy.

The deliberative space gives rise to contestation, framed as a class struggle. Lefebvre (1991) calls for urban planning





that considers various values to address dissociation issues. ensuring that no space is marginalised. The shift from Presidential Regulation No. 107 of 2015 to Presidential Regulation No. 93 of 2021 has made space control a commodity that impacts the agendas of various stakeholders. The KCJB route is being used by developers and the government to create spaces that are economically beneficial, while the community seeks the social function of those spaces. When the mode of production is controlled by the state and capitalists, it can be detrimental to local communities. Complaints have arisen regarding the expedited environmental licensing process, as the AMDAL document does not align with the KCJB Spatial Plan (Nugraha, 2016). China's investment in ASEAN, promoted by Xi Jinping through the concept of "community of shared future,"

establishes а hegemony of large capital with the potential to reshape space. Indonesia faces a similar threat, with its debt reaching Rp 315.1 trillion in 2022. The case of Sri Lanka, where 70% of governance was transferred to China under a 99year lease, heightens concerns over debt traps. In Indonesia, the cost of the high-speed rail project alone has surged to US\$7.27 billion (Rp 106.2 trillion) in 2022 (Setiaji, 2022).

d. Mega Project of BRI: Between Politics, Economics, and China's Hegemony

Lefebvre emphasised that the state plays a more dominant role than economic power in controlling abstract space, although this power is often concealed. Abstract space functions as a tool of power that can be fully controlled, in which subtle politics and the dialogue



between spaces impose while common objectives neglecting concrete spaces, thereby creating differential spaces. This process encourages the emergence of neo-capitalism, in which property transforms into a commodity reliant on the state's capital interests. In this context, various parties compete to achieve the highest value in order to sustain the capital circuit. China's interest in the KCJB is a tangible example of the reciprocal relationship between politics and economics, in line with Indonesia's consistent free and non-aligned foreign policy. China's dominance is clearly evident, with 70% of the Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) contractors controlled by Chinese stateenterprises owned (SOEs), while Indonesian SOEs control only 30%.

This project becomes an arena for negotiations that influence each other, resulting in increased costs and the loss of potential revenue from TOD, which leads to proposals for concessions of up to 80 years. Indonesia's dependence on China has increased, facilitating China's ability to influence the country's politics and economy. Indonesian environmental An NGO, WALHI in West Java, criticised the project as a form of government service to property investors, which could potentially strip the people's right to live. The costs borne by investors have led to an increased debt ratio and asset losses, making space a transformative entity both historically, socially, politically, and economically. In this context, space not only reflects habits but also the social tensions arising from conflicts of interest among various parties seeking to control and exploit the space.

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Reproduction of Space in the KCJB

The the impact of of KC.JB development the illustrates the dominance of the perspective on modernisation and infrastructure development created by the Indonesia-China This Consortium. perspective forms а hegemonic new understanding that the KCJB is not just a transportation route, but also a symbol of progress in Indonesia. According to Lefebvre (1991), the practices behind space are no longer viewed as something neutral, but as objects that can be controlled significantly and optimised, impacting the social and economic structure of society, including the increase in property values, job creation, and the transformation of areas into investment hubs. As a result. those with economic power gain greater control over the functions and utilisation of ecological resources and spatial rights.

The exploitation of investment is evident in the four planned stations: Halim. Karawang, Padalarang, and Tegalluar, with only three stations (Halim, Padalarang, and Tegalluar) operational at the time of the study. Despite aiming to boost regional economies, the project worsens social and economic This disparities. project exemplifies the dominance of elites who prioritise profit over the interests of the public, neoliberal in line with the narrative, where development serves the accumulation of capital rather than the needs of citizens (Harvey, 2005). Since November 2023, although the KCJB has been operating with 48 schedules, the high fares make it more suitable for business travel than public transportation.



Furthermore, the TOD projects by KCIC and the government exacerbate this gap, resulting in a discrepancy between the policies implemented by the government and the expectations of the public.

a. High-Speed Rail, TOD, and Spatial Planning Changes

In general, economic pressures affect abstract spaces and exacerbate disparities. The dominant groups control the system in such a way that differences appear subtle and their agenda seems neutral. For planners, the KCJB project is seen as а sustainable transportation solution to reduce congestion and air pollution (Lefebvre, 1974; Schmid, 2008). The implementation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) aims to reduce dependence on private vehicles by providing various urban amenities, such as residential areas, recreational

spaces, offices, and shopping centres. According to Investor.id, the demand for housing around the KCJB route is expected to rise in the first half of 2023 with the operation of the mass transit system. Improved connectivity and easier access to various modes of public transport will attract public interest. Data from 99 Group shows that the demand for housing in the subdistricts surrounding the three KC.JB operational stations has significantly increased compared to the second half of 2022, especially in the Halim (26.2%), Padalarang (26.3%), and Tegalluar (34.4%) areas. Behind this development, each party has an interest in gaining profit. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) and KCIC Indonesia organise these spaces in such a way as to maximise capital accumulation. Additionally, the development



process is often accompanied by campaigns promoting an ideal lifestyle by capital owners to attract urban public attention.

Halim Station is expected increase trip generation, to supported by the presence of transport modes such as LRT, bus stops, airports, and bus terminals (Arum, 2018). Furthermore, the spatial approach to Halim Station can introduce business competitors and business markets, as regulated in the RDTR (spatial plan) of Jakarta, Zone K-2 (Service Trade) and Zone K-3 (Mixed-use Office and Trade/ Services). This development needs to be evenly distributed, but according to the GEO MAPID Study, the western Halim area is denser and offers more options than the eastern side (Christomo, 2023). Access to the Halim LRT (Light Rail Transit) from Jabodebek can be facilitated via a sky bridge, with the public able to use Transjakarta route 7W, connecting Cawang to the KCJB Halim Station. Meanwhile, the Karawang Station is not yet operational due to the unprepared access roads to and from the station, and KCIC has now passed its target and rescheduled for 2025.

The Tegalluar Station is a less popular option due to its remote location, resulting in limited surrounding transportation options. Furthermore, there are plans for BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) infrastructure preparation due to the increased number of tourist visits to Bandung, with a total of 2,252,966 visitors recorded until June 2023, up from 1,422,673 in the first quarter, according to the Department of Culture and Tourism of Bandung (Aurellia, 2023). Economic growth in 2022 reached 5.41% compared to 2020, while on the expenditure side, the GRDP (Gross Regional Domestic Product) for 2022 grew by 5.73% (BPS, 2022).



This concept further supports the importance of the High-Speed Rail passing through Bandung City, and KCIC has also actively partnered with other transportation providers such as the GoTo Group as characteristic of modern а urban mobility supported by commercial activities (Suryanto, 2023).

b. The TOD from Lefebvre's Spatial Agenda Perspective

The transformation of spatial planning due to the high-speed rail project through TOD is not merely an effort to integrate transportation and urban areas, but also reflects the dominance of the neoliberal spatial agenda. From Lefebvre's perspective, TOD, as a representation of space operates not only at the physical level but also shapes life experiences people's through representational spaces. With the dominance of

land-use investors. decisions are increasingly determined by capital interests rather than local community needs, potentially triggering gentrification and the displacement of low-income groups. Mass media plays a role in reinforcing the development narrative that favours capitalism by presenting TOD as a solution for modernisation without addressing its social impacts. As a result, spaces that should collectively owned be are experiencing covert privatisation, where access to urban space becomes increasingly exclusive and unequal.

The TOD logic between China and Indonesia is supported by the Indonesia Property Market Index, which recorded a 5% increase in property prices in Bekasi at the onset of the pandemic (Ridwan, 2020). The southern region is dominated by the Depok-Bogor residential area, while the western region includes



industrial and residential areas such as Meikarta. Deltamas. BSD. and Summarecon. Meikarta, covering 500 hectares, offers 250,000 housing units, 1.5 million square meters of commercial space, and 100 hectares of Central Park, evolving into a Central Business District with an investment of IDR 7.1 trillion in 2017 (Lippo Cikarang, 2017). Deltamas City, located southwest of the Karawang TOD area under Sinarmas Land, has also developed with support from investors, the private sector, and the government. According to Presidential Regulation No. 60 of 2020, the focus of this area is to provide raw water and reduce traffic congestion. Rail-based transportation networks have become key, with 24 regional city TOD development plans. Thus, the Bekasi and Karawang areas have become strategic hubs connecting movement towards West Bandung.

In the Bandung Corridor, an analysis of the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) was conducted by comparing the contribution of each district and city to West Java's total GRDP. This calculation is based on a proportional distribution, using trends from the previous five years as a reference. The analysis shows that GRDP has been increasing in various areas, regardless of the presence of the Whoosh Project. However, with TOD support, GRDP growth is projected to be approximately 1.08 times higher than without it. According to the Feasibility Study and Bappeda West Java, the KCJB project is expected to absorb 39,000 workers during the 3-year construction phase, 28,000 workers during 25 years of operation, and 20,000 workers during 15 years of station and surrounding construction (Pratiwi et al., 2022). The West Bandung region needs to focus



on land users in the area, as TOD is generally meant to provide 'convenience'. However, investors often misuse this concept, focusina sales on property instead (Simbolon, 2023). The impact of capitalism on space is evident in the phenomenon of gentrification, where middle- and upper-class groups move into areas previously inhabited by lowincome communities. According Lefebvre's to Spatial Triad Theory (1991), gentrification occurs due to inequalities in the production of space. As a result, lower-income communities are forced to relocate to other areas. often facing negative stigma. This process triggers tension, especially when land acquisition occurs, where privatisation of assets by SOEs often leads to a monopoly of public assets by the state.

Sustainable transportation is expected to raise awareness of technology and environmental impact (AMDAL), despite initial setbacks. Presidential Regulation No. 107 of 2015, Article 14, initially accommodated only three regions: Purwakarta, West Bandung, and Bandung City, while Bekasi, Karawang, and Cimahi were excluded. This created challenges for local governments in adjusting spatial planning. However, Presidential Regulation No. 3 of 2016 established a new legal foundation to accelerate the development of these areas and harmonise the Regional Spatial Plans (RTRW) across different regions. The Minister of State-Owned Enterprises at the time also revised Government Regulation No. 26 of 2008 regarding the National Spatial Planning (RTRW) to facilitate the disbursement of funds from China (Kuwado, 2017). This revision, approved by relevant ministries, was reinforced by several key decisions: Minister of Transportation Decree No. KP.



25 of 2016 on the Determination of the High-Speed Railwav Line connecting Jakarta and Bandung through the Halim-Tegalluar Crossing; the Governor of DKI Jakarta Decree No. 1640 of 2019 on the Designation of Locations for the Development of High-Speed Railway, Stations, and Facilities between Jakarta and Bandung: and the Governor of West Java Decree No. 593/ Kep.707-Pemksm/2019 on Determination of the Land Procurement Locations for the Construction of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail Route and Stations, which includes land procurement in nine cities/ regencies, namely East Jakarta Administrative City, Bekasi City, Bekasi Regency, Karawang Regency, Purwakarta Regency, West Bandung Regency, Cimahi City, Bandung City, and Bandung Regency.

c. Disharmony of the KCJB with Government Policies

There disharmony is а between the national and provincial spatial planning regulations, such as Government Regulation No. 13 of 2017 and Regional Regulation No. 22 of 2010, and the development of the KCJB project. This issue, particularly in Bekasi Regency, has led to legal uncertainty. The project is not listed in the Bekasi Regency's Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW) (Silvia et al., 2021), while formal legal constraints limit access to justice and contradict the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. As a result, the land use along the KCJB route is being changed, jeopardising the livelihoods of affected communities. The route spanning 5.940 km in Cimahi has received support from the city government, including through revisions to the 2012-2032 RTRW (Cimahi City Regional



Regulation No. 4 of 2013), although this process has not yet fully completed. The government assures that projects in Cibeber, Melong, and Leuwigajah will smoothly proceed (Bangkit, 2019). However, the dominance of developers in decisionmaking highlights the need for a balance between infrastructure development and the protection of social rights.

In the case of land disputes Ngamprah, decision in the made by the Bale Bandung District Court in case number 11/Pdt.KONS/2018/PN.Bib. determined which the land consignment. deemed was of unrepresentative the community as it did not include the land ownership of residents in Sukatani Village. This reflects the limited representation of the community in decisions regarding land acquisition for strategic projects. Α similar situation occurred in

Cikaobandung, where the lack of transparency in the project's socialisation led to limited community participation, which symbolic was more than substantive. Decisions made in these cases largely accommodate the interests of the state and corporations, rather than the aspirations of the affected communities.

From Lefebvre's perspective of spatial justice, the situation in Cikaobandung reflects inequality in the distribution of space due to the dominance of neoliberalism. which prioritises privatisation and large investments. The lack of active community participation in planning and decision-making creates an unjust space, where access to land and resources is predominantly controlled by economic and political elites. In line with Harvey's views in Space of Hope, achieving spatial justice requires broader community involvement in





determining the direction of development, so that spatial policies benefit more than just a few parties and also reflect the social and economic rights of the affected communities.

2016. PT KCIC In was designated to manage land acquisition in nine cities and However. regencies. they decided to partner with PT Arjuna for this task. In 2017, PT KCIC terminated its contract with PT Arjuna and began implementing Law No. 2 of 2012 on land acquisition. Dudi Hubaidi, а local resident, revealed that PT Arjuna offered a significantly lower price for purchasing his family's 1.6-hectare rice field, just IDR 200,000 per square metre, despite the land being far from the Cikalong Wetan road. A meeting was held, but no solution was reached at that time. Mr. Dudi agreed to sell his land if the price were IDR 2 million per square metre (Hidayat et al.,

2017). Although most residents have received compensation for their land, 33 families in Cikuda and 24 families in Pangleseran are still awaiting for payment. PT KCIC has not provided a clear explanation for selecting PT Arjuna as the implementing party.

In the same year, PT KCIC held a meeting with the local residents. Instead of seeking a solution, they provided excuses when the residents demanded clarity. According to Yulianto, the head of the neighborhood association in Perumahan Lembah Teratai Bandung Barat, PT KCIC offered IDR 380 million for a standard 73 m² house, while the market price for houses in the area was already IDR 400 million, and houses nearby were even priced at IDR 600 million, making the offered price inappropriate (Hidayat et al., 2017). This issue also applied to land acquisition in Purwakarta.



Since 2016, PT KCIC has leased three plots of land from 13 residents in Kampung Pasir Salak at IDR 50,000 per square metre for five years to dispose of waste (Putricantika, project 2023). The socialisation process was slow in Sempur Village, where brokers purchased land without following the official procedures. In Depok Village, there was an issue with waste disposal, and PT KCIC did not provide any clarification. The uncertainty in handling social environmental and concerns surrounding the KCJB project requires transparency to mitigate the negative impacts. The presence of various contradictory spaces undermines long-established property rights that have been exploited for years by different classes.

The contestation of interests in spatial practices is inevitable, as it is influenced by the rationality of each space user. Indonesia-China relations under President Jokowi have intensified through the BRI, with a B2B scheme that involving Indonesian state-owned enterprises as project managers. Rini Soemarno, during her tenure Minister of State-Owned as Enterprises, played a key role, despite initial concerns about China's dominance. According to Lim et al. (2021), Rini was instrumental in convincing China, even though a feasibility study had been previously conducted by a Japanese consortium during President SBY's administration. Fiscal challenges, such as the 3% GDP deficit limit, were addressed by promoting long-term impact projects like the KCJB through indirect financing schemes state-owned enterprises. by However, China's involvement as a strategic partner left lingering



public questions, particularly regarding the dismissal of objections from influential parties.

Ridwan Kamil tried to align central and regional interests, but the Regent of West Bandung at that time, Sutisna, rejected the KCJB route because it was deemed not beneficial to the local community (Husodo, 2019). demanded additional Sutisna facilities, such as bridges and roads. which were provided bv state-owned enterprises. This reflects the complexity of decentralised politics. where Ridwan Kamil delegated authority between regional national elites and partners (Nurulliah, 2019). Despite Rini Soemarno's support, Ignasius Jonan opposed the project due to concerns over the budget and favoured cooperation with Japan. However, his role was increasingly marginalised, and he was eventually dismissed

(rmol.d, 2016). The military's distrust of China also became an obstacle, but after an agreement was reached, the project at Halim Station was subsequently approved. Alongside Rini, Luhut Pandjaitan became a strong advocate for the policy and facilitated the cooperation, in the including matter of Chinese foreign workers (TKA) in Indonesia (Rakhmat, 2020).

d. The Impact of the KCJB Project on the Livelihood of Local Residents

Not only does the contestation among various actors mentioned above, but the KCJB project has also neglected environmental sectors, as stated by a representative of WALHI:

"According to WALHI Jabar, 23 cases related to this project have been reported, covering issues such as permits, environmental concerns, social impacts, and work-related accidents.



Dwi Sawung, the Campaign Manager for Spatial Planning and Infrastructure at WALHI Nasional. stated that the construction of the high-speed rail project is reckless and disregards spatial planning. There are suspicions regarding the Environmental Impact Assessment (AMDAL) which process. was completed in less than two weeks. Additionally, several ministries walked out during hearings, including the Ministry of Transportation. This has caused further problems for local communities. such as the loss of water sources, road damage, and flooding due to improper land clearing, particularly Bandung. in West 1 that acknowledge Chinese contractors are notorious for neglecting environmental conditions and the safety of other workers." (Interview DS, Manager of Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Campaign at WALHI, via Zoom, on 11 October 2023).

The explanation above highlights how the expansion of infrastructure development overlooks human rights, such as the loss of water sources. Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management mandates that the government protect citizens's right to a healthy environment and natural resources. The loss of water sources and jobs for some farmers represents the failure of the state to protect its citizens. The privatisation by state-owned enterprises has prompted citizens to organise the #FROM JABAR movement

According to Lefebvre, capitalism increasingly influences spatial planning, where space is designed as an abstract concept by architects and urban planners who focus



on the ideal representation of urban design. This concept often overlooks the social needs of the community and tends to favour economic interests. In line with the views of Kebłowski et al. public transportation (2016), policies often hide capitalist interests behind public agendas. Although public transportation aims to meet the needs of society, its main agenda still revolves around economic profits. In the context of the High-Speed Rail, spatial planning practices are not only reproduced for capitalist interests but also restructured with legal legitimacy. However, it is essential to ensure that this restructuring prioritises the public interest and the welfare of the community in a fair manner.

Conclusion

Based on the previous discussion, it is evident that the construction of the KCJB project has not been well-managed, despite expectations that it would serve as an innovation Indonesia's transportation in sector. The Indonesia-China cooperation has created a tug-ofwar for power to safeguard their respective interests. The lack of understanding and protection of resources has opened the door for poor practices in the investment climate, with the government tending to favour capitalist interests and sacrificing the welfare of the people. The perception of "prosperity" between the public and the government is also misaligned. Additionally, major issues such as a cost overrun amounting to IDR 120 trillion have occurred due to electricity inaccuracies in land procurement and calculations. acquisition To address this, the government injected State Capital



Participation (PMN) amounting of IDR 7.5 trillion in 2021-2022, while PT KAI replaced WIKA, using the company's funds.

Currently, the operators are trying to sustain the business by requesting an extension of the concession period from the original 50 years to 80 years, despite this violating existing regulations. KCIC represents a phenomenon of reliance on ticket sales revenue. which indicates that the reality of this project is increasingly neglected, undermining public trust. The power that influences the dynamics of social space is not merely understood as a physical measurement but as a property of those who hold capital. Overall, this relationship appears abstract and benefits certain parties, yet harms many others, especially in terms of transparency and social justice. This demonstrates paper that China has effectively

established a sphere of influence in Indonesia through its use of space. It is important to note that this investment is not just an economic expansion but also a part of a strategy to strengthen hegemony in the borrowing country.





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