Urban Planning Approach and Production of Counter Architecture: A Case Study of New Market, Khulna

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Abstract. Informal spatial practices in cities of the Global South are often regarded as activities taking place outside the realm of regulatory oversight. The prevailing urban governance and planning paradigms, which are largely derived from developed countries, struggle to adapt to the dynamic nature of these practices and the inherent conflicts they entail. Furthermore, the influence of disorderly political systems further complicates matters at the local level. In response to planned development, informal spatial practices persist as a critical yet overlooked/integral aspect of ever-evolving urban realities. This paper provides new insights into the current dynamics surrounding the creation of informal urban spaces in Global South cities and their interaction with the formal planning framework. Our study focused on the city of Khulna in Bangladesh, a compelling case study with a history of failed industrial planning dating back to the 1960s, when it was designed by a group of British consultants. Following its initial failure and the city's subsequent decline in population, Khulna has witnessed an unforeseen surge in 'counter spatial' development driven by the imperative to meet socio-economic and cultural needs. This paper underscores the significance of such type of informal spatial production and introduces/highlights the concept of 'counter architecture' as a pivotal element of society that demands recognition and inclusion in the broader urban development framework. It suggests that the 'counter architecture' lens provides a foundation for challenging the rigidity of master planning and understanding the interconnectedness between formal and informal urban spaces. This perspective emphasizes the need to consider the lived experiences and tactical attributes of spatial formation, ultimately highlighting the resistance of 'inhabitants' and 'users' against the static codes of modern master planning in cities of Global South like Khulna.

Keywords. Counter Architecture, Global South, Khulna, Planning Approach, Urban Informality.

Abstract. Praktik tata ruang informal di kota-kota di negara-negara Selatan sering dianggap sebagai kegiatan yang terjadi di luar pengawasan peraturan. Paradigma tata kelola dan perencanaan perkotaan yang ada, yang sebagian besar berasal dari negara-negara maju, kesulitan untuk beradaptasi dengan sifat dinamis dari praktik-praktik ini dan konflik-konflik yang ada di dalamnya. Selain itu, pengaruh sistem politik yang tidak tertib semakin memperumit permasalahan di tingkat lokal. Sebagai respons terhadap pembangunan terencana, praktik tata ruang informal tetap menjadi aspek penting namun terabaikan/integral dari realitas perkotaan yang terus berkembang. Makalah ini memberikan wawasan baru mengenai dinamika terkini seputar penciptaan ruang perkotaan informal di kota-kota di wilayah Selatan dan interaksinya dengan kerangka perencanaan formal. Studi kami berfokus pada kota Khulna di Bangladesh, sebuah studi kasus menarik dengan sejarah kegagalan perencanaan industri sejak tahun 1960an,

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ketika kota tersebut dirancang oleh sekelompok konsultan Inggris. Menyusul kegagalan awalnya dan penurunan populasi kota, Khulna telah menyaksikan lonjakan pembangunan 'kontra spasial' yang tidak terduga yang didorong oleh keharusan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan sosial-ekonomi dan budaya. Makalah ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya jenis produksi spasial informal dan memperkenalkan/menyoroti konsep 'kontra arsitektur' sebagai elemen penting dalam masyarakat yang menuntut pengakuan dan inklusi dalam kerangka pembangunan perkotaan yang lebih luas. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa sudut pandang 'kontra arsitektur' memberikan landasan untuk menantang kekakuan perencanaan induk dan memahami keterhubungan antara ruang perkotaan formal dan informal. Perspektif ini menekankan perlunya mempertimbangkan pengalaman hidup dan atribut taktis dari pembentukan tata ruang, yang pada akhirnya menyoroti resistensi 'penghuni' dan 'pengguna' terhadap kode statis perencanaan induk modern di kota-kota di Dunia Selatan seperti Khulna.

__Kata kunci__. Global Selatan, Khulna, Kontra Arsitektur, Informalitas Perkotaan, Pendekatan Perencanaan.

Introduction

Following a global trend, the main challenge facing most cities of the Global South is to manage rapid urbanization. The UN has stated in a report that 68% of the population will be living in urban areas by 2050, which is 55% at present (Kookana et al., 2020). This urban population explosion brings forth many challenges at the city level, including the informal sector's growth, while the planning methods to deal with them borrow largely from the Global North (Chaudhury, 2010). Among the countries in the Global South, Bangladesh is known for being one of the fastest-growing economies, pulling millions from rural areas every year (Hossain and Mahmood, 2016). The vast majority of people are compelled to engage in the informal economy for a living and occupy urban roadsides and other fallow lands near markets and public spaces. As a counter form against idealized norms and regulations, this spatiality negotiates with the state's powerful planning agency and its apparatus for long-term sustenance. Furthermore, micro-level territorial politics contribute to establishing dominancy or economic benefits and legalizing these practices by engaging this subaltern group. Every year their number is increasing due to high inflation, environmental hazards and above all the inability of 'development policies' to respond to contextual needs. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has found that 85.1% of total employment in 2018 was connected with the informal sector for daily wages (BBS, 2018), yet the interrelationship among spatial form, social norms, political attitudes, and urban informality remains uneasy under the current planning regime.

The ubiquitous presence of urban informality has made informal ventures and consecutive spatial phenomena a crucial element in the production of cities in Bangladesh. The term 'informality' has been familiar in urban planning since 1970 when Hart introduced it from the economic perspective of African cities and has recently gained more scholarly attention worldwide (Lutzoni, 2016; Hart, 1973). Nevertheless, the idea has not been sufficiently subsumed in the modern social, cultural, and geographic modalities of city planning in the Global South. Rather, experiences from these cities confirm that informality is generally considered 'counter' urbanism.

Cases in Latin America have shown informality as a marginalized sector with a temporary nature, formed by the urban poor. Informality is the only survival strategy left, emerging from the heroism of marginalized people and the urban poor in reaction to the state's incapacity, in the shape of spontaneous creative solutions (De Soto, 1989). Thus, the developments of the informal sector are often threatened with eviction by the state, citing lack of property rights and untaxed growth. For example, Operation Sunshine or Operation Hawker, launched in India by the Calcutta

Municipal Corporation and Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority, meant to solve the hawker problem harming the city environment (Roy, 2004). Eventually, evictions were initiated in the name of reclaiming the city's past, 'The Bhodralok or Gentleman Calcutta' (Roy, 2004).

In Bangladesh, the major cities are regulated under the master planning model, while the urban informal sector commonly goes beyond the estimations of the periodic master plans. Fast migration, the increasing flow of unskilled labor in urban areas, and the lack of economic opportunities act as catalysts in the growth of informal spatial practices. Although, the urban informal sector creates diversity and enables spatial vibrancy through imageability, functionality, and security, informal spatial practices are considered in scholarship as an 'other mode' of metropolitan urbanization, which the public management authorities often treat as an obstruction to the implementation of planning. Current theoretical interpretations also understand informality as an alternative tactic of urban development (Roy, 2009), a revolutionary act against bureaucracy and state capitalism (Bayat, 2013), and an innovative movement that influences national GDP along with ensuring the economic security of unskilled labor (Soto, 1989). However, in Bangladesh, the local government authorities, including the Khulna City Corporation (KCC), suppress these informal spatial practices through periodical evictions and the demolition of shops. Urban informality is seen as a threat to ensuring the functionality of formal planning, resource management, and governing logic, which has often been put forward as the necessity behind evictions.

The conflicting relationship with formal planning and the lack of conceptual clarity on informality's engagement is deemed a threat to the sustainable planning of cities in the Global South. The present paper explores the case of Khulna city, the third-largest city in Bangladesh, to comprehend the engagement of urban informality with the current regime of the master planning model. The city occupies a strategic location, being close to the border with India. In Khulna, a Euro-inspired model of master planning was introduced in 1961 to manage urban growth but without a comprehensive guideline to include the urban informal sector. Later plans, including the Masterplan of 2002 and the Detailed Area Plan of 2002 and 2013, acknowledged the importance of the informal sector for the economic survival of the poor but lacked any physical planning guidelines.

This paper sees informality and its respective spatial engagements beyond the current theoretical interpretations. It explores informality as a mechanism to complement the urban social life of ordinary people in Bangladesh. It argues that urban informality is a process-oriented 'counter development' to top-down planning and architectural stereotyping of cities, which installs flexible spatial dynamics responding to context-specific planning scopes by interconnecting with the concerned spatial agents, actors, and contextual factors for inclusive urban growth.

Master planning Approach and Khulna New Market

In Bangladesh, master planning was introduced during the early twentieth century under the British colonial regime. Sir Patrick Geddes prepared the first Master Plan for Dhaka in the early twentieth century (Choudhury and Armstrong, 2013). However, it was not until the post-partition era that master planning was introduced for cities other than the capital.

For Khulna, the first master plan was introduced in 1961 (Figure 1, right). The British consultants Minoprio, Spencely and MacFarlane were invited to draft a master plan. The British Firm prepared a draft master plan for Khulna as part of the technical Co-operation Scheme of the Colombo plan (KDA, 1961). The master plan set a gross area of 70 miles as its controlling territory (Figure 2). Inspired by the planning of British towns of the mid-twentieth century, the

westernized/Euro-inspired planning model interpreted the broader socio-cultural, political, and environmental aspects of Khulna within the physical terrain (Figure 2).

Analysis of the master planning document suggests that the plan detailed the proposal under four sets of propositions: land-use zoning, (aesthetics of the) physical development, infrastructure development, and execution of the master plan (KDA-DAP, 2013: 13). The plan prioritized industrial growth by adopting the principles of modern industrial city planning. Industrial areas were planned as zones at the outskirts of the old town. Commercial zones were allocated between the edge of the old town and a new industrial center (Figure 2).

According to such arrangements, two commercial centers were planned, in the north and south respectively. The land-use layout ensured that the commercial areas could serve either of the industrial areas and the respective residential zones evenly, while the new master plan also took advantage of the old city center. Conscious ignorance of the engagement of the migrant/marginalized/poor population in the conceptualization of the plans must be assumed, as the plan does not show any decisive strategies for accommodating informal economic activities. Informal actors were left to have constant negotiations with the state and its apparatus for taking part in economic activities outside the regulatory framework.
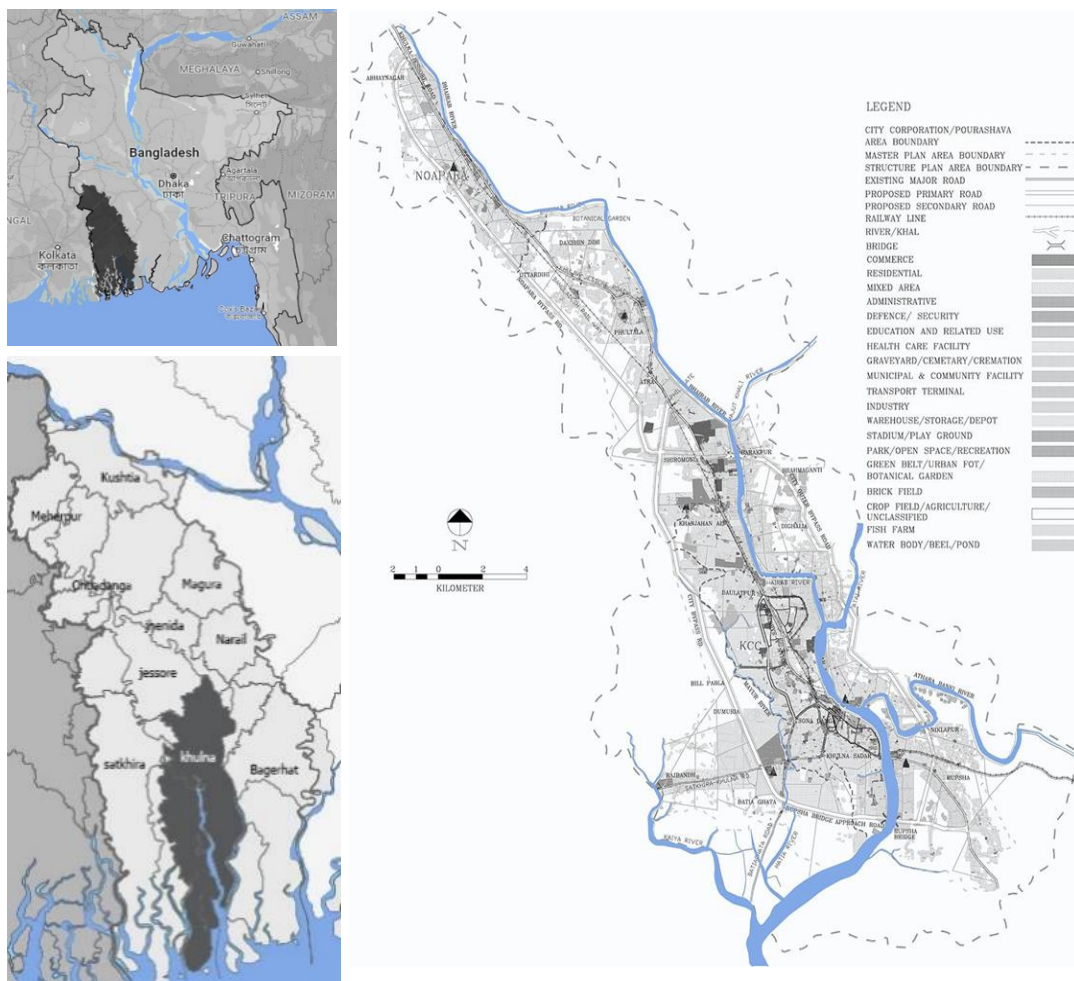

Figure 1. (Top left) Khulna in relation to Kolkata and Myanmar; (bottom left) Khulna district map; (right) proposed master plan of Khulna developed by KDA in 2001.

Instead, to generate economic vibrancy, as Figure 2 shows, two dedicated town centers were proposed: one near the railway station and steamer ghat, and the other near the industrial center in Daulatpur. Approximately 0.28% of the total Master Plan area was marked for the growth of the town center or square (KDA 2001: 41). Aiming to provide modern services and to create a 'worthy' image of the new industrial town through commercial centers, in 1963-64 the Development Authority proposed a modern prototype market, Khulna New Market (KNM) (red circle, Figure 2). The market was planned adjacent to Khulna-Jashore Highway near Khulna Textile Mills Limited along with a comprehensive commercial land-use plan around KNM. Overall, 6.5 acres were marked as commercial development, divided into 27 plots in total (Annual report, 1998), with plot sizes varying from 2.8 to 10 Katha
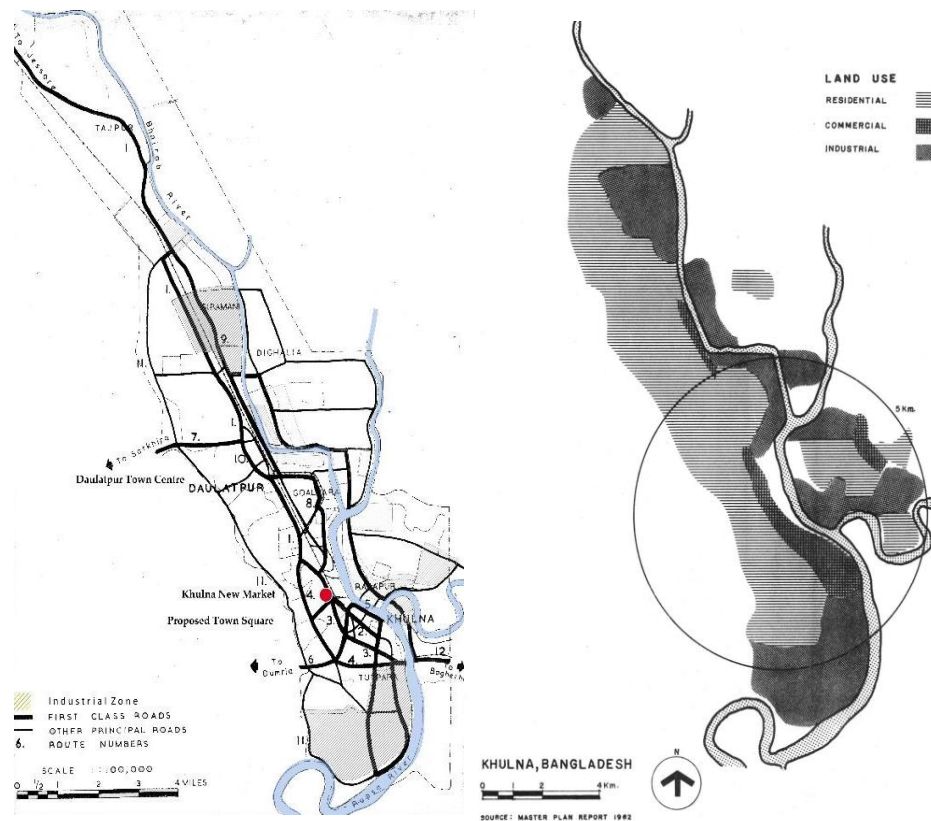

Figure 2. (Left) Road networks in the Khulna Master Plan 1961, developed by a British firm, proposing two town centers and the Khulna New Market (red circle) in view of the city's growth; (right) major land-use zones. Source: KDA 1961

The subsequent developments in the area included the establishment of the Sonadanga planned residential area (first phase) and the Jhinuk theatre (1982), opting to cater for the needs of a specific economic class , 'medium income level'. In 1985-86, the Khulna Development Authority (KDA) allocated land for the Prantik Market (market for the marginalized) adjacent to the New Market, followed by the Baitun Nur Mosque commercial area in late 1990 as a major impetus for commercial growth. The successive plans followed the foundational concept of the master plan by promoting the spatial practices of coded, ordered and guided development. Should there be consideration of the inclusion of marginalized people, central commercial spaces were produced with a rigid and non-temporal quality (i.e., Prantik Market), according to authoritarian planning models.

Methodology

This research used the case study method for further investigation. A planned market area, Khulna New Market (KNM), was chosen for a detailed case study analysis. KNM was designed during the Pakistan period in the 1960s by a British consultancy firm. The plan for the market was developed with a top-down design approach that embodied the ideology of modern city planning, following an introverted concept. The functions of the KNM were arranged around a central courtyard with a looped circulation system. Moreover, the impregnable outer facades of the courtyard cut off the market from its surroundings so that the surrounding urban spaces could maintain the clean and orderly 'image' of the city. Over the years, however, the unmalleable character of this form failed to protect this scenic image, as dynamic social-spatial practices began to occupy the outer areas of the KNM. Unauthorized functions, including commercial spaces, were generated along the access road of the market in response to the varied needs of the city people. The growth of informality in the city's central commercial area represented the dysfunctionality of the formal planning approach, as the informal created a new layer of unauthorized spatial practices and the growth of this layer made the market area a more vibrant place for the residents of the city.

This study also conducted an ethnographic investigation to examine the 'unauthorized' layer of commercial spaces developed outside of the master planning framework. This helped to gain an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural aspects of the 'unauthorized' production of spaces through real-life engagement. To obtain critical insight into the place and the people, participant observation was conducted following a structured time-map on the different days of the week. Based on the researchers' professional networks, key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with representatives from the authorities and the KNM committee. The interviewees were selected using the random sampling method both from informal commercial actors as well as users; an open-ended questionnaire was used. Field notes were carefully taken for further narration of events performed in relation to different spatial agents. The surveyed interview and observational data were sorted and analyzed using Lefebvre's spatial triad of social space theory (Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith 1991). Lefebvre's method was used since it helps to break down the production of space into three layers: 'conceived', 'perceived' and 'lived' spaces. The separation among three layers helps to understand the difference in positionality among the stakeholders in the production of spaces. Since the production of urban spaces in the KNM area includes multifaceted stakeholders, Lefebvre's spatial triad method helped to identify potential conflicts and co-relations among stakeholders' views and analyze the reasons for the differences.

Conceived space and planning 'Exception'

Representation of space is the outcome of technocratic or expert conceptualization based on an imagined ideology about geographies (Jabareen, 2014). To design KNM as a modern commercial center, the consultants adopted a functionalist approach, aligning with the guidelines in the master plan from 1961. Locating the market along the approach roads was done using an introverted design so that the shopping activities would not hinder traffic. The inner courtyard-based layout created confined spatial arrangements using a number of circulation loops, which articulated a bold and dominating three-dimensional form (Figure 3). These arrangements were intended to give the commercial area a tidy image.

A strict regular order was followed in the arrangement of the shops to avoid any 'chaos'. The shops were connected by an alley in a symmetrical arrangement. The axial entry from the four approach streets terminated in a central courtyard. Overall, the rigid composition, the spatial

layout, and the grouping of shops symbolize a clean and sanitized modernist ideology, to maintain the scenic integrity of the master plan. At the same time, this rigidity offered a discrete internal shopping environment, while the outside remained fuzzy for interaction with the public.
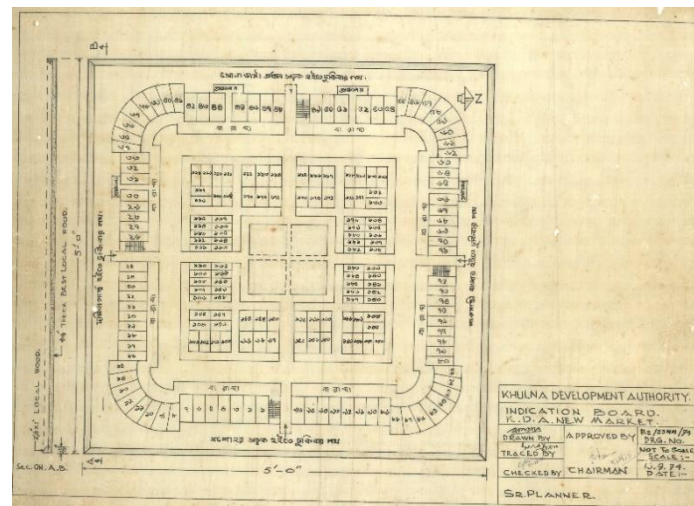

Figure 3. Layout of Khulna New Market planned in 1965-1966 by a British consultancy firm.
Source: KDA

The successive formal developments in the area followed the original conception of the master plan from 1961, if not accentuated it. The approval and development of super shops, including Save N Save, constituted a new genre of brand image that encouraged the rapid growth of other brand shops, including Day 7, La Reve and Arong (Figure 4). This indicates a conscious shaping of the area to cater exclusively to a particular economic class, as the adjacent residential area was transitioning from middle-income to high-income class.

The 2001 master plan defined the New Market zone as a fast-growing commercial area. The radial road network of the city and the resulting connectivity with the KNM made it a popular location for commercial development. Recent land-use developments corroborated the KNM area's locational significance for the city by showing increasing commercial growth. Ideally, the city's master plan would serve as the sole planning and development document to guide its infrastructural development. It used a set of land laws to control the physical growth of the city (Chaudhury, 2010; Paris, 2013). However, since 1961, the integrity of the master plan's model of the city has depended entirely on the conception of 'stability', where land-owners or renters are eligible to be part of the development. Stability is the primary logic of master planning for urban development; the master plan protects an imagined gated territory of an exclusive class, where public spaces are carefully surveilled and controlled by the development authority with their power. The development authority uses the carefully crafted rigid road layout/order and land-use code to legalize every space within the master plan territory. The need for 'legality' makes the system more secure in terms of property ownership from groups who do not have the ability to take part in the production of urban space. However, the order of the master plan is threatened when these excluded groups without landownership function as a way out or escape route from economic oppression. As a counter practice of the state-protected privatization process of the commercial center, the 'illegal' spatial development countered the coded order of the master plan to make room for a collective subsistence economy.
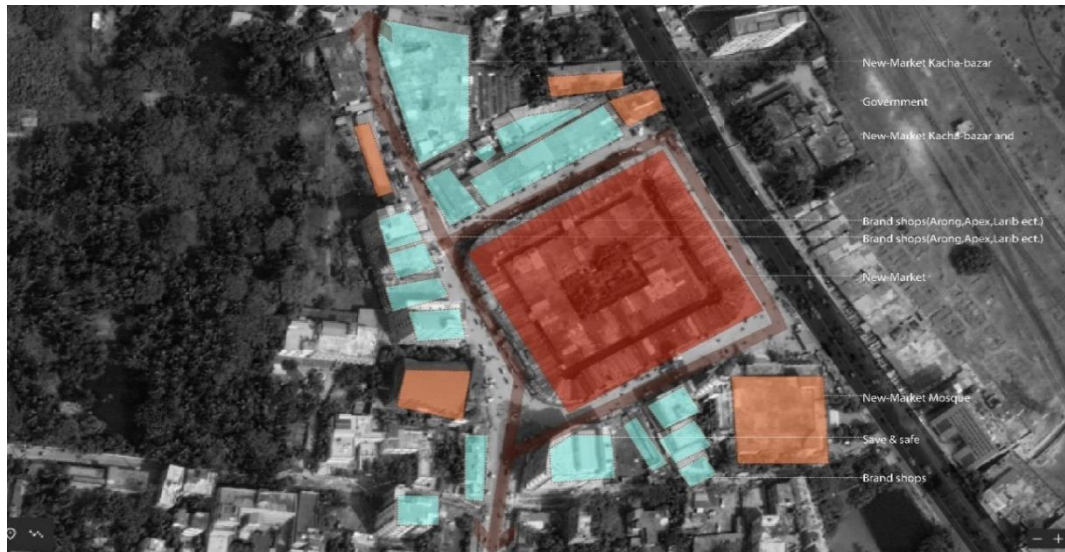
Figure 4. Present land use and brand shop locations around the KNM.

Yet, the conception of modern class-protected development and local survival logic creates an unprecedented gap in understanding the physical transformation of the city, which also requires an alternative to the 'stability' conception of the master planning approach and the very vocabulary of public space for this city in the Global South. Everyday production of urban spaces outside the KNM is more transient and temporary, which counters the conceived space of the planners, asserting an explicit denial of the master plan's core logic. These spatial developments utilize spatial 'flexibility' in place of 'stability'/control along with various socio-political interconnectivity among agents. By doing so, it represents a sort of denial of state-imposed and conceived order in urban space. Table 1 shows the authorities' connectivity with specific objectives at various scales that inherently patron these unordered spatial developments. The top authority and local committees set similar types of aims, where local leaders control the system to gain financial benefit and establish dominancy. The survival strategy of excluded groups continues to stand up against the conception of the master plan, resulting in a distortion of the proposed land use.

Table 1. Matrix of authorities with specific aims and its physical manifestation related to the production of informal spatial practices.

Geographical scale	Authorities	Objective/purpose	Implementation
Macro	Development authority (KDA) Municipality (KCC)	Elitist-focused spatial organization. Physical form as a tool for dominance.	Adequate parking space design. Automobile-oriented road development. Introverted functional arrangement. More solid building form.
Meso	Market committee (New Market) Mosque committee Baitun-Nur market committee	Stability and benefit of legalized shop owners. Clean image of entry. Financial benefits.	Periodical evictions. Defined perimeter with moveable elements and strict maintenance.
Micro	Shop owners and landlords	Retain control of the land and protect the exclusive image of the KNM area.	Conserve an orderly image of the city. Secure financial profit/rent from the locational benefit of KNM in the city's key commercial area.

In contrast to the conceived space of the master planning framework, the counter/distortion spaces create a unique interrelationship between the formal and informal in Khulna that has triggered a new complex network of social reality, which contributes to achieving social justice in the urban context, which the master planning method has neither been capable to comprehend or produce in its perpetual ignorance of the evolving needs of the local context.

Perceived Space and Counter Architecture

The production of urban space or informality has its own purposes and codes, which are not the outcome of irrationality or spontaneity (Jabareen, 2014) but part of everyday urbanism that is formed by a multitude of interactions and collaborations among spatial agents and features. In the case of the KNM, the impregnable master planning method restricts people's engagement with changes or alterations through regulatory codes. However, lower economic classes counter the exclusive character of the area through a counter architecture that is apparently perceived as messy, impermanent, and temporally dynamic. Through this form of architecture, small-scale and diverse spatio-economic activities take place, engaging all societal strata to transform KNM into a non-class typology of public place. The counter architecture ensures the inclusion of diversity, as well as transforming the rigid and 'static city' into what Rahul Mehrotra (2008) explains as a 'kinetic city'.

The connectivity of the KNM with significant city nodes, such as the Dakbanglow, Powerhouse, Shib-bari, Joragate and Sonadanga bus-stops, makes the place a destination for various cultural purposes. Additionally, the secondary and tertiary connections establish a strong linkage with its surroundings that enables everyday accessibility to ordinary people (Figure 5). Similar to what Soja (1998) showed in his work, the everyday production of counter spaces takes place according to people's perception of the built environment, including paths, networks, and patterns of interaction. These have had an impact on how the KNM area has evolved with reference to the rigid master plan, and its perception by the public has changed over the years.
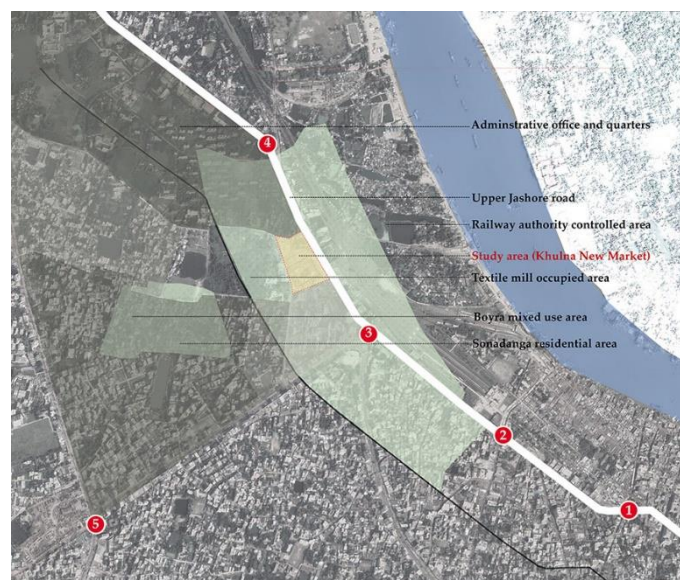
Figure 5. The 1) Dakbanglow, 2) Powerhouse, 3) Shib-bari 4) Joragate, and 5) Sonadanga bus-stand nodes. Highlighted in red is the study area and surrounding land-use details.

In the first phase, the market building was single-storied with shopping facilities. Later, to serve local needs, Prantik market (Kacha Bazaar) was developed on the west side, near the approach road. Furthermore, the commercial activities in the area spilled beyond the boundaries of the plots and over streets to cope with the increasing socio-economic demands of city life. In the morning, vendors/hawkers sell vegetables, household items on the roadside of Prantik market and Girza.

The secondary and tertiary roadsides have been transformed into everyday markets for surrounding residents and shop workers selling home-related items, vegetables, fruits and seasonal commodities/ accessories both in the morning and at night. People's perception about these roadside market spaces is that they offer comparatively cheaper and fresher products than those of the typical shops and the surrounding super-shops. This perception boosts the popularity of the KNM area among the city residents. In addition, there are key repair shops, cobbler shops, and other open street shops of temporary vendors that do not fit conventional architectural stereotypes but serve the needs of diverse people. In the afternoon, garment products, jewelry, fruits, and foods near the mosque's premises turn the periphery of the KNM into an active social space. The affordability and cheap transport make it easier for people to visit the KNM area. Mr. Siddik, a consumer says,

> *Considering the location and availability of transportation, it's very easy to come to the New Market from any other place. I frequently visit the place after shopping in Dakbangla for the delicious street foods and home stuff.*

Vendors use customized vans or portable carriers, and even sit on the street, occupying spaces in temporary structures in the area (Figure 6). These do not fit the architectural form that the modern master planning or exclusive economic class conventionally conceive. Instead, they are often perceived as creating chaos and distortion of the planned environment. Despite the obsession of the master planning approach to make the place into a sanitized homogenous territory, this distortion by the production of counter architecture in the KNM area has opened up various scopes and economic opportunities for the city center to become an inclusive social space for people of all economic classes.

Figure 6. (Left) Seasonal hawkers sit occasionally with portable forms of architecture; (middle, right) vendors selling household items.
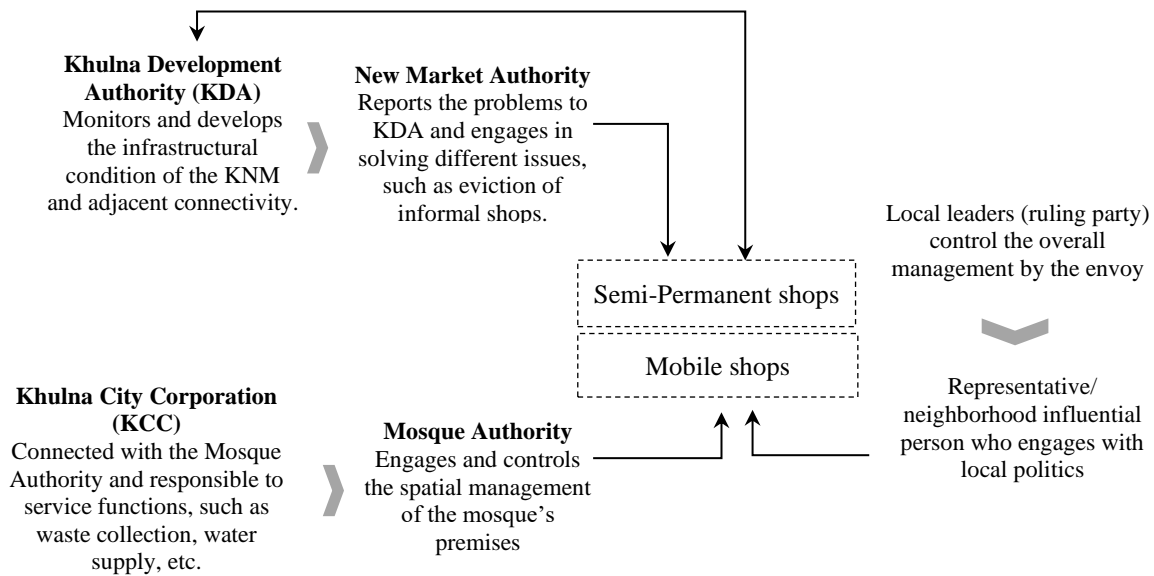
Figure 7. Involvement mechanisms of different authorities in the management of informal hawkers in the market and mosque area.

Table 2. The location of hawkers in the New Market and Baitun-Nur-Mosque area at different times of the day.

Time: 8 am to 1 pm	Time: 1 pm to 6 pm	Time: 7 pm to 11 pm
Mostly hawkers selling seasonal vegetables and snacks, and tea stalls. 70-80% of vendors use a van or other moveable vehicle to display their products.	Household items, cobblers, key repair shops, girls' accessories and garment products are available. Some hawkers sit at the same place regularly with portable stalls to display their products.	Diversity of foods are the main attraction. Some vegetables, fruits, garment products and home appliances are also sold. 80-90 vendors are found, where 80% of them use carts or vans.

This diversity celebrates and promotes the everyday spatial events of life. As Jane Jacobs (1961) advocated, variety works as a catalyst to enhance urban street life and commerce. Similarly, the set of spatial features is responsible for the distortion of planned land use. The counter architecture

facilitates the KNM to embrace a rich production and reproduction of public space. The distortional use of master planning subsumes different social classes within its malleable functionality. Our user feedback analysis illustrates that the diversity of services and functions generates more activities and vibrancy around the KNM area. Field observation identified more than six functional typologies available, including (but not limited to) brand shops, retail shops, a church, a mosque, and food stalls. From morning to night, this multiplicity of functions attracts people of all classes and ages (Table 2). Through distortion of the master plan, the area represents a popular recreational area for city residents. This distortion creates land-use flexibility, allowing the food stalls to engage and offer cheap but high-quality food, which acts as the primary catalyst for social gatherings in the afternoon. The counter architectural typology challenges the monopoly role of the authority in reducing inclusive spatial growth and provides a non-class-oriented place for everyone. The survey found that a large number of people gather at the mosque's premises for street food, and its safe character makes it a good social space that the formal facilities have not managed to create over the years.

Nearly every corner of the market is used wisely by the counter architecture to animate some form of public activity. Even the narrow space between the market building's perimeter and the parking lot is used for different purposes, including tea stalls, a bakery, and a bus ticket counter (Figure 8). The counter architecture represents an alternative form of spatial practice, conventionally understood to damage the formal establishments in the KNM area. However, this grey area arguably serves as a vital catalyst for the cultural-economic flourishing of the present developing Khulna, which the symmetrical, rigid, and ordered development has failed to promote. This failure has widened the area's scope, to create a symbiosis of the formal and informal arena and enhances an alternative form of spatial production where functionality plays a complementary role.

Figure 8. In-between space of building perimeter and road, occupied by informal vendors/hawkers.

To meet the increasing social, cultural, and economic needs of the city, which the organizational logic of the master plan failed to incorporate in the area, the counter-architectural development took over to create an active socio-cultural-economic place by transforming the KNM's periphery. These alterations and transformations were possible because of the fluid and flexible spatial character of the informal architecture, countering the planners' conceived space. Yet, the transformation of the periphery of the KNM forces to rethink what/who constitutes and represents the area: the periphery, which constitutes the counter form of architecture producing life in the city, or the modern, formal architecture that is intended to create an exclusive, lifeless city.

Lived space and spatial organization

Political relations are a kind of social connection that helps the marginalized to secure the place they occupy. Mills (1956) saw political relations as a tool to exercise 'power' that takes place within a group of the same interests (Mills, 1956:20). The survey in the study area revealed that political lobbying, interpersonal relationships, social connections, and monetary transactions are vital to occupy and maintain a business space in the KNM area. Financial transactions and social relations are more impactful for the production of informality in the area. Negotiation and political connectivity also help vendors/hawkers to secure their production of counter architecture around the market. Two types of phenomena prevail in the management of informality. On the KNM side, permanent and semi-permanent vendors liaise with the market authority and lobby with petty local political leaders. On the other hand, the mosque and the Baitun-nur market committee directly control the frontal spatial arrangement. The committee evicts hawkers/vendors periodically because of excessive crowds at the entry space. On the market side, the New Market's shop association and local representatives of the ruling party mutually monitor and control the informality. Figure 7 depicts the connectivity mechanisms within the authorities, the local committee, and influential persons in controlling and managing the vendors/hawkers. A mosque-side hawker said,

> *We (sitting on the mosque's premises) have to maintain strong relations with the mosque market committee rather than lobbying with influential persons. But one should maintain a good relationship with influential persons if one wants to stay in the KNM side area.*

Local political leaders getting financial benefits from the vendors play a key role in providing backup and making liaisons. Some claim that policemen, security guards, committee members, and shop owners are directly connected with monetary benefits, even though vendors are evicted periodically by the authorities, despite liaising and negotiations. Unplanned occupation, traffic jams, excessive crowding, and the noxious environment are among the factors that affect the execution of the master plan's guidelines, which have been argued to justify these evictions.

The process to create a scenic master plan space (including eviction) is, however, a cyclic process, as the evicted hawkers come back shortly to resume their business. The necessity of vendors for the sustenance of a successful social/public space binds them with the area in a perpetual relationship. Since formal establishments and the ordered planning approach fail to fulfill the city residents' dynamic needs, the lived presence of the informal vendors fills the vacuum. To offer the required diversified services, from morning to late at night, vendors sit on the roadside in front of the regular Bazar with vegetables, seasonal fruits, and home accessories in the morning. In the afternoon, the public space changes into a food zone (locally called 'Food Hut') that is spontaneously organized to meet the demand for a social gathering space on the mosque's premises. At the same time, on the west side of the New Market, hawkers sell clothing items, jewelry, and fruits. This diversity of informal services is why the New Market area acts as a meeting place for all social classes and has become the most vibrant public space in the city. This spatial modality has a deeper connection with the very nature of the city of Khulna, which is known as a survival resort for migrants in coastal Bangladesh. About 33% of the people in the city are migrants (Gray and Mueller, 2012). This category is dominated by climate migrants who come to Khulna for survival. A majority of them use the city every day to seek livelihood opportunities. Their need for survival reinforces the malleable/coexistent quality of the spatial production, where the respective uses of space change spontaneously. At present, the changing pattern of spatial practices represents a distinct character of ephemeral urbanism, where the flexibility enhances the temporal qualities of space and increases the engagement of new people continuously. Such flexibility in spatial production is evident from the case of the premises of

Jhinuk Hall. In the morning, vendors sell fresh vegetable and fruits, while in the afternoon, the place is transformed into a social meeting spot. These temporalities in the peripheral areas of the New Market and the adjacent streets allow the place to grow and sustain itself as a meaningful social space that affects the daily lives of individuals who are formally or informally associated with the area. These socially constructed spatial activities have been established as an inalienable part of the formal planning framework over time. The oldest tea seller in the area informs,

> *For setting up a long-term business, new hawkers should connect with local leaders or market committee persons. In some cases, negotiation with a shop owner and monetary relationships give them a short-time benefit.*

In the afternoon, when the area turns into a vibrant public space for all groups, irrespective of social class, age, and sex, the visual connectivity makes the area alive until late at night, allowing people to participate in activities. The openness and unobstructed visual settings ensure psychological security by enabling to see one another from a distance, simultaneously giving scope to share visual expressions with physical accessibility and providing a meaningful interaction through behavior, attitude, and body language. A survey from 2021 found that regardless of gender identity, both males and females feel secure and enjoy spending time around the New Market area until late at night. Most of the respondents mentioned that the roadside vibrancy and the mixing of social classes make the space safe for all. Thus, the planning ideology that conceived the area to cater to a specific economic class has been violated by the lived presence of all classes, yet these violations make the area a successful social space through the presence of urban informality

Discussion: Age of master planning approach and counter architecture perspective of urban informality

The master planning method was introduced by British professionals in the 1940s to foster urban growth by managing urban ills (Chaudhury, 2010). The codified and regulated approach was used as a 'rationalizing' tool to ensure cohesion in ordered development. In Khulna, the master planning approach was implemented as an abstract form of standardized rules that ignore the contextual socio-spatial and socio-cultural practices. At least three key aspects of this modern planning method can be highlighted. Firstly, master planning aimed to enforce administrative control over the physical expansion of cities through rules and regulations; secondly, master planning manifested the state's power to stabilize and implement a 'rationalist' concept of the modern city; and finally, master planning made civil society in Khulna weaker/unable in decision making and resisting the state's interventions in physical space (Campbell and Fainstein, 2003).

With reference to the framework of master planning, informality has been understood as an 'unregistered' or 'counter/alternative' sector of the economy; however, a comparative analysis of the global scenario shows the recognition of informality since 1970. The ideology of informality has been propounded commonly as an agenda in the development and urban planning across cities in the Global South for a few decades. Yet, in 1990, a group of development professionals started using the term 'informality' to define spatial transformation, alteration, and accusation of urban areas. Thus, master planning has been used as a tool for 'development control' to manage 'spontaneous' urban growth, which ranges from street vendors to illegal settlements. Despite the denial of urban informality in master planning, many built-environment experts (planners, architects, etc.) bring forth a multidisciplinary viewpoint related to economic, social, political, and cultural aspects to comprehend urban informality. Further, these developments establish a symbiotic relationship between conceptual and communal space that often disrupts the quality

control and makes the place flexible and fluid. The mutual agreement between individuals and various groups acting outside the law of the state influences this spatial development (Caporale et al., 2004, Roy and AlSayyad, 2004).

In many areas, informality continues to be outlawed by the regulatory bodies, which they see as a catalyst for disorderly growth, creating an annoying and messy environment. Nevertheless, this conception exposes the shortcomings of traditional planning policies and procedures. Some interpret informality as introducing a 'politicized culture' as an alternative tool for structural adjustment in relation to context-specific power exercises. With continuous negotiations and connections between state and non-state actors, hawkers/vendors break the planned, ordered, and idealized city to produce a 'counter space'. Ananya Roy (2004) has portrayed the extreme situation of political leaders and a ruling party manipulating roadside informality. Roy has shown how the Calcutta Municipal Corporation and the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority launched an operation called Operation Sunshine to evict vendors and street hawkers, even though the left-wing political party had promised to help the hawkers keep their occupied spaces if they won the election. Similarly, during the eviction, the opposition party came to protect and gave the same assurance (Roy, 2004). This is a form of spatial politics to redress financial and social scarcity rather than protesting against authoritarian intervention. Similarly, Asef Bayat explained that prolonged non-collective or individual political actions are for quietly achieving gains, which can be called 'quiet encroachment' (Bayat, 1997). These forms are evident around the study area, where socio-political connectivity influences collective development and, functionally, the ordered-disordered spaces coexist successfully.

In recent studies, Habitat III recognizes urban informality for its contribution to the economic development process of cities and emphasizes the long-term gradual process it takes to legitimize informal livelihoods. The spontaneous and creative solution of informality is an outcome of the state's incapacity of providing economic stability, which De Soto called the 'other path' (De Soto, 1989). The legalist school of thought brought forth the positive forces linked with power politics of the context, while structuralist scholars saw it as part of the single system of the economy (Lutzoni, 2016). In a nutshell, most schools of thought emphasize a dichotomous view of formal-informal relationships instead of them being merged in the social continuum of urban life. The flexible mode of production of space emerges from a community's own logic and code of space (AlSayyad, 2004, Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). Through the 'negotiation' with formal regulations, political parties and development authorities grow 'quietly' (Bayat, 2000) in urban places to sustain social life and recreational needs in urban spaces. Empirical observations from cities in the Global South like Khulna only confirm this mode of social co-operation across economic classes for sustainability against various odds in trying to overcome the failure of master planning.

The absence of the prevalence of the social perspective in analyzing urban informality has restricted the comprehensive analysis of the production of urban spaces in the context of developing cities. Despite this fact, the social aspect of urban informality has only enhanced the capacity to foster economically and socially sustainable urban spaces for fostering sustainable economic growth and social development. Avoiding any negative connotations between the two poles of formal and informal, this paper shows how informality evolves as a counter space that subsequently acts as a way of social life that is produced deliberately for the sustainability of the formal system. To this end, the dynamics of the social environment need to be reinterpreted within the context of present urban development based upon which the current socio-spatial realities of cities in the Global South can be figured out.

In this respect, the social lens developed by Lefebvre is fundamental for discerning the organizational character of urban informality, where it epitomizes a new theoretical foundation

that could challenge the stability, control, and image-making mission of master planning. It puts forward the question of the interconnectedness/interrelationship between abstract spaces of planned areas (land uses, formal rules, and regulations) and the chaotic reality of informality, which presents a theoretical debate on (formal-informal) space, which has been understood only as a 'processes-oriented' model for apprehending codified and spontaneous structures. Lefebvre's lens, as used here, engages socially constructed thought and practices embedded within this positive outcome of the planning and design of urban space. Categorically, elements of the spatial triad illustrate how tactical attributes of spatial formation, through conceived, perceived and lived space, systematically discern the codes and symbols that generate everyday life and behavior, where locations and spatial sets of characteristics (routes, land use, etc.) are embedded within the production and reproduction of urban informal spaces. These spaces, as seen in Khulna's case, belong to the 'inhabitants' and 'users' who live directly in different times and maintain them through their own knowledge and ideology (Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith, 1991), resisting the static codes of modern master planning for the city.

This study framed informality as counter production in response to orderly space and against the formal planning apparatus, challenging conventional methodological orientations of comprehending urban spatial production. For example, Diane Davis (2017), by focusing on political and developmental status, affirms the role of informality in molding the state function from both an authoritative and legal perspective. By restructuring or transforming through counter architecture, informality helps to unveil an inclusive social order, governance, and the inhabitants' status in a democratic society that evolves against strict and static guidelines (Davis 2017). Thus, this counter architecture plays an imperative role in stabilizing socio-economic and cultural crises in a society that has been idealized without considering local fabrics. Similarly, Vanessa Watson (2009) illustrates spatial segregation or fragmentation, which is the outcome of 'control' and 'power' of planning over the marginalized. Using the concept of 'hybridity', Watson (2009) illustrates informality as a survival effort of deprived people that interconnects formal-informal spatial layers, which this study stretched further through the exploration of the counter architecture lens.

Socio-economic polarization, uneven spatial distribution, or disparities of power and resources are noticeable in most of the city's phenomena, which the rhetoric of the planning ideology fails to address. To face these progressive urban crises, Song (2016) mentions the inclusion of informal spatial practices in mainstream planning practice that neo-liberal planning discourses mostly ignore. The study further expanded her findings on the necessity of developing co-producing, inclusive, and adaptive planning policies that focus on the needs and crises of the locality with flexibility, temporality, and transient attributes of informality, which in the case of Khulna manifests itself in the form of counter architecture.

Conclusion

After Bangladesh's independence in 1971, the country has been evolving as a democratic society, with the use of a strict ordered and coded master planning approach for urban development inherently controlling everyone in their right to the city. Specifically, the marginalized and displaced urban poor are severely affected by these laws and regulations. However, the master planning approach has been further rationalized by the successive state regimes to boost economic growth and development. The approach intended to improve city people's lives and living, whereas in most cases the embedded spatial ideology creates a socially segregated city (Siu and Huang, 2015). Khulna, as this paper found, is no exception. The developmental approach failed

to accommodate the needs of the majority in this context, and in response counter spatial practices have emerged from the marginalized groups for survival.

This study revealed the present dynamics of evolving informal spatial practices with reference to formal planning regimes and elaborated on the actors that are responsible for the creation of counter architecture. Utilizing Lefebvre's ideology of the production of space, the study area reveals how informality becomes an inseparable part of coded development with the help of authorized and unauthorized authorities. In negotiation with local authorities, such as the mosque and the market committee, informal services in the form of counter architecture not only contribute to the economy but also generate a vibrant social space that the scenic and sanitized modern architecture failed to create.

The counter form challenges a stable form of architecture that the authority's vision is meant to impose on society. With the participation of all socio-economic classes, the counter practices break the rigidity and static morphology that make the marketplace placeless. Subsequently, a temporal, dynamic, and adaptive architecture is generated, which allows the context to evolve into a non-order and no-ownership type of space.

On the other hand, the everyday paths and access routes around the New Market and Upper Jashore Road enhance spatial mobility. Further, the portable character of the vendors/hawkers' stalls redefines the characterization of the envisioned spatial arrangement and provide for diversified needs. This diversification invites more users to become engaged, which produces an unruly spatiality that is not scenic from a master planning perspective. This contested form against the image-making ideology of space development inherently develops new synergies between formal and informal planning approaches. The user feels comfortable with enough safety and security to ensure the participation of every individual beyond race and economic class. However, this quiet encroachment is always threatened by the fear of eviction by the authorities; in this case, vendors use various alternative mechanisms, such as social and political networks, and monetary transactions, to reclaim their vending space again and again. Our findings show that social networks and political connections are required to stay on the mosque's premises and for the shops around the mosque and the market area financial relations are also required.

Most importantly, these temporalities redefine the controlling mechanism of the authoritarian model by their rich sensibility and break static boundaries by expanding spatial practices beyond their limits. Through counter production, informality on the one hand sets a new spectacle to serve the needs that static development is unable to meet, while on the other hand compelling the system to become malleable to adopt changes. Beyond convention, the informal spatial production in the Global South is evolving, as every architecture of the ordinary is more transformative and flexible.

In pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of counter architecture, it is imperative to engage in meticulous spatial mapping endeavors, allowing for the in-depth analysis of their distribution, growth dynamics, and the ensuing socio-economic ramifications within urban landscapes. Future research endeavors stand to benefit immensely from conducting comparative analyses with other cities in the Global South, thereby facilitating a nuanced understanding of the commonalities and distinctions in counter space morphology and their profound impacts on urban development.

Finally, a holistic inquiry into the cultural and social dimensions of counter architecture is essential. This paper has shown how spaces can play a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion, promoting spatial justice, and preserving cultural practices that are integral to the tapestry of urban life. Therefore, it is paramount to understand how these activities can underpin livelihoods, bolster local economies, and engender constructive interactions between the formal and informal sectors.

Such an approach would draw from a diverse array of fields, including urban planning, sociology, economics, anthropology, and others, to provide a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the intricate issues surrounding the recognition and inclusion of counter spaces within the overarching urban planning framework of cities in the Global South.

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