

PUBLIC SPACE FUNCTION TRANSFORMATION (CASE STUDY: ENGKU PUTERI SQUARE IN BATAM CITY)

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ABSTRACT

Engku Puteri Square is an open field which is usually called “Alun-Alun”, located next to the mayor's office of Batam which was originally planned as a public open space and venue for the ceremony ground of the Batam City civil servants. The concept of structuring the city square in several cities in Indonesia has been started since a long time ago, the city square has a potential role to be one of the city identities. This is important because we are now experiencing an identity crisis, especially in the field of architecture or urban planning. Engku Puteri square became a different public space when in 2003 the Municipality of Batam decided to construct the fence around the square area, especially when the Alun-Alun was decided to be the location for the implementation of the National MTQ when the Riau Islands Province hosted the event in 2014. A few months before National Level MTQ being held, there were a large renovation done, such as the addition of towers and gates permanently. The pulpit and Astaka used as the main arena of MTQ activities are also built magnificently. The Engku Puteri, which used to have an open concept now becomes more intimate and different from the initial concept, all might be due to the lack of awareness of the public and policy makers about the concept of public open space. The purpose of this paper is to find a concept of the city square that will be compared with the existing conditions as a consideration to restore the actual function of the Engku Puteri City Square.

Key word: alun-alun; architecture; urban planning; main arena; public.

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INTRODUCTION

"Public open space is one type of outdoor space that is usually used freely by the surrounding community to carry out activities and social interaction, as a center for outdoor activities for the community" (Korpela K M: 241 - 256).

“The square is a public space that has existed since the days of the Javanese kingdoms, at that time the square was a tangible form of appreciation to the public for open public spaces. Currently, the square or other open spaces are less attractive than closed public spaces, which are now more modern. In the past, the center of government during the Dutch Colonial period adopted an imitation of the Alun-Alun, but the traditional values in it were not included and prioritized commercial or market activities in the corridor of the square for political purposes to transfer the authority of the indigenous government” (Siti Rukhayah & Sugiono Sutomo Journal of Historical Studies, VIII. 2. December 2007).

The existing public space is demanded more by the community in accommodating all their needs, where the demand for meeting these needs has an impact on the pattern of activity and utilization of the space in it. A public open space must meet certain requirements to be able to attach the title of a successful open space, which can support the community in their activities, interactions, and aspirations. Below are some examples of squares in big cities in Indonesia.



Figure 1. Yogyakarta City Square (Source: <http://www.tribun.com>)



Figure 2. Bandung City Square (Source: <http://www.tribun.com>)

The existence of the square as a public open space, should be used and managed properly. With the phenomenon of a shift in the concept of the Alun-Alun, which has changed and is starting to be oriented towards profit, by turning it into a parking area and slowly being earmarked for other purposes, we conducted several samplings using the interview method with the users of the Alun-Alun Engku Putri, both children and young adults. Young people, adults, and some of the elderly they stated that too often events were held in the square so often they could not do their activities and people began to lose space for expression, movement, and self-actualization. The most important thing is that we respond to the results of the interview that as social beings, humans also need an open, free container to interact and socialize with the community or other communities.

The following are some routine activities that are usually carried out in the Batam City square.



Figure 3. PAUD children's activities at Engku Puteri Batam 2018 (Source: <http://www.batampos.co.id>)



Figure 4. Engku Puteri Nusantara Bike 2018 (Source: <http://www.batampos.co.id>)



Figure 5. Engku Puteri 2018 Community Entrepreneur Party "Tangan Diatas" (Source: <http://www.batampos.co.id>)



Figure 6. Engku Puteri Bandung Karate Club Grand Parade 2018 (Source: <http://www.batampos.co.id>)



Figure 7. BPOM Riau Islands Anniversary at Engku Puteri Square 2018 (Source: <http://www.batampos.co.id>)



Figure 8. Zumba exercise with “Kartu As” at Engku Puteri Square 2018 (Source: <http://www.tribun.com>)



Figure 9. Halal Bi Halal Association of Javanese Citizens at Engku Puteri 2018
(Source: <http://www.tribun.com>)



Figure 10. Haul Akbar at Engku Puteri Square (Source: <http://www.tribun.com>)

In several other areas in Indonesia, public open spaces have different forms and characteristics, moreover the Dutch Colonial Government in the past has formed a model of the square as a commercial place, so that many big agendas of an area are usually carried out in the square and commercial nature. The form of actualization of public open space to the square will not be obtained by the lower middle class, because its orientation is on activities to generate value or seek profit.

The shift in the shape of an Alun-Alun in Batam City gives an image that has not been optimized for the community. In other words, the use of the square of a city; although it is for the benefit of some people and also for the routine agenda of the Regional Government; so that it is protected, so that other people can also benefit from its existence, and what is more important is how people are aware that the square is not only for economic activities; as described in the past Colonial Government; so that various damages and also ineffectiveness in the use of the square as a public open space can be avoided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alun-Alun as a Public Space

"A public space becomes part of a built environment which has a relationship with cultural elements of the community as planners and users" (Rapoport, A. (2001): 17:4, pp. 145165).

The Ideal Public Space

In the order of people's lives in urban areas, the need for public space as part of the essence of the basic needs of the community to socialize and interact the greater. Existing diversity in urban communities demands created public space that can accommodate the variety of community needs and desires, so it is important to see how the city is able to respond to these needs (Trancik, 1986).

“There are several criteria for an ideal public space, among others: the first is comfort, so that users of public spaces feel comfortable in carrying out their activities in public spaces. Thus, it is necessary to make efforts to meet the needs of space users who are more psychological and support activities. The second is safety, which is intended to protect users of public spaces from possible disasters such as accidents or conflicts. Security aims to provide a sense of security for users of public spaces in carrying out their activities in a public space. and to prevent violence and crime in space. The fourth is attainment, intended to provide easy access to a space without any obstacles, distractions, or obstacles. This also concerns the feeling of ease of orientation in a space of meaning” (Sigit Dwinanato A. 2003).

Access provides convenience, comfort, and security for Paramets to achieve the goals with transportation facilities and infrastructure that supports the ease of accessibility planned and designed according to user requirements so that it can provide comfort and convenience in carrying out its activities. This accessibility facility should be in the planning and design to pay attention to the order, location and circulation, dimensions (Lynch, 1976).

Interestingly attractive visuals are needed to add value to the scenery (Vista) which can increase the attractiveness and aesthetic value of the region to be of quality (Cullen, G, 1986). The next thing that is no less important is attractiveness. The attractiveness in a public space is related to the aesthetic factor. However, this does not mean that the space is filled with aesthetic elements that tend to be expensive, but rather to characterize a space. This will relate to the sense of ownership of the space which will give the identity and image of the space to the community as its users. So that in the end it will foster a sense of belonging to the public space.

The quality of a public space includes the meaning of the existence of the public space in the sense that it can meet the feasibility of several criteria, namely: functional quality, visual quality, and environmental quality (Danisworo, 1992).

CONCLUSION

The problem of public open space related to the existence of the square, especially for the middle- and lower-class people, on the outskirts of the city is very important, because with the square, people can express themselves so that all needs including human psychology can be met. The description of the square is almost evenly distributed throughout Indonesia, starting from the problems of structuring the square, maintenance, and renovation of the square. Inappropriate use of the square is due to its changing function into a night market, music concerts, and so on. The most important thing is the lack of concern from the government and the community regarding the condition of the square. This function shift also occurred in Batam City, Riau Islands, where the square is no longer an ideal public space. What can be seen is that the existence of the alun-alun in Batam City is oriented towards activities that generate value and the implementation of government agendas, so that its existence has changed a lot into an economic commodity. As a result, the condition of the square is rarely used by the public because of the agenda of events that are held almost every week, and many parts of the square, including public facilities, are damaged. This condition has become a common symptom in several regions in Indonesia. One way that can be done is to understand the concept of the square first, by building a trademark or image of the city in the above discussion it has been described about the concept of a good or ideal square, but it is necessary to collaborate between the government and the community in rearranging it all. So that all parties feel they have it, and all parties feel responsible for the use of public space in accordance with the wishes of the community.

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