

A study on students' recognition of words that represent alun-alun, Indonesia's traditional open spaces

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1. Introduction

To increase the value of an open space, it is important to clarify the current situation, especially what kind of images people have. This study focuses on alun-alun, which are traditional open spaces in Java, Indonesia. Alun-alun have spread all over Java. Generally, one alun-alun has been set in each city. It's usually located in the city center, and it serves as a precious open space.

It has been said that alun-alun have a strong relationship with Java's history. One could also say that alun-alun have a high historical and cultural value. The most famous alun-alun is located in Yogyakarta. This alun-alun has a strong relationship with the palace.

The objective of this study is to clarify the current situation of alun-alun through the key words that youth consider. The purpose of revealing the current situation is connected to understanding the kind of planning and designing that are needed.

2. Study Methods

In this study, the subjects are students of Universitas Gadjah Mada, located in Yogyakarta. The research method involved questionnaires. These questionnaires asked key words that the students associated with alun-alun. They were asked to write down keywords—a minimum of one and a maximum of six. The survey was conducted in September 2015. Regarding respondents' attributes, the number of valid responses was 202, with 105 males (52.0%) and 84 females (41.6%).

3. Results

Respondents were spread across all of Java. 12 people came from the province of Banten, 7 came from the province of West Java, 63 came from the province of Central Java, 54 came from the Special Capital Region of Yogyakarta, and 15 came from province of East Java. 1,242 keywords were collected from 202 respondents.

Key words were divided into four groups: emotion, utilization, existence, and space configuration. The emotion group had words that represented people's feelings about alun-alun (429 key words or 34.5%). The utilization group had words that represented people's activity in alun-alun (290 key words or 23.3%). The existence group had words that represented alun-alun's status from past to present (145 key words or 11.7%). The space configuration group had words that represented what constituted alun-alun (349 key words or 28.1%). In the emotion group, there were some words that involved bad emotions like "dirty" and "crime." But most of them were words that express good emotions like "cozy," "clean," and "relax." In the utilization group, the most common activities were playing sports, gathering people, and buying something; there were also more unusual activities like tourism, courtship, and festivals.

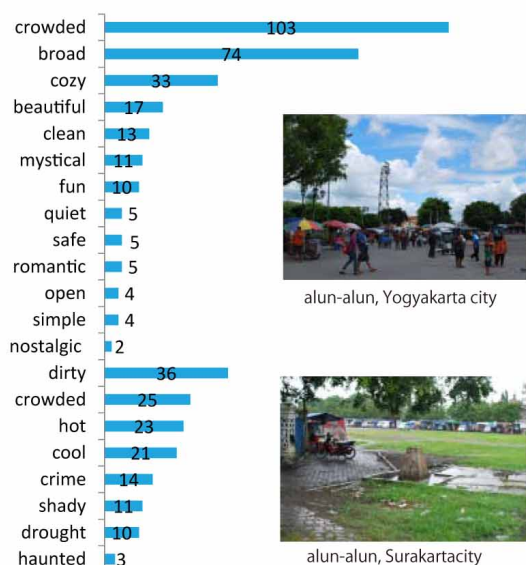
One could say alun-alun have two types of activities: daily use and extraordinary use. In the existence group, there were some words about the past, such as "culture," "history," "palace," and "king"; there were also some words from the present, such as "fields" and "park." Alun-alun have some historical aspects, but they're also used as open spaces in the present. The space configuration group revealed that ficus benjamina (a special kind of tree), other trees, and grass are thought of as components for alun-alun, and the land mass is huge. Most people think of alun-alun as mainly consisting of trees and grass, but there are other components, such as lights, flagpoles, and benches.

4. Conclusion

From this research, one could say that alun-alun are historical and cultural places that are used for extraordinary events. However, for some people who answered these questions, alun-alun are places where people spend their daily time for gathering, eating, and playing sports. Therefore, this study reveals that alun-alun are open spaces for urban people.

Keywords: Indonesia, Java, open space, alun-alun, questionnaire

<The emotion group>



<The utilization group>



<The existence group>



<The space configuration group>

