THE ROLE OF JALAN RUKUNAN IN THE KAMPUNG OF KOTAGADE YOGYAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

The paper is aimed to identify the role of what is called “Jalan Rukunam” in Kotagade and its physical characteristics, as well as its interconnection and growth during a certain period of time, through a qualitative approach. Certain numbers of samples are selected purposively and sampling ends when repetition occurred. The unit of analysis is Jalan Rukunam, and its surrounding, both in terms of physical environment and activities conducted within the neighborhood. The research divided the period into three categories: (1) between 1930-1950, (2) between 1950-1970, and (3) between 1970-1990.

INTRODUCTION

Kotagade nowadays is considered as an old city, characterized by its prominent Javanesian ethnic culture and their old buildings that can still be seen there. The structure of the city has similarity to the one of Yogyakarta and of Surakarta palace cities. Many traditional houses built facing south are still found around the kampungs (Javanese urban settlements). What interested to be seen are small alleys, which are formed by, open spaces located in between houses. The small alley is called “Jalan Rukunam” which means "shared/together alley".

These Jalan Rukunam are running from east to west connecting houses inside the kampung, and connecting bigger streets outside the kampung. The Jalan Rukunam has social functions as well as used for working space. People along the street have been using it as a place to sit down and relax, as a meeting place for the kampung members, to hold parties or traditional ceremonies, as children's playground, as well as a place to dry up the laundry. In some places, they also function as craft workshops. Due to their functions, these alleys have been playing important role in kampung life of Kotagade.

THE MUHAMMADIYAH PERIOD

An Islamic organization called Muhammadiyah was very well accepted by the people of Kotagade in 1925 and received positive responses especially by the middle class groups. This organization, which main activities are Islamic teachings and social welfare activities was very influential to the life of the people in Kotagade (Nakamura, 1983). Religious activities, including the purification of Islamic teachings were stated to be at certain places, especially at the houses of religious chiefs. At the time, religious activities are still limited to the middle class community, while the others, usually live in the kampungs were members of Kewawan beliefs. Thus, all ceremonies like weddings or funerals were carried out in traditional ways mixed with Islam ways.

In the year of 1935-1938, the people of Kotagade mostly earned their living as silver-craft businessmen. They reached and enjoyed the golden years of their business at that time, as many silver-craft works are exported abroad (KPDY, 1987). This gave a strong socio-economic impact to people’s life in Kotagade. Most of the people were working as businessmen in silver-craft industry, either as the producer or the merchant. In this period, Jalan Rukunam played an important role in community life of the people of Kotagade, where they held meetings, ceremonies, and other activities as well as during the silver-craft works.

THE ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIOD AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE

During the first year after the country’s independence (1950-1970), the economic condition of Kotagade was declining. It started since the Japanese occupation period, in which the raw material for silver was getting more difficult to find. This situation made many businessmen have to stop their production, and the silver-craft workers were out of work from 1960-1965 were difficult times for the people of Kotagade, as there was a sharp increase of living cost in the area (Amini, 1994). This problem was temporarily solved when the cooperative assisted their members in getting raw materials for silver-craft until around 1965 (Nakamura, 1983).

During this time, many businessmen left the region and moved to other cities, due to the worst economic condition. However, working as silver-craft workers were still the best alternative beside garment home industries. People opened silver workshops at their own houses, usually next to the living room, and

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hiring a few workers (4-5 persons), and sold their silver-craft products to Beringharjo market.

In the meantime, the religious and social activities led by Muhammadiyah organization were improving. Many schools and health-clinics were being built. The religious activities were not only limited to certain environment, but had been spread into the kampungs where the common people lived. Many religious ceremonies as Idul Fitri prayers or sacrificing animals at Idul Adha were carried out at Kotagede grass-field, which was situated at the north side of the area, while prayers during Ramadhan fasting month and Lebaran celebration were stated to be held in bigger houses in the kampung.

Figure 1. Building situation Map Kota Gede
THE PRESENT ACTIVITIES

The period around 1970-1993 was called the "New Order" period, which was signified by development activities especially in economic and technological sectors. The economy and craft industry conditions in Kotagede were also improved by the emergence of many big companies in this sector. Some people ran their business in a relatively modern way, with a large space to accommodate their silver shops and workshops. Meanwhile, although the small silver home-industries still continuing their slow activities, the workers were often not doing anything for several days as there was not any order from bigger companies.

However, the activities in the kampungs were increasing in this period. These activities include lebaran, prayers, weddings, funerals, and other public and social activities, which were carried out together by the members of the kampung in Jalan Rukunan.

Figure 2. Jalan Rukunan Location

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THE ROLE OF JALAN RUKUNAN

Looking at the above mentioned descriptions, the role of Jalan Rukunan could be described as follow:
(1) as a link to connect one cluster of settlement to another, the kampung to main road, and short cut from one kampung to another, (2) as a common space for the whole families along the Jalan Rukunan, (3) as a social-tight bond among the members of neighborhood, (4) as a place to carry-out daily activities, such as drying laundries or meeting guest, and (5) as a place to hold traditional as well as religious and social activities and celebrations (such as weddings, funerals, prayers, or independence-day celebration).

Figure 3. Physical condition of Jalan Rukunan a: Kampung Alun-alun

Figure 4. Position of Jalan Rukunan

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