

## Spatial Value in the Islamic Community Area of the Old City of Surabaya

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**Abstract:** A study conducted through a phenomenological approach to develop spatial value that was characterized from socio-behavioral pattern. Explorative, qualitative and inductive methods were used to analyse social interaction, ethnic characteristics, thought and beliefs and spatiality. This study characterized the theme and the existence of spatial value. The spatial value of Islamic Community area of the old city consisted of several values, comprised of religious, historical, social and economic values which formed a chain of interconnected values that subsequently formed a hierarchical pattern of spatiality. The absence of religious value or any of the links would change the entire concept of regional spatial value. In terms of social life and physical condition, the old city was very unique both life quality and interaction values.

**Key words:** Empirical phenomena · social pattern · theme · transferability

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### INTRODUCTION

The growth of population and economy in urban areas had caused various problems that deserved serious attention. Some of which were the use of land and space which did not comply with what people expected. The value of an urban area could not easily be found merely from its physical structure and land use. The expression that developed from built environment also contained various perceptions and meanings which could be felt in its spatiality and the cultural behaviour of the people. These should be discussed comprehensively in order to obtain a broad picture of urban spatial value [1]. However, the available theories on values in space and land utilization could not always be applied to every area since such theories mostly operated in meso and macro orders so they could not reach the micro order, let alone special areas. The approach used was mainly based on economic consideration, so it often ignored other important elements that affected human life in the society, such as culture and social behaviour. On the other hand, the method used was mostly deductive and qualitative [2]. Various points of view were used to evaluate and determine the use of land and space, but basically the use of land could not merely be seen from economic factor or evaluated from right and legal factors [3]. Land character should be considered and more importantly it should be evaluated in terms of cosmic-magic-religious basis [4].

Moreover, equilibrium and integration approach could be used and the development of city planning theory could not use a single paradigm only [5]. Due to changes in the pattern of the city, the regions had undergone some shifts [6]. There were regions that had disappeared or decreased in size and there were also some others that still remained and retained their specific characteristics. The regions that still retained their specific characteristics physically and socio-culturally were located in the so called old city [7].

The purpose of this study was to characterize empirical phenomena by which spatial value in the Islamic community area of old city was developed. The result obtained would complement and enrich the existing concepts, especially those that are related to land use in a given region. Spatial values of urban areas should be the main focus of research as theoretical or conceptual enrichment substantially which was related to existing space in urban areas.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method used in the study was explorative-quantitative-inductive under the umbrella of phenomenological paradigm [8], in order to unearth and record the phenomena developing in the selected locus. This was based on the rationale that the pieces of information disclosed were values which were

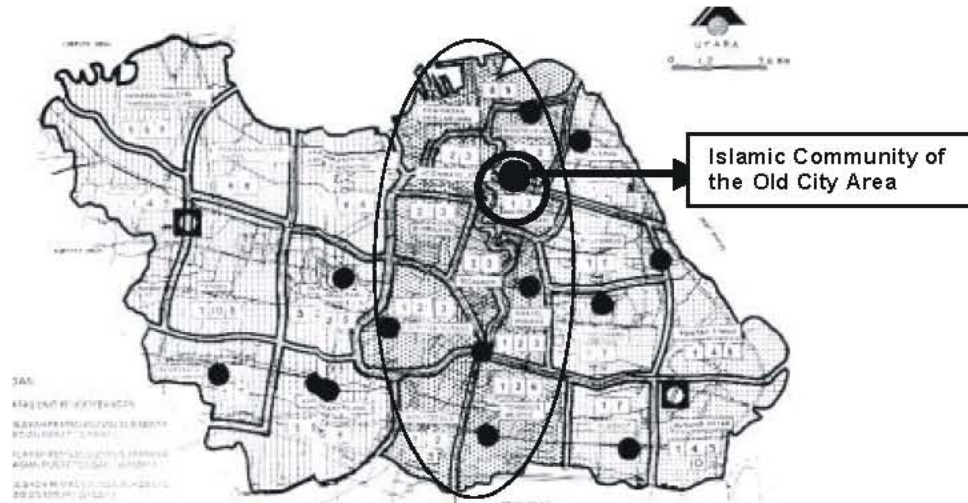


Fig. 1: Map of Surabaya City, Islamic Community of the Old City Area as a Locus of the Study

immeasurable in figures and the events recorded were phenomena developing in the society.

The observation unit was in the Islamic community area of the old city of Surabaya where individuals existed in communities of different ethnicities living in a unity of activities (Fig. 1). The selection of information units was based on the sources of information which derived from three elements, namely humans, activities and artefacts. The interconnection among the three elements formed several units of information which were used as the basis of analysis. A unit of information was a set of activities conducted by people or a society in a given place and space having the same characteristic.

The unit of analysis used in the study was theme that was developed from a combination of various units of information as the basis of analysis. A unit of analysis was formed from the integration of activities, thoughts and space existing in the society. The theme was developed from interrelationship among people that were made up of various ethnic groups, daily activities, pattern of life and thought; environment which was composed of the elements of place, space and other physical components as objects; and history which included cultural development, morphological changes and spatial pattern [9].

The analysis was carried out by inductive method since the context would, therefore, be easier to describe, while the interpretation was idiographic. By means of theme categorization and intertheme induction, interpretation was then conducted at every stage of induction in order to develop meaning from different aspects and factors. Meaning was assigned through human's integrative ability, senses, power of mind and

intelligence. The concept of space value was developed by taking into consideration a number of expressions implicitly and explicitly stated in the meaning assignment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Theme:** Empirical findings in the field showed that there were several themes that profoundly coloured the life of people. They were religious, social and economic life, social interaction among ethnic groups including the nature and character, the spatial characteristic of the region and spatial relation among ethnic groups as well as their daily life. The themes underly the development of several local patterns, namely the pattern of life, pattern of spatial social interaction among ethnic groups, pattern of ethnic nature and character, pattern of togetherness in the society, pattern of people's mind and belief and pattern of spatiality. Those patterns were based on two fundamental aspects, i.e. physical consisted of the existence of historical remains in the form of mosques, graves, residential areas; and non-physical such as the charisma of respected person, spiritual belief, tolerance and establishment and meaningfulness of life felt by the people. The spatial value of the old city, which was an intact system of values of the whole region, was developed on the basis of local concept derived from field themes.

There were five supporting factors for the development of existing systems of values [10-11]. They were the existence of a mosque which functioned effectively and a grave that functioned as a pilgrimage destination; the tranquil social situation of the region that had never experienced unrest; the variety of activities

which interrelated with and complemented each others; the religious daily life of the people at family and community scales; and the strategic location of the area both in terms of accessibility and the capacity to accommodate business activities.

The diversified systems of values in the life of the old city could be categorized into four values. Firstly, it was religious value that was based on the fact that the religious activities and life profoundly coloured the situation and activities of both the local people and visitors. Secondly, it was historical value that was the history of the arrival of respected person and mosque that were both highly respected and this was manifested in the people's willingness to keep, take care of and use the mosque. Thirdly, it was socio-cultural value, the cultural diversity colouring the social interaction among the people. Each ethnic group retained its culture but all groups were bound in togetherness, mutual help in everyday life and in keeping the reputation of the region. Fourthly, it was economic value, economic activities seen in everyday life at a small family scale in which people sold all kinds of goods around their homes and at a larger scale people ran shops, stalls, restaurants, kiosks and others.

**Spatial value:** The concept was a local concept that was developed from activities occurring in the old city which were grouped into areal units namely the area of mosque and grave, residential area and commercial area. The mosque area had an intense religious and historical atmosphere supported by intense religious activities, the grave area had a historical and socio-cultural atmosphere affecting people's life, that is as a place for reciting prayers and the residential area was characterized by intense socio-cultural and economic atmosphere in which the two elements combined harmoniously. The outer circle of value hierarchy was the commercial area which had an economic situation that was influenced by internal activities and external activities, the latter being activities resulting from interaction with other commercial areas nearby.

The essence of spatial value concept of a region was to uplift the value and quality of space which were built from the society and beneficial for their life, both in the short term and the long term [12]. Every region might have specific value and quality provided that it grew in the framework of historical time line; it existed in a society that had a commitment to togetherness and in the unity of common transcendental belief; it grew and developed well socio-culturally and economically; and it had space for

self expression and active participation in anticipating the dynamics of people's life appreciation. The spatial value concept was the main key to the development of a region since it resulted from close interrelationship between people's needs and pattern of life, both physically and non-physically in terms of spiritual belief.

This study provided two understandings, i.e. the area of historical legacy remaining in a physical condition and the activities of the people had beneficial values and quality, the concept of spatial value of old city enriched practical and theoretical knowledge although it derived from a specific case and the result of the study was a local concept. A historical region which had a system of values resulting from its specific physical situation and life of the people should be a region that was strong and resilient enough to stand changes. The spatial quality and value of the region could be uplifted and retained to be used for future development. Knowledge about the concept of regional spatial value could explain that there were concepts of space utilization and space value in the life of people in a given region.

The concept of space use might be viewed from various factors. They were relationship among ethnics, daily life, the spiritual belief professed and the history of the region's growth. The factors could be easily found in reality by exploring the empirical phenomena or physical, actual facts, namely social interaction in spatiality, characteristics of daily activities and life in spatiality. Non-physical facts were in the form of interrelationship and togetherness within cultural differences and ideas about spiritual belief.

**Transferability:** The process of spatial value construction in the old city had resulted in an approach that could be used in planning or managing the use of space and land and as a means of viewing and understanding the space and land in another region. Theoretically, the entire study signified the existence of substantive knowledge in planning. This included knowledge of regional spatial values hierarchy that was based on the relationship among people, belief and history physical and non-physical. Knowledge of diversity and interconnection among values in a given area were as an intact unity. In addition, it was knowledge of social interaction among people in diversity and under the spirit of adaptation. Also, it was knowledge of the principle of togetherness based on tolerance, knowledge of transcendental spiritual belief underpinning the life of the people, knowledge of activity and spatial relation based on spiritual belief. Finally, it was knowledge of the

benefits of the approach, method and technique of analysis under phenomenological paradigm. The concept of spatial value was a hierarchy of interrelated spatial values resembling the links of a chain. The concept enriched other urban planning concepts such as permanency [13], core and periphery [14] and continuity and change [15]. Each of the concept used a different process but the result had a similarity, that was the existence of growth core.

The practical knowledge that could be applied was effective use of space both individually and collectively, environmental management by self-supporting method, improvement of people's economy through self-supporting efforts and the principle of tolerance, adaptation and togetherness. The most fundamental enrichment of pragmatic knowledge in this study comprised of knowledge of the spirit and motivation for togetherness among the people and knowledge of self-supporting environment conservation, both physically and non-physically.

### **CONCLUSION**

The main finding of the study was the concept of space value of Islamic Community of the old city which was a hierarchy of space values made up of religious value, historical value, socio-cultural value and economic value. In essence, the values formed interconnected links constituting a synergic unity. People with life and activities were depended on religious and historical values whenever a region had a growth history. The old city still remained and possessed the potency to develop.

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