



Prosiding

Seminar Nasional

SCAN#6 : 2015

FINDING THE FIFTH ELEMENT

... After Water, Earth, Wind, and Fire



Program Pascasarjana UAJY



Proceeding

SCAN#6 : 2015

FINDING THE FIFTH ELEMENT

... After Water, Earth, Wind, and Fire

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Hak publikasi pada Penerbit Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta

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No.Buku: 576.FT.13.05.15
ISBN: 978-602-8817-64-6



PROSIDING SEMINAR NASIONAL SCAN#6

FINDING THE FIFTH ELEMENT ... After Water, Earth, Wind, and Fire

- § Pemikiran Filosofis tentang Kearifan Lokal dan Ilmu Pengetahuan
- § Konsep dan Strategi Pemanfaatan Kearifan Lokal
- § Penerapan Kearifan Lokal dan Ilmu Pengetahuan Modern

21 MEI 2015

PENYELENGGARA :

PROGRAM STUDI ARSITEKTUR
FAKULTAS TEKNIK
UNIVERSITAS ATMA JAYA YOGYAKARTA

BEKERJA SAMA DENGAN :

Program Pasca Sarjana Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta
Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia (IAI) Cabang DIY
Architecture and Planning Research Forum (APRF)
Forum Wahana Teknik (FWT)



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Prof. Ir. Yoyong Arfiadi, M. Eng, Ph.D
Dekan Fakultas Teknik UAJY

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RECONCEPTUALIZING KAUMAN’S URBAN STRUCTURE AS A SYMBOL OF PHILOSOPHY¹⁴

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ABSTRACT

Generally, all the Javanese ancient philosophy always emphasizes the harmonious relationship between man with his society, nature, God and even with his existence as a human being. This philosophical concept underlies almost all the Javanese spatial design at all scales of architecture. Being influenced by a complex cultural changes, Kauman settlement has emerged as a distinct entity in many major traditional cities of Java, including in Yogyakarta and Semarang. In this case, Kauman becomes a symbol, not only of the philosophy of Java, but also of Islam to which the local society orient their faith and rites. The research emphasizes the importance of conserving Kauman settlement as a constituent element defining the identity of Yogyakarta and Semarang City, especially in facing the recent challenge resulted from globalization phenomenon. The research has two goals which are to re-conceptualize each Kauman’s urban structure in regards with Javanese philosophy and Islamic ideology and to redefine the current characteristics of each Kauman settlement. The methodology implemented on this research is phenomenology by adopting an ethnographic approach that depends on the researcher’s interpretation upon Kauman’s urban structure based on philosophy and cultural perspective.

Keywords: Philosophy, Urban Structure, Symbol

1. INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is aimed to answer all human basic problems related to life, truth, wisdom and God. The term does not only include the concept of mind, but also self-motivation, heart and even faith (Ronald 1988). In Javanese term, philosophy is also called as *kejawen* which integrates mystical values with local wisdom in a more specific way. Regarding the philosophy of Java, it always emphasizes the harmonious relationship between man with his people, nature, God and even with his own being, which is reflected through daily routines, customs including the way he builds his living environment.

When Mataram Islam Sultanate reigned over Java around 16th century, Javanese traditional settlements became to emerge and gradually established their own identity as center of Islam. Besides Islamic influences, political ambition of the ruler has also evidently become the main factor determining the cultural development of those settlements. This could be observed from the case of Kauman settlement in Yogyakarta whose development was dominantly dictated by Sultan since 1755 A.D. Therefore, the Kauman’s urban characteristics in Yogyakarta City are relatively static, contrary to those in Semarang City which are more dynamic to respond to modern needs and values. The similar characteristics between the two settlements of Kauman are mainly defined by the existence of Islamic symbolic elements like Mosque, musholla and Islamic boarding schools.

Facing the influences of the ongoing globalization, the threats to the sustainability of one urban identity should be anticipated, whether it is in the realm of city planning or urban design. However, the possibility for new changes must still be allowed, as long as it could be responsibly managed with a proper manner and full of considerations. The research focuses on an attempt to analyze the

¹⁴ This paper is partly modified based on the research entitled “Mengungkap Konsep Filosofis dan Makna Simbolis Kampung Kauman Yogyakarta dan Semarang” funded by LPPM UAJY in 2013 and was accepted for oral presentation in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA.

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Kauman's urban structures along with their symbolic meanings both in Yogyakarta and Semarang with regards to the philosophy of Java and Islam, as well as the characteristics of the two settlements in the context of the current period of time.

2. KAUMAN: THE EVIDENCE OF SYNCRETISM

Based on Gujarat theory, the history of Islam in Indonesia begins since the arrival of the Gujarats in Indonesian coastal regions around 13th century (Surya Negara 1994). Islam assimilated with the local culture including that of Java, after having been influenced by Hindus and Buddhist culture. The influx of Islam into Java is urged by some factors which are the crisis occurred in Indochina that weakened the power of early Javanese Kingdoms, the motivation of *Sufi* in the Middle East for spreading the ideology of Islam to the East where mystical practices still flourished, the expectations of Javanese people towards Islam as a promising ideology that offers a liberation from colonialism, as well as a spiritual vision in which Islam is seen to capable of providing protection against foreign forces, especially that of the Portuguese (Zahnd 2008).

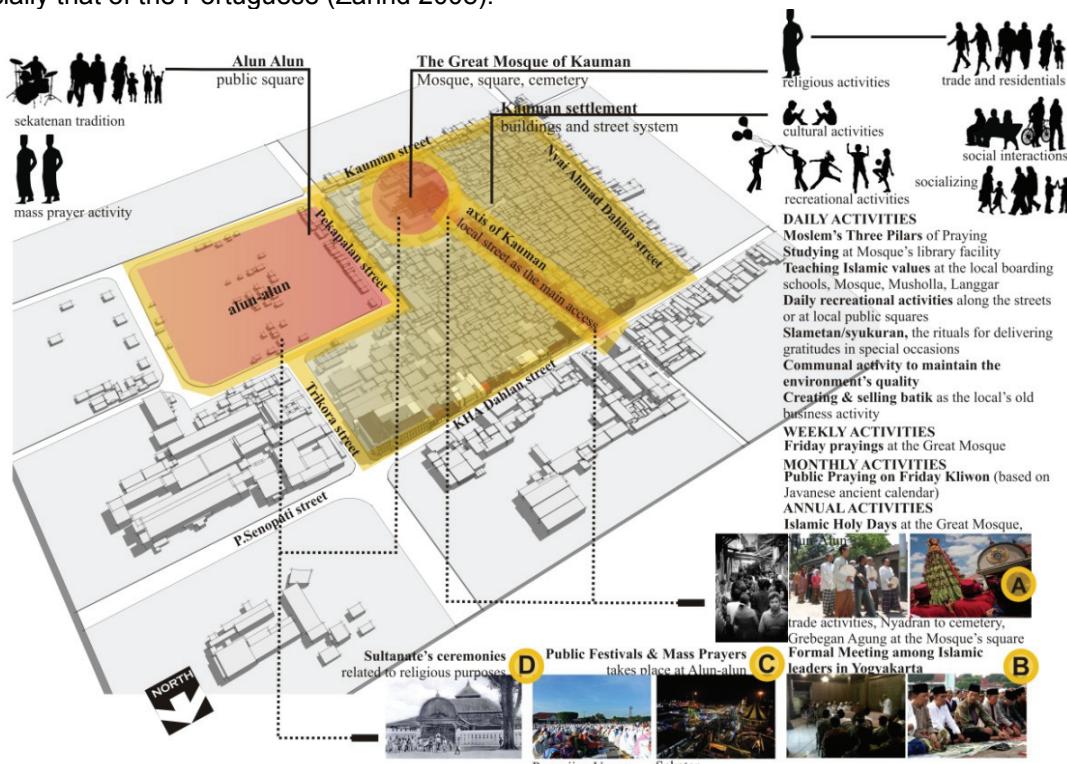


Figure 1. The variety of cultural activities in Kauman settlement, Yogyakarta City

The acculturation between Java and Islam are basically caused by two reasons. First, the ability of Islam to interpreting the cultural environment of Java in a new way without jeopardizing its cultural sustainability. Second, the ability of Javanese culture to integrate foreign values with its own identity from which the meaning of syncretism then derives. In other words, syncretism presents the flexibility of Javanese culture to adapt to various cultures which also gives a cultural strength to Java. In social relationship context, there are three categories of traditional community in Java. These kinds of communities include *kaum priyayi* which consists of local intellectuals who tend to maintain their ancestral traditions besides Islam, *kaum santri* which consists of people whose tendency is to establish the authenticity of Islamic values by rejecting practices based on mystical beliefs; and *kaum abangan* which consists of people who tend to lay their daily customs on ancestral beliefs (Zahnd 2008). The current specific conditions of Kauman's activities in case of the city of Yogyakarta could be seen from figure 1.

Regarding Kauman settlements, Bardan (1984) has once asserted that their establishments are based on Javanese spatial typology, as originated from Demak and Mataram Islam Sultanate (Wijanarka 2001). The location of Kauman settlements are relatively near the king's palace and the civic centers, and are characterized by Islamic urban elements like Mosque and other Islamic facilities. In terms of Kauman settlement in Yogyakarta, its establishment could not be separated from the history of the city which was established in 1755 AD after a long dispute between the royal members

of the Sultanate. Many Islamic prominent figures were born in Kauman settlement and among them is Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah organization whose radical thoughts have much shifted the public conception towards Islam. The Great Mosque was built within the settlement under Sultan Hamengku Buwana I's commands, and constructed with orientation to *alun-alun* area. It is where all monarchy's religious activities and cultural ceremonies are centralized. Differ from Kauman settlement in Semarang, Kauman in Yogyakarta has a tight bureaucracy relationship with the Sultanate in which obligations related to religy are delegated from the Sultan to the locals.

Kaumans settlement in Semarang city has a unique historical background with great turmoil affected by political and natural events. According to Wijanarka (2001), Kauman settlement in Semarang was established in 16th century by an Islamic figure called as Ki Ageng Pandan Arang, with a mosque as its primary development generator. The mosque itself was once built at the western side of Semarang River during the reign era of Demak Sultanate. After the death of Ki Ageng Pandang Arang, the spreading of Islam was then proceeded by his descendant to whom the regent status was then bestowed by Sultan. During his governance, the Moslems' formal settlements were built around the Mosque and formed a district of Kanjengan, the civic center of the regent (Wijanarka 2001). In 1965, new settlements expanded, as well as those of Chinese newcomers at the eastern side of the Mosque. At the same period of time, the Dutch colony also built a millitary fortress. When a conflict occured between the Chinese settlers with the Dutch in 1740, the Mosque was fully destroyed and then re-built 13 years later by Suro Adimenggolo III. To avoid the effects from any possible conflicts, the site of the Mosque was then moved to the Sultan's private ground at the western side of the river which then bestowed once again by Sultan to the locals. In 1885, the Mosque was struck by lightning and reconstructed, but with orientation towards the *Qiblah*. A problem rose among Kauman people in regards with the construction budget required for the Mosque's re-establishment. For the solution, the Kauman people funded its construction by selling their properties to the Chinese settlers who then rented them to outsiders. This social phenomenon encourages some radical changes in the characteristics and physical appearance of Semarang's Kauman settlement.

In 1939, the establishment of the first major traditional market in Semarang called Pasar Johar, was finally completed (Dwiyanto 2009). The existence of this market as the main commercial center in Semarang, has accelerated the transformations of the Kauman settlement. Having been depressed by the effects of Pasar Johar, the Kauman people migrated to the existing vacant lands along the streets by establishing new residences. But the massive influences of modernization surely could not be avoided. They profoundly affect not only the local's way of thinking, but also of customs in which they prefered to change their residence into space for commercial and business. The identity of Kauman in this city is gradually decreased and indicated to lead to other monotonous evidence of what is dictated by economic factor as the ubiquitous driver of change.

The figure 2 indicates how the current hybrid activities of Kauman people in the city of Semarang, spiritually and commercially, influence the local's living. Despite this fact, Islam still becomes the dominant factor detecting the local's way of living, especially when the major religious observances of Islam occur.

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Figure 2. The various cultural activities of Kauman settlement in the city of Semarang

3. (RE)-CONCEPTUALIZING THE PHILOSOPHY OF JAVA

Understanding the meaning of philosophy could not be separated from human nature which continually seeking for the rightest answers for all basic questions about life or self-existence. For this reason, particular manners must be available to engage in self-reflection in which economic and cultural factors play important roles to influence the seeking process. Based on the history of philosophy, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) attempted to define the term based on his curiosity about human ability to think. The word philosophy comes from two Greek words *philos* which means “loving” and *Sophia* which means “wisdom.” As the time changes, the meaning of philosophy also changes and leaves the modern philosophers with an intricate puzzle to define the term adequately. Although there is no standardized explanation for this term, there is still a definition widely accepted. According to Hammon (2000), philosophy is the activity of rationality which attempts to understand and to answer the human basic questions. There are three main branches of philosophy which are metaphysics which deals with appearance and reality, epistemology which deals with knowledge and opinion, and axiology which deals with fact and value. In the case of Kauman’s urban structure, philosophy is a crystalized values influencing the local’s mind conceptions which is expressed not only through particular behaviour or manner, but also through its material culture, namely architecture and urban spatial design.

Based on some ancient inscriptions, the spatial concept and political system in Java had long been existed during the cultural reign of Hindus and Buddhist Kingdom. The myth of *jagad gedhe* which emphasizes the correlation between God’s and man’s universe, flourished in this time-period. Nature presents the Holy Spirit who is believed to have brought life to all men and for the return, men are obliged to deliver gratitudes by providing some tributes to the spirit (Setiadi 2010). This belief is expressed through the rite of *sesajen* which is still practiced until the recent days.

Javanese people also believed in the concept of *manunggaling kawula lan Gusti* which explains the union between man with God, nature and his self-being, and influences the man’s manner of establishing a living environment. As could be seen from table 1, the concept could be divided into four types which include man’s relationship with God which is manifested through the existence of a sacred space, the relationship with nature through an open space, the relationship with other men through a communal space and the relationship with his self-being through the existence of private space.

Table 1. The Implementation of Javanese Philosophy towards Human Relations Concept

Javanese Philosophy towards Human Relationship Concept	Concepts Actualization	Types of Activities	Types of Space Function
Man-God	Spiritual	Rituals/Religious ceremonies	Sacred space
Man-Nature	<i>Merti kampung</i> ¹⁶	Production	Open space
Man-Community	Social interaction	Social and cultural activities	Public space/ Communal space
Man-Personality	Private life and family interaction	Daily living	Private space

Besides the concept of human relations, Javanese people also believe that each conduct would result in certain effects and that all men have responsibilities to bear all the consequences of each conduct in the presence of God. The symbols existed in Javanese built environment are not only aimed for aesthetical reasons, but deeper than that, it reflects the state of self consciousness towards life obligations based on the causes-consequences understanding. During his lifetime, man is obliged to have a good manner that covering the aspect of culture, tradition, social interaction, harmony and reconciliation, communal discussion and duties. Tradition is an aspect that includes family or village customs which is reflected through normative expressions, ceremonies, and solidarity. Social interaction includes social norms, reconciliation as the principle in social living, and communal discussion that is performed to obtain a verdict for solving certain issues. Divine revelation is a wisdom manifestation which relates to certain call of duties and demands a good moral-based conduct (Ronald 1988).

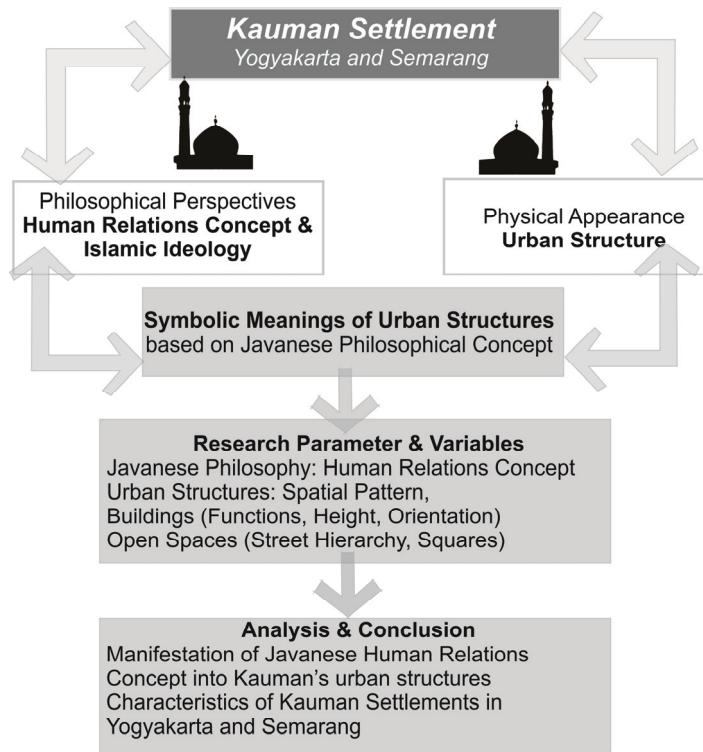
In spatial context, Javanese society does not see a region primarily from its physical appearance, but from a cosmological point of view which requires an understanding beyond an ordinary comprehension (Wiryomartono 1995). The world of macro-cosmic represents heaven, and therefore, the Sultanate's palace is seen as the idealistic replication of the macro-cosmic world or the kingdom of heaven. This belief is manifested through the spatial ordering system of Java by hierarchically placing the Sultanate's palace as the center of the region, and creating a concentric type of the spatial pattern (Setyowati 2007). The meaning of this symbolic spatial arrangement is usually associated to ancient Hindus concept called *mancapat* which emphasizes a transendental relationship between the world of heaven (macro-cosmic) and the world of man (micro-cosmic). Literally, *mancapat* concept means a division into five parts based on the rule system of four earth's cardinal points with one central point (Karsono 1996). The Javanese people believe that the manner of ordering spaces based on *mancapat* would help them to sustain their lives, including those of the other kinds of God's creations (Setyowati 2007).

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used on this research is phenomenology that employs ethnographic approach to analyze each urban structure of Kauman based on philosophical point of view. The characteristics of ethnographic research are defined by its holistic exploration of setting by using a context-rich detail, its reliance on an unstructured data, its focus on a single case or small number of cases and its data analysis that emphasizes the meanings and the functions on human action (Groth and Wang 2002).

The research is systematically divided into four phases which are the preparation phase, the data collection phase, the analysis phase that includes the attempt of interpreting each Kauman's urban structure, and finally the conclusion phase which summarizes the research findings by explaining the correlation between each Kauman's urban structure with the philosophy of Java and the ideology of Islam.

¹⁶ Merti kampung is an ancestral tradition which is aimed to express gratitudes by delivering a tribute to God (Saifuddin 2009).



Scheme 1. Research Framework

5. ANALYSIS

The Spatial Relationship

The urban structure of Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement is influenced by an imaginary axis linking the Great Mosque, *alun-alun* and the Sultanate's palace. From cosmological point of view, *alun-alun* is the meeting point where the imaginary axes from the Mosque and that of the palace are conjuncted.

Based on the Javanese concept towards human relations, the urban structure of Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement could be explained as follows: (1) The concentric pattern that hierarchically emphasizes the Great Mosque as urban center, expresses the dominancy of Islam. Mosque has a sacred function that accommodates the local's religious activities and also symbolizes the local's life orientation towards Islam; (2) The linear pattern that hierarchically shows the Great Mosque as the urban focal point, expresses the profound influences of the Islamic values; (3) The incremental pattern formed by the sporadic distribution of religious facilities throughout Kauman settlement, expresses how Islam influences almost all aspects of the local's daily routines.

In comparison with Kauman settlement in Yogyakarta City, the urban structure of the settlement in Semarang City shows less dominancy of Islam in dictating its urban development, especially in the current period of time. The Great Mosque of Kauman, the area of *Kanjengan* which is known as the former civic center of the region, and *alun-alun*, are linked by one imaginary axis. This spatial arrangement was initiated by Kyai Ageng Pandan Arang II who once ruled over the Kauman district. The manifestation of Javanese concept towards human relations in the case of Kauman's urban structure in Semarang could be described as follows: (1) Similar to that of Kauman's urban structure in Yogyakarta, the concentric pattern of Kauman's urban structure in Semarang hierarchically emphasizes the Great Mosque as the urban center. This pattern expresses the dominancy of Islamic values within the Kauman society; (2) The linear pattern that hierarchically shows the position of the Great Mosque of Kauman as the urban focal point, expresses the dominancy of Islam as the local's life orientation; (3) The incremental pattern of Kauman settlement is formed by sporadic distribution of buildings that mainly aimed for commerce and business. The impacts resulted from this kind of development tendency, have radically changed the local's life orientation and behavior. The intensive development around Pasar Johar is accused to have been worsening the urban issues must be faced by Kauman today, especially in regards with culture and place identity.

Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement is widely known as the center of Islamic teachings, including as the settlement of Islam's followers. Besides that, it holds a specific status of *abdi dalem pamethakan*

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whose obligations strongly relates to Yogyakarta monarchy. The bureaucracy relationship between Kauman with the monarchy is expressed through Kauman's urban elements which show the legitimate power of the Sultan. Differ from Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement, the influences coming from economic activities especially those around Pasar Johar, have lead the later development of Semarang's Kauman settlement to an intricate urban issues. Despite these contrary facts, the symbolic meanings of the two Kauman settlements in terms of Javanese concept towards human relations, could be described as follows: (1) The Great Mosque reflects the concept of man's relationship with God including with Sultan, who initiates the establishment of the Mosque. In this case, the Great Mosque of each Kauman settlement also symbolizes the supreme power of Sultan in dictating the religious activities of all Kauman societies; (2) The other types of Islamic facilities besides the Great Mosque, such as musholla and langgar, manifests the concept of man's relationship with God and the local's faith towards Islam; (3) The social facilities distributed throughout each Kauman settlement manifests the man's relationship with other human beings, in which social interactions and cultural events take place; (4) The commercial facilities dominated the land utilization of Kauman especially in the case of Semarang, reflects the man's relationship with other people. The massive commercial activities around Pasar Johar, has threatened the monumentality of the Great Mosque including the historical values of *Kanjengan* as the former region's governmental center. The residential function still dominates the land usage of Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement, and shows the local's tendency to sustain the concept of man's relationship with his self-being who still needs some privacy at certain level; (5) The existence of open spaces in Kauman settlements, both in Yogyakarta and Semarang, expresses the realization of Javanese concept towards human relations in terms of man's relationship with nature including with other people.

The different characteristics between Kauman settlement in Yogyakarta with that in Semarang City, are caused by some facts, which are: (1) The absence of monarchy in Semarang and its existence in the case of Yogyakarta, attributes to create some different characteristics between the two Islamic settlements. Sultan Hamengku Buwana I has bounded Kauman people of Yogyakarta with specific obligations since the beginning of his reign power; (2) Holding a status of Sultanate's royal servants which is locally termed as *abdi dalem pamethakan*, the people of Kauman in Yogyakarta are obliged to manage all the religious activities of the monarchy including to maintain the sustainability of the Great Mosque; (3) The uncontrolled activities around Pasar Johar could potentially threaten the sustainability of the Kauman's identity as a historical Islamic settlement in Semarang. The absence of a bureaucracy relationship between Kauman society with a traditional ruler in the case of Semarang City, is assumed to have been one of the factors that causes the lack of supervision towards its development and conservation to occur.

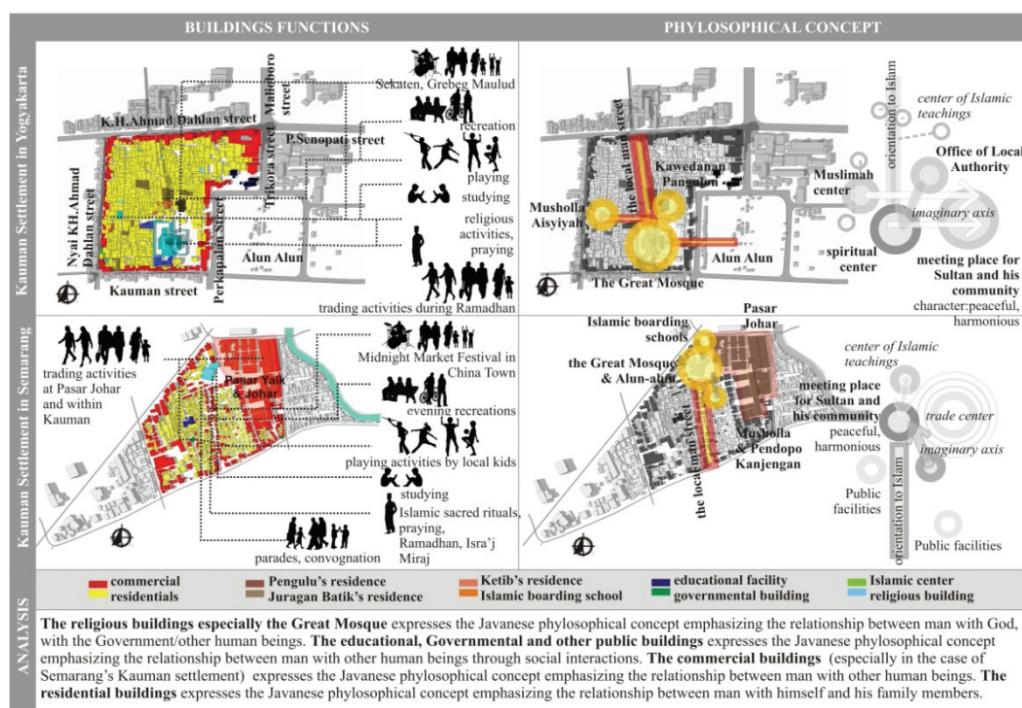


Figure 4. The comparison between the characteristics of the two Kauman's urban structures in terms of building's functions based on Javanese philosophical concept

Buildings Orientation

The buildings orientation could also symbolize certain values of philosophy. Related to Javanese concept towards human relations and its implementation to buildings orientation, the Kauman's urban structures both in Yogyakarta and Semarang City, could be explained as follows: (1) In the case of Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement, the orientation of the Great Mosque towards *alun-alun* through one imaginary axis, expresses the absolute power of Sultan Hamengku Buwana I. The Sultan had a supreme control to dictate how the Mosque must be designed and constructed, including in regards with the Mosque's orientation which was directed not towards *Qibla*, but towards *alun-alun*. This arrangement was adopted from the common typology of Javanese spatial design. The manner of orienting the Mosque towards *alun-alun* reflects the idea of man's relationship with God, other people and nature; (2) In the case of Kauman settlement in Semarang City, the Great Mosque was oriented towards *Qibla*. According to Wijanarka (2001), the Great Mosque had previously been oriented towards *alun-alun*, similar to the case of Kauman settlement in Yogyakarta (Wijanarka 2001). After being destroyed by some horrific events, the Mosque was re-established, but with radical changes in which its orientation was finally managed towards *Qibla*. This fact reflects the shifting in the local's life orientation from local to spiritual bases in which the pure Islamic values are entirely accommodated. In regards with the Javanese concept towards human relations, this fact symbolizes the local's faith towards Islam and conception of man's relationship with his God; (3) The buildings orientation of *Kawedanan Pangulon*¹⁷ towards the Great Mosque represents the bureaucracy correlation between the resident with the monarchy. The resident of the *Kawedanan Pangulon* is called as *pengulu* by the locals and holds the status of the highest-rank officer who specifically manage the monarchy's religious activities and guarantee the sustainability of the Great Mosque. As the reward, Sultan bestowed a status of *abdi dalem pamethakan* to the people of Kauman (Zahnd 2008). Regarding the Javanese concept towards human relations, this fact symbolizes the man's relationship with God and other people; (4) In case of Semarang City, the political influences to the Kauman's spatial design is symbolized through the orientation of *Pendopo Kajengen* towards the local's traditional open space called as *alun-alun*. The *alun-alun* is a public square where communal activities and monarchy's major ceremonies usually take place and therefore, the act of orienting buildings towards this square reflects the local's tendency to emphasize the concept of man's relationship with other people including with nature. The further realization of the Javanese philosophy towards human relations concept into buildings orientation, could be seen from figure 3.

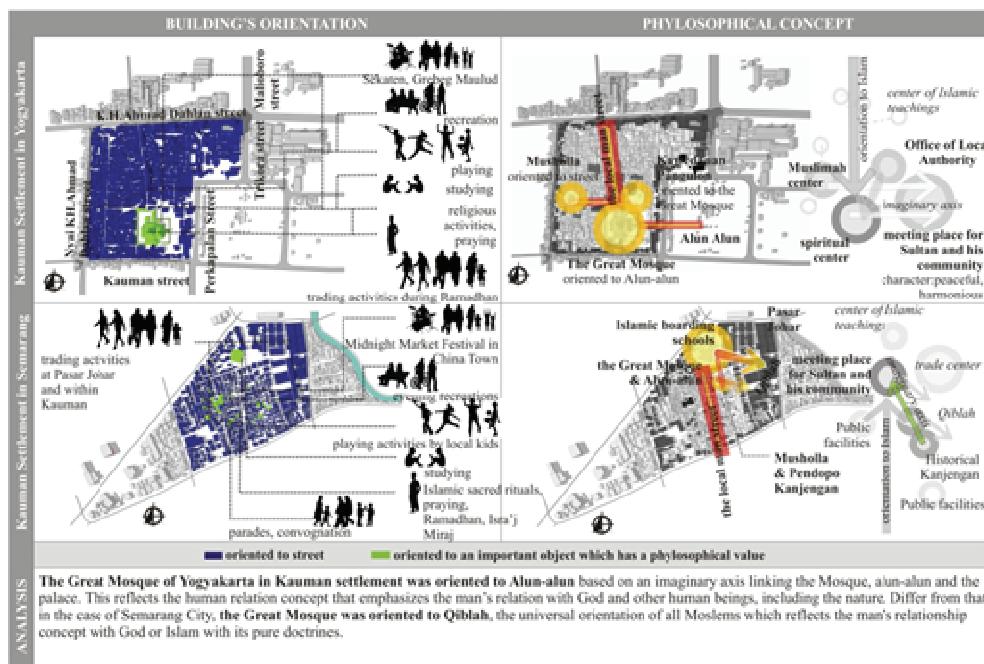


Figure 5. The comparison between the characteristics of Kauman's urban structures in terms of building's orientation based on Javanese philosophical concept

¹⁷ *Kawedanan Pangulon* consists of a residential where *pengulu* along with his family resides, and an office building where administrative activities occur.

Street Hierarchy

The street hierarchy could also symbolize certain values of ideology or philosophical teachings, especially in terms of historical urban areas.

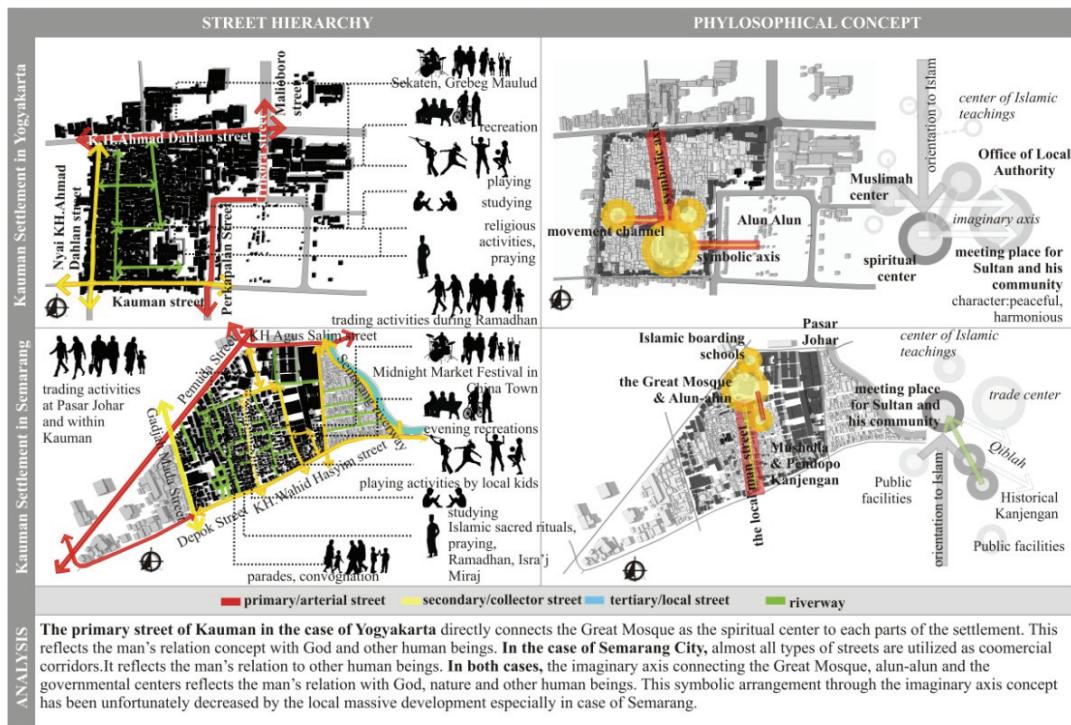


Figure 4. The comparison between the characteristics of Kauman's urban structures in terms of street hierarchy based on Javanese philosophical concept

The realization of Javanese concept towards human relations and its manifestation into street hierarchy could be analyzed as follows: (1) The main axis of the Yogyakarta's Kauman settlement linking K.H.Ahmad Dahlan street with the urban core of Kauman, represents its function as a corridor that accommodates the public movement. The main axis is oriented towards the Great Mosque, and therefore it emphasizes the role of the Mosque as the most significant element that defines the identity of Kauman. During Ramadhan, the local people utilizes the corridor as a space for commercial activities by selling various meals and drinks. Based on these facts, the man's relationship with God is represented through the main axis that links the Kauman settlement directly with the Great Mosque, while the relationship with nature and other people is shown through the existence of the corridor. The latter conception is based on the function of the street as the main access for public movement and its role as a communal space where various social interactions usually take place; (2) In case of Kauman settlement in Semarang, the local's main street is utilized as a space for accomodating the local movement, including commercial activities. The street is directly oriented towards the Great Mosque and this arrangement increases the monumentality of the Mosque. The Mosque is emphasized as the most important element defining the identity of Kauman and as the symbol of Islam towards which the locals would orient their faith or belief. The man's relationship with God, other people and nature are expressed through the existence of an axis linking the Great Mosque with Kauman settlement; (3) Cosmologically, there is an imaginary axis that links the governmental buildings, the Great Mosque and *alun-alun*. According to Javanese philosophy, *alun-alun* symbolizes nature which has a peaceful stream and is utilized as a meeting place that unites the King with his people. The imaginary axis linking these three Javanese symbolic elements shows the strong belief of Javanese people towards the philosophy of man's relationship with God, other people and nature. The ritual occasions of Islam usually take place within the areas of this imaginary axis, such as the ceremony of *Grebeg Maulud Nabi* or *Grebeg Agung*.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the research interpretations toward the two Kauman's urban structures, there are some factors that determine the characteristics of each settlement both in Yogyakarta and Semarang, which

are: (1) The ideology of Islam adhered by the Kauman society in Yogyakarta, is not only based on the pure Islamic values teachings, but also on the ancestral traditions. These ancestral traditions are influenced by Hindus culture and ancient Javanese philosophy, and are still preserved by the Yogyakarta monarchy. The relationship between the monarchy with the Kauman society was strengthened after Sultan delegated specific duties to the locals; (2) The ideology of Islam which is adhered by the Kauman community in Semarang is purely based on the pure Islamic doctrines taught by the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad S.A.W. Differ from the factors determining the characteristics of Kauman settlement in Yogyakarta, those in Semarang are mainly dictated by economic motivations which give a dynamic characteristics to the settlement and dictate the next development of the Kauman settlement of Semarang.

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