

Memorable Square: Identities, Meanings and the Production of Urban Space in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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1 ABSTRACT

Traditional space in Yogyakarta Indonesia is called alun-alun. It takes form as a square, which is located in front of the palace and is surrounded by essential buildings. Taking all into account, alun-alun is located in the area, which represents the power and civilization symbol. The initial function of alun-alun was not intended to serve royal purposes and show the grandeur of sultanate. Through history, alun-alun has been changing its role and becoming merely to be public space. It has experienced various tensions over its reproduction and control ranging from the issue of privatization, commercialization, and misuse to the tension between modernization and conservation. The mushroomed of street vendor and the absence of institution and management together with the lack of planning regulation have been declining the importance of alun-alun. Waiting for the ideal form of future alun-alun through debates among stakeholders has been creating negative impact and left this place abandoned.

2 ALUN-ALUN IN THE EARLY FORMATION OF KASULTANAN YOGYAKARTA (1755-1880)

2.1 Introduction

The establishment of Yogyakarta city was initially begun with the construction of the king's palace (kraton), while its architecture reflects the Javanese view of the cosmos. Within this overview Yogyakarta and its kraton is considered to be the imago mundi, the replica of the universe, where maintaining the balance between macrocosm and microcosm was fundamental. At the core of Javanese philosophy is the concept of dualism that shows the balance through dialectical interaction of opposites, such as interconnection of mountain and sea, solid and void and north and south. Two other important Javanese philosophical concepts are symmetry and hierarchy. Symmetry relates to the design and layout of buildings, while hierarchy could be seen in the arrangement of each building components and its relationship to other parts. These concepts of dualism, symmetry and hierarchy are strongly reflected in the layout of kraton and its two open spaces.

Spatially, kraton is a residence complex of the reigning king of Yogyakarta Sultanate. Taking a form of Javanese house, kraton contains series enclosures which each encircled by wall and a main gate. Each enclosure consists of courtyard with several open and closed pavilions. A pavilion without wall surrounding it is called bangsal or tratag, while the closed one is called gedhong. According to this Javanese house pattern, a large open space adjacent to bangsal could be considered as the courtyard of kraton complex. It has two open spaces on the northern and southern parts following the north-south axis, which are called alun-alun. The words alun-alun at least is interpreted in two ways. It comes from word 'alun' or the wave since it is an open space which is covered by sand like an ocean. Other believes it comes from words 'alun-alun', which means 'walk slowly' due to old Javanese custom. In the past, people who would be facing the king in the *sitihinggil* has to prepared themselves, started from alun-alun they had to walk slowly and set the pace in connection with royal procedures.

2.2 Alun-Alun Under Sultanate Power

The concept of hierarchy has put northern parts of kraton as the front and considered more important, while southern parts were considered *pengkeran* or the backside. Northern alun-alun covers an area of 310x 280 m² which is bigger than southern alun-alun which only covers an area of 160x160m². It took form as an open square located in front of bangsal pagelaran. The illustration of early kraton and northern alun-alun could be interpreted from a sketch by A. de Nelly in 1771 (Figure 1). Southern alun-alun was encircled by tapered wood fences called *pinacak suji* and guarded by Javanese royal soldiers armed with *keris*, a Javanese dagger, and spear. Those indicated the importance of this space.

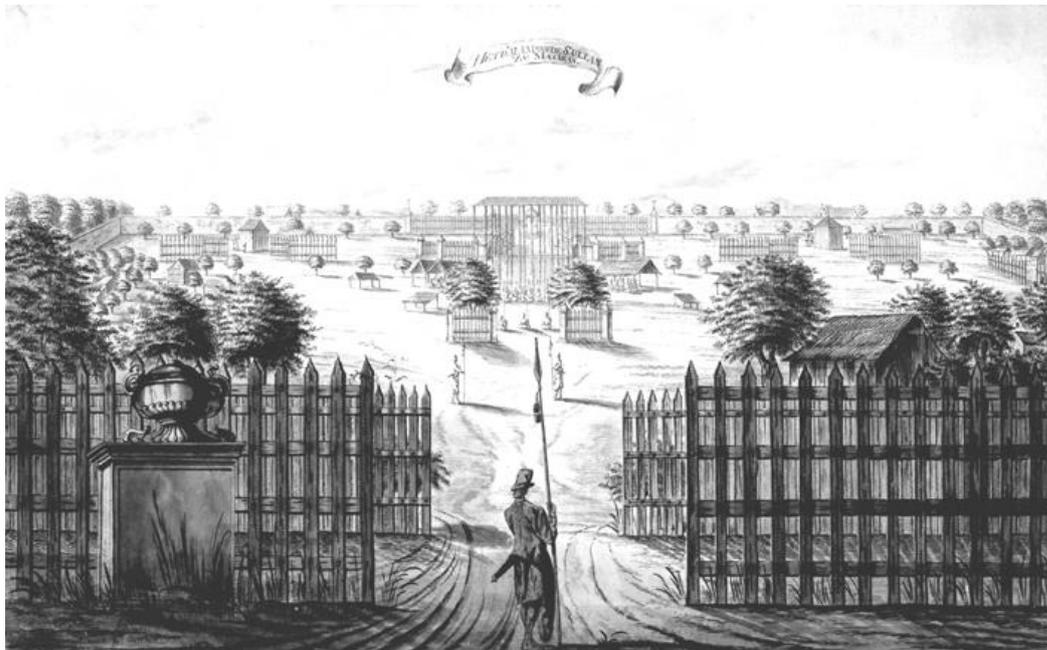


Figure 1. View of the Yogyakarta kraton from the northern square (alun-alun) sketched by A. de Nelly, one of Johannes Rach's pupils, in circa 1771. Source: Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam as cited in Peter Carey 2008.

The surface of northern alun-alun was covered only by fine sand represented the shoreless ocean which in turn is a universal image for the infinity of God. The center of square was completely released which make two banyan trees dominated the view. A pair of banyan trees called Kyai Dewandaru and Kyai Janandaru represents the idea of macrocosm and microcosm. Kyai Dewandaru represents the union of sultan and God, where dewa literally means god and daru or andaru symbolizes wahyu (divine radiance). Kyai Janandaru represents the unity of sultan and his subjects, where jana literally means human to characterize humanity in general and the population of sultanate in particular. Together they represent the two aspect of the Javanese doctrine of 'manunggaling kawulo lan gusti' (the unity of servant and lord). While the two banyan trees at center of alun-alun are primarily a symbol of mystical knowledge and the infinity of God, sixty-two banyan trees represented the age of Prophet Mohammad when he died also surrounded it. The boundless ocean and mystical union represented by twin-fenced trees at the center realizes the essential unity of creator and the created.



Figure 2. Banyan trees in northern alun-alun in year circa 1990. Source: Courtesy of KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

Northern alun-alun was encircled with some important buildings in term of its size and function. The main building around northern alun-alun is pagelaran kraton (palace hall) which functioned as the main audience hall of the kraton and a transition space before entering a space for the throne of sultan. Along the western edge there is a complex which belongs to masjid agung (great mosque). Great mosque is separate component

of kraton compound but play strong role to legitimate king position where sultan as the representation of God is the head of religion. The square was surrounded by tall banyan trees and several pavilions called *pekapalan* which come from word *kapal* means horse or a place to tighten horse while the rider take a rest. *Pekapalan* was a rest place for *bupati* (regent) from Kasultanan Yogyakarta territory, when they had to face the king. Other buildings on the edge of northern alun-alun were tiger cage and *pamonggangan*, a place to store gamelan. King used to conserve wild animals like tiger and elephant, which symbolize his strong sovereignty (Lombard 2008).

Despite the strong presence of dominant power, historically alun-alun was central to both the physical and cultural lives of its people. Alun-alun was the only space of the palace that was publicly accessible. While it did not function as a democratic space, it nonetheless had a more civic nature than its surroundings, although this was rather symbolic. This space functioned as an arena for public activities sponsored by the ruler and the religious ceremonies to celebrate the ruling power of the king. Among various royal ceremonies, there were *garebeg* and *sekaten*.

The *garebeg* was a ritual of veneration, which includes praying, offering, and distribution of gifts and alms. It is held three times a year according to three major Islamic festivals that are *Mulud*, *Poso* and *Besar*. *Garebeg Mulud* commemorates the birthday of Prophet Mohammad, while other *garebegs* celebrate the end of the fasting months (*Garebeg Pasa*, *Bakda* or *Shawal*) and great *Eid* (*Garebeg Besar*). The ritual of *garebeg* consisted of a procession of royal troops, nobles and *abdi dalems* (retainers) bearing *pusaka* (heirlooms) and *gunungan* (a rice-mound) moved out of the inner complex of kraton towards the great mosque. Food offering are given to the mosque officials and other *abdi dalem*, and each of sultan subject should receive a portion of *gunungan*. The *garebeg* was importantly the occasion upon which taxes owed to the royal center were collected from all territories. It was on *Garebeg Mulud* that kraton claimed its share of harvest and collected taxes from the people. Hence, *Garebeg Mulud* could be considered as a symbolic form of sacrifice in which the farmers in hierarchical agrarian society would pay tributes to their ruler in exchange for divine blessing producing fertility in their crops. *Garebeg* was also a chance for people to see their king. Sultan appeared out of the place accompanied by high-rank royal families and officers sat on his throne while his subjects converged in northern alun-alun to worship their king. The coming of people in northern alun-alun implied loyalty and devotion of the people to their king, which in turn was also meant as recognition of king' power and authority over them. The combination of mystical union and the *garebeg* are thought to establish the prosperity, social and spiritual tranquility of the state and to define ideal social relationship in term of union of servant and lord.

Sekaten was the series of *Garebeg Mulud* held a week precede it. The fundamental parts of *Sekaten* was the appearance of two set of gamelan, *Kyai Nogowilogo* and *Kyai Gunturmadu* in the great mosque which are played simultaneously three times a day within a week. Besides the gamelan performance, *sekaten* is an annual event to provide public entertainment and a night fair runs enliven it for a month. *Sekaten* fair was not only to attract people from village, but also to provide entertainment to those who came to pay their taxes.

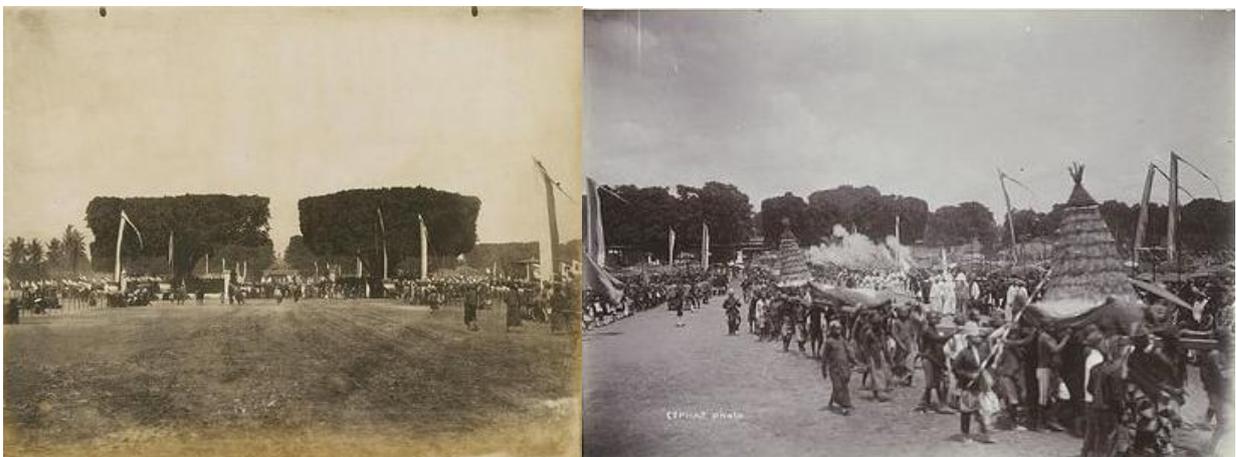


Figure 3. *Garebeg* procession in northern alun-alun Yogyakarta in the early 1990s Source: Courtesy of KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

In the eighteen and early nineteenth century, the participation of the troops in the procession was a clear symbol of the sultan's military power. The sultan troops were at the time more than a symbol. They provided security and posed a clear threat to real and potential rebels and to the Dutch. The celebration was marked by the obligatory attendances at court of all the provincial nobility and all the kingdom officialdom. Participation in the ritual was an act of political submission and those who refused to attend could be executed for treason (Woodward 2011). Garebeg in the eighteen century was also arenas for elite political competition precisely because all of the contending factions were required to appear at court. Indeed, it was at this celebration that the unity of the kingdom was determined and reaffirmed precisely by the differential attendance of the provincial elite alongside the elite of capital.

3 ALUN-ALUN IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL STATE (1880-1940)

The role of both alun-alun was closely related to the role of kraton as the center of political, military and ritual activities of Yogyakarta Sultanate. The balance between these organizational principles has shifted along with the political fortunes of the Sultan. There were massive changes happened in Kasultanan Yogyakarta in the early 20th century. VOC (Dutch East India Company) went bankruptcy in year 1799 and Royal Dutch Government took the control over its colonies. The arrival of Daendels, the Dutch governor general in 1808 marked the start of new and more aggressive policy toward the court. It placed the court in clearly subordinate position to European government. Since then the inharmonious relationship between sultan and Dutch came into surface. The renovation of most buildings in kraton complex shows the attempt of sultan to restore his cultural dignity in the midst of his decreasing political roles. Bangsal Pagelaran became the façade of kraton and marked the changing orientation of kraton to be more open. It followed with the construction of Sono Budoyo Museum and Soboharsono Theater surrounding northern alun-alun. The sacredness of kraton as well as alun-alun is gradually decreasing and becoming more public.

The changing political role of sultan in early 19th was also evidenced in the activities, rituals and processions taken place in alun-alun. In earlier time, the role of southern and northern alun-alun was related to the role of kraton as the center of political and military activities of Yogyakarta Sultanate. By the early nineteenth century, many of the functions of royal bodyguard regiments were of a ceremonial nature, although they still take to the field. The demise of the political authority and military power of the sultanate in the nineteenth century led its military, political functions to be redefined as ritual.

As Dutch colonial power grew, Kasultanan Yogyakarta became more and more of a theater state in which ritual replaced military and economic power as the foundation of royal prestige and authority. These political changes also impacted on the role of alun-alun as the space for conducting and representing the grandeur of kraton Yogyakarta. This is evidenced in the activities, ritual and procession taking place in alun-alun which was still a place for holding kraton rituals such as garebeg and sekaten although their message was fundamentally changed. The Garebeg as the grand gathering is no longer a state rite that unites the entire regions through a ceremony of gratitude for a bountiful harvest and the spreading of blessing from their king. The ritual and procession had been simplified and military parade was just the part of ritual. It is rather a cultural ceremony that its symbolic role is limited to the religious realm and the preservation of tradition, although it is argued that during the colonial period state ceremonies were used as a mode of symbolic resistance of colonial hegemony. Royal ceremony and ritual could not be used to show his authority, when royal military troops was eliminated to be just a ritual during garebeg. This aspect of ritual is subject to almost constant change. The number of gunungan decreased which could be interpreted as the sign of decreasing wealth and territory, although the obligatory attendance at the court of all the provincial nobility was maintained until 1939s. Kasultanan Yogyakarta lost most of his outer territories while inner territory was shared with other court, Pakualaman in year 1813.

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4 ALUN-ALUN IN THE EARLY INDONESIAN INDEPENDENT ERA (1940-1990)

Kasultanan Yogyakarta underwent significant changes during this period. Internal transformation had started after Hamengkubuwono IX ascended the throne in year 1940. Dutch authority on Yogyakarta was taken over by Japan in year 1942-1945. Although Japan did not explicitly take over the political agreement between sultan and Dutch government, the system of indirect rule over Yogyakarta was maintained. Kasultanan Yogyakarta had independent authority to regulate and manage its territory under the supervision of the colonial government. Dutch colonial government called these territory as *zelfbestuurende lanschappen* while Japan colonial government as *kooti*. Soon after the defeat of Japan, Indonesia declared its independence on 17 August 1945 and Kasultanan Yogyakarta joined to Republic of Indonesia on 5 September 1945.

During the early years of its independence, the position of this new republic was not yet fully stable, coupled with the intention of Dutch to recapture its former territories through military aggressions. Kasultanan Yogyakarta as a more well established court took important role in defending the sovereignty of Republic of Indonesia. In this revolution period, the center of Indonesian government who was formerly in Jakarta was relocated to Yogyakarta under warranty from Hamengkubuwono IX. Kraton Yogyakarta became the center of Indonesian revolution. In the early period of Indonesian independence, Yogyakarta also became a place for national revolution when it became the capital of Indonesian Republic in year 1946-1949. Yogyakarta became a special region in Indonesian Republic largely because of the central role that Hamengkubuwono IX played during Indonesian revolution. Northern alun-alun became a site for Indonesian independence movement and activities related to nation building were echoed from this square. Indonesian national army was formed in year 1946 and the parade was held in northern alun-alun led by first president Soekarno. Northern alun-alun was strategic place for mass mobilization such as political oration by Sukarno during the celebration of international Labor Day in year 1948.



Figure 4. Indonesian national movements in northern alun-alun in year 1946 Source: Collection of IPPHOS, Indonesian National Archives.

The next transformation was on the royal ceremony and rite. Hamengkubuwono IX viewed splendor through party and ceremony as a colonial legacy, where Dutch colonial power let the king and nobility to be complacent in luxurious life (Soemardjan 2009). The important rites were simplified without reducing its cultural, religious and magical significances attended only by officials and members of royal families. Hence the essence of each ceremony is retained but its pomp and splendor had been uninstalled. Among others, jamas pusaka (ritual of heirlooms bathing) is maintained but conducting without lavish and outstanding ceremony as the earliest times. Even the luxurious garebeg has been reduced to normality. Its Offerings and praying remained to be conducted in accordance with tradition, without compulsion for the local officials to be present and pusaka was no longer displayed during the procession. Garebeg were continues to be held three times a year where a lot of people came to watch the procession from sithinggil to great mosque and scrambled the gunungan as a sign of king' blessing (Figure 6-21). The absent of local officers attendance was a result of government system, where their presence and homage from were no longer a symbol of loyalty to the king.

The event of sekaten had also changed its form. During previous years, at least until the period of Hamengkubuwono VIII, sekaten was originally seen as a means of supporting garebeg. At the beginning of Japanese occupation in year 1942, sekaten was installed with other shows and government stands also took part. This night market and exhibition lasted until the Indonesian post-independent in year 1950 when sekaten was held for thirty days instead of seven days duration. Along with garebeg, the festive of sekaten provided popular entertainments for people where gamelan sekaten was played. Northern alun-alun turned into a night market, in where a variety of performances such as shadow puppet and magic shows were held. The crowd created opportunity for selling food, either selling in temporary tent or hawking. There are many food and beverage stalls and merchants selling goods ranging from agricultural tools to clothing, cooking utensils, toys and souvenirs. If there is a common rule concerning this element of Sekaten, it is that whatever form of entertainment is currently popular is included.

Under Hamengkubuwono IX, kraton Yogyakarta has opened its door to local as well as global changes. The kraton complex which for years could only be entered by the nobilities and high rank officials has been opened to public. It began with the use of bangsal pagelaran for student lectures. Gadjah Mada University was established in year 1949, the lectures were temporary held in bangsal pagelaran and in the buildings around it before it had an official campus on the southern part of the city. Allowing commoners, students and teachers, to enter a sacred area of sithinggil was a radical departure of Hamengkubuwono IX's redefinition of the concept of kingship.

What had been considered sacred and private space became more profane and public space. Surrounding the square is encircled with two-way streets along with sidewalk adjacent to the series of buildings on the edge. These streets were paved in the mid 1970 to provide access for people to enter kraton complex and its surrounding kampongs. A space that once was sacred is becoming a mere part of a transportation network dominated by vehicles. Furthermore, some parts of kraton complex were opened to Indonesian and foreign tourist. Kraton began to attract visitors and daily visited by people from rural sides and surrounding town within Central Java (Soemardjan 2009). Cultural attraction, important royal ceremonies and rites, has been

installed and wrapped for tourist purposes. There are daily wayang show (shadow puppet), gamelan performances along with offering lessons in gamelan play and classical dances for free of charge.

Out of special events like garebeg and sekaten which was held only three times a year, other activities which attended by mass of people had appeared in northern alun-alun. This area became the center of public activities. Students used to have outdoor activities, such as exercising and scouting while civil officers used to have offices around the square. During daytime a lot of tourists come to visit kraton building and Sono Budoyo and they used northern alun-alun for parking. Along with the increasing number of visitor, people who live surrounding kraton took opportunities for earning additional income by selling goods or offering services. They sold their goods in temporary kiosks, tents or in peddlers while other became tour guide, becak driver or parking attendant.

5 ALUN-ALUN IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

Northern alun-alun is considered as a place which has historical and cultural significances. A site of massive rallies contributes significantly to the political development in local and national levels. During political crisis of May 1998, northern alun-alun, which had been a cultural space, became Yogyakarta and Indonesian political space. When the legitimacy of the government of republic Indonesia came into question, the sultan rethought his position and became a national political figure. He devotes to Indonesian nation and willing to employ traditional Javanese notions of kingship and authority when the republic is in danger. Indonesia was hit by economic crises that began in year 1997 led to widespread students demonstration, violence by mob and security forces and demand for an end to the New Order government. The kraton of Yogyakarta played significant role in averting violence that is more tragic and facilitating the end of New Order. Yogyakarta as the symbolic center of Indonesia, were combined in the political dramas of 1998 and 1999 that led to the fall of the Soeharto government and the rise of Sultan Hamengkubuwono X as an important and powerful national leader. Socio-cultural aspects of massive moral movement of Yogyakarta community gathered in the square in front of Sultanate Palace to meet with Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X demanding political reform in Indonesia without violence. On 20 May 1998, Hamengkubuwono gave oration to call Soeharto to resign. He stood in front of people in northern alun-alun and spoke of the need of reformation. . Although sultan had significant political role, being part of Indonesia has redefined kraton functions as cultural and ceremonial instead of political space. Kraton had appeared to rely on their rituals to project their significance and relevance as a cultural center and tourist attraction. Although the essence of royal ceremony and ritual has been preserved, they have been experiencing commercialization as the impact of tourism development.



Figure 5. Northern alun-alun in year 2011 Source: observation

Sekaten as a series of garebeg ceremony has been experiencing fluctuation in meaning. At first was intended to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Mohammad along with religious activities. At this stage has been converted into means of income generation for various parties, especially when duration of sekaten was extended from seven days to a month. In year 1991, sekaten is enlivened with kraton festival where the culture of kraton has been compromised by the existing nature of modernity. This effort is a logical consequence of the discourses of tourism development endorsed by city government and Kasultanan Yogyakarta. The format of sekaten was changed into cultural and handicraft exhibition in year 2004-2005, called JES (Jogja Expo Sekaten). A professional event organizer organized it and the purpose was to promote tourism as well as to attract potential buyers and investor. Northern alun-alun was transformed into a modern expo arena with luxury booths and air-conditions system. Visitors had to pay entry ticket and traditional merchants were excluded, which was protested by public since it was considered disrespectful to tradition. Sekaten was long believed to be a folk market, where traditional merchants were prioritized and every person

has the right to come at no charge. Sekaten then has returned to its original format as a folk market. On sekaten fair 2011, the center of northern alun-alun became a bazaar area with numerous stalls and vendors, while government institutions also participated for socializing their programs. The spaces for sekaten event were divided into plots for merchants and for government institutions with different rates. The visitor also had to pay entry ticket of 3000 IDR (approximately 25 EUR). Space for sekaten has been commercialized, without changing the meaning of its ritual which takes place in the great mosque. This division led to assumption that garebeg was maintained as a sacred activity while sekaten is becoming more profane. Hence people who want to see garebeg or gamelan sekaten in the mosque were still free of charge, while those who want to see sekaten had to pay entry ticket. At the fair, there were rides such as Ferris wheels and mini train, which were simply meant to provide entertainment and fun. Joy rides and food stalls have become a feature in sekaten fair. Sekaten which was dominated by traditional merchandises, has been gradually replaced by popular entertainment and contemporary products. Traditional food traders are rarely seen and the nuance of tradition is almost imperceptible.



Figure 6. Gunungan and garabeg procession in year 2011 Source: observation

The major activities take place in northern alun-alun relate to the role of kraton complex as the major tourists destination in Yogyakarta. There are at least nine tourist objects inside kraton walls which consist of kraton main building, Tamansari water castle, old mosques, museums, birds market and traditional kampongs (Department of Tourism, Arts and Culture Yogyakarta 2007). Northern alun-alun becomes a gateway to kraton and surrounding tourist destinations. Thousands of people come to alun-alun to watch the garebeg procession and when many tourists come to visit kraton, alun-alun is used for parking. During tourist high season, the square is utilized for parking by private cars and tourist buses, while becaks (rickshaw) and horse-carriages are lined up next to the entrance of bangsal pagelaran (Figure 7-). All types of vehicles, ranging from bus, car, motorcycle, becak to horse-carriage are passing through the streets on its perimeter that becomes traffic artery and connects area inner to outer kraton wall. The atmosphere of alun-alun comes alive with growing number of people visiting during day and night and people began to take advantage from this festive by establishing their petty business. Street vendors are taking a chance by selling good to these visitors. Street vendors are visible almost everywhere in northern alun-alun where there is a high concentration of people- the streets, parking lots, street junctions, sidewalks and the center of the square. Various types of street vendors exist here (Figure 7-). Either some are stationary and operate in certain locations, with permanent structures such as warung or kiosk, or non-permanent structures such as gelaran (mat) and tent that are easy assembled and dissembled. Some street vendors are ambulatory which continuously moving about to a place where there are many people to sell their goods or offer their services. These ambulatory street vendors are using gerobag (pushcart), pikulan (yoke) or bakul (basket) which sometimes are installed on a bicycle or a motorcycle. Alun-alun has evolved into area where small-scale trading and bazaar occur. There are at least 470 street vendors and hawkers in northern alun-alun. Their informal status are not fit with the image of cleanliness and order which becoming the eyesore of alun-alun.

6 CONCLUSION

The aforementioned historical account visualizes how alun-alun has catalyzed the formation of collective urban images, which are transmitted from generation to generation creating a corpus of inter-subjectivity. This allows the square to maintain its role as a place for the collective expression of discontent and hope for better times.

The examination of alun-alun reveals of pattern of gradual change and transformation, which is tandem with the significant historical events and changes in cultural setting of the society. Changes are manifested in the

physical, social and symbolic pattern, which occur in response to events, actions or policies introduces in different historical periods. From physical perspectives, alun-alun has witnessed reorganization where some uses added and some modified, or eliminated along with the changes in political and major political holder. The reorganization of its morphological pattern resulting in the increase in density and shown in the changes of enclosure elements, building addition and general visual character. From social perspectives, alun-alun has witnessed changes in patterns of access and social character. It is however, from symbolic perspective that alun-alun has witnessed greatest changes. Alun-alun continues to be a venue for massive events ranging from cultural, social to political. Although alun-alun is still a venue for cultural ceremonies, the messages is fundamentally changed. They would rather a ritual, which symbolic roles are limited to the religious realm and the preservation of tradition. On other side they have experienced commercialization as the impact of tourism development. The agglomeration of commercial activities encouraged the growth informal sectors, which show the gradual decline of its importance divergence between the real lived space and the representation of space has increased.

Administration System	Characteristic		
	Arrangement of space	Primary uses of space	Accessibility
Traditional authority (1755-1880)	- Center is a sacred space - Periphery is profane	- Military activities - Royal ceremonies	- Restricted area and strictly controlled
Dutch colonial administration (1880-1940)	- Center is less sacred - Periphery is profane	- Royal ceremonies - Cultural activities - Social activities	- Partial restricted area and less controlled
Indonesian early independent (1940-1960)	- Center and periphery are profane	- Royal ceremonies - National movement activities - Economic activities	- Open area
New Order (1960-1990)	- Center and periphery are profane	- Royal ceremonies - Religious activities - More economic activities - More social activities	- Open area
Modern 1990- 2012	- Center and periphery are profane -	- Ritual ceremonies - Religious activities - Political activities - More economic activities - Social activities - Traffic thoroughfare	- Open area

Table 1. Characteristic of Public Space through Changing Administration System Source: Author

Alun-alun that was previously used only for a formal ceremonial meeting place between sultan and his subjects has evolved into area where small-scale trading and bazaar occur as well as special outdoor cultural events. The square that has an important historic and symbolic function, linking sultan and his people has evolved into a visitor attraction as many domestic as well as foreign visitors go there during the day and evening to browse among the stalls. On special occasion, elaborate court and religious ceremony take place in alun-alun, they have become cultural attraction in their own right.

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