

Reading The Transformation of The Alun-Alun in Bogor City as A Physical and Social Space

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Abstract The dichotomy of study in STEM (science technology engineering and mathematics) and the humanities has been a popular issue in academic research. This paper tries to see whether that the dichotomy is significant or not. Utilizing a public open space as one of the common subjects of study in landscape architecture. The public open space is analyzed within a positivistic domain and in the cultural studies paradigm. The purpose is to exercise an approach of analyzing a same set of data and present a continuous discussion on the subject of interest, which is *alun-alun* (town square). Data from two town squares in Bogor City, which are Alun-alun Empang and Alun-alun Kota Bogor, were collected according to common practice in landscape architecture field of study. The discussion uses descriptive analysis and critical social analysis techniques. The descriptive analysis is applied to interpret data from the landscape architecture point of view. Then the same data set is interpreted using a critical social analysis approach to seek the hidden meaning of any tangible objects that appear on the site and beyond the site. The result shows that descriptive analysis works well for biophysical aspect while the critical social analysis makes the social aspect give a deeper understanding on intangible area.

Index Terms—Alun-alun, Transformation, Character, Function.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public open spaces in urban areas play an essential role in the dynamics of city life. These spaces not only serve as vital recreational facilities for city residents but also as venues for social interaction and markers of a place's identity. As stated by Kevin Lynch (1960) in his theory on city imagery, elements such as paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks are very important in shaping individuals' perceptions of the urban environment. Public open spaces are referred to as landmarks in city landscapes or squares, and they serve as clear points of orientation, centers of activity for urban communities, and significant

contributors to the visual image and identity of a city [1], [2]. Given their function and role in shaping city identity, public open spaces are essential. They play a significant role in enhancing urban quality of life by offering areas for social activities and cultural expression.

Cities can also be viewed from a socio-cultural landscape perspective. From this point of view, urban spaces are imagined as a collection of socio-cultural entities that develop and work in harmony with the dynamics of society. Public and private spaces in cities are places where people engage in activities that construct their identities. Habermas [3] argues that the emergence of public and private spaces was deliberately intended to counter or balance the authority that sought to control civil society. He mentions that this can be traced back to ancient Greece, which was already an advanced city-state at that time. Public life took

place in places such as a market called agora. These public spaces became places where people met, traded, and socialized. Similarly, in Indonesia, there are public open spaces with similar functions on the island of Java, known as *alun-alun*.

In Indonesia, *alun-alun* are a distinctive form of public green open space that serve more than just providing space for community activities; they also reflect the cultural identity and history of a city. *Alun-alun* are generally located in the center of cities, where their presence can influence urban patterns and become a mental map for urban residents [4]. The concept of traditional *alun-alun* on the island of Java itself emerged from the pre-colonial era. The application of this concept can be seen in Trowulan, which was the capital of Majapahit, a Hindu kingdom in the archipelago. Trowulan is considered to be a manifestation of the universe (cosmos), which is depicted in the north-south axis layout, with one of the elements of the city being the town square [5]. Furthermore, according to Rukayah [6], kingdoms in later eras, such as Demak and Islamic Mataram, also adopted this pattern. A city center was marked by the presence of a town square, which served as the center of government and religious buildings.

Over time, the development of modern cities has brought about shifts in the concept and need for open spaces. Arifin (in Kohori [4]) reveals that *alun-alun* are facing changes caused by the development of cities around them. *Alun-alun*, which may have had relatively static designs and functions in the past, are now faced with the demand to be more dynamic and multifunctional, accommodating a variety of community activities. This shift raises critical questions about how the landscape elements and spatial composition of *alun-alun* adapt to these changes. *Alun-alun*, as representations of a city's identity in the form of public open spaces, also carry the stories of individuals or groups with their respective statuses.

Alun-Alun Empang and *Alun-Alun Kota Bogor* in Bogor city, West Java, offer interesting case studies for observing this phenomenon. Both represent different characteristics of *alun-alun* and reflect the dynamics of change in public green spaces in urban areas. Physical changes can also be critically examined from a social perspective by looking at the interactions between the community, managers, and landscape architects who design *alun-alun* in public open spaces.

This paper argues that public open spaces such as *alun-alun* can represent the social conditions of a community. This is because, fundamentally, public spaces are social constructs of those who are present and those who are absent. Space, as a physical form and object, can also describe the cultural conditions of the community. This paper will also present an understanding of the physical characteristics of these *alun-alun* in the dynamics of space and time. An understanding of the social construction manifested in public open spaces can be used as part of the development of sustainable *alun-alun* design strategies in the future. The novelty of this research is the use of critical

social analysis that is common in the humanities field, to reveal the social construction that drives a landscape architectural design of public open space.

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a cultural study approach. Data was collected through field observations and literature in the form of documents, journal articles, and images. The analysis was carried out in two stages. The first part of the analysis follows the positivistic paradigm. It analyzes the physical elements of the landscape space descriptively. The second part of the analysis uses a critical social analysis approach, which is in the cultural studies paradigm. The physical space of *alun-alun* is analyzed critically to examine the social activities that shape space or are formed from space as a social construction. Both of the *alun-alun* are read as a text to reveal the layers of matters that are hidden beneath the structures that often come first.

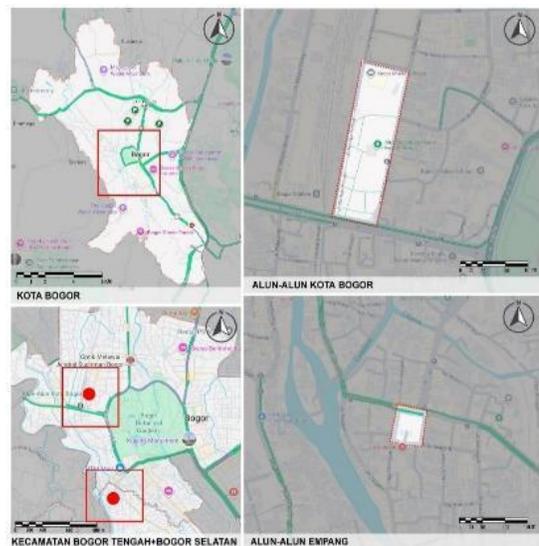


Fig. 1. Research location
(Source: Digitally drawn from Google Map)

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Urban Public Open Space of The Past and Present

Most people who live in a city simply understand public open space as a physical space, such as a city park, that residents can visit. Park visitors can use this public space for exercising, strolling, socializing, and other recreational activities. This aligns with the definition stated in Indonesian Law No. 26 of 2007 on Spatial Planning, public green open spaces are green areas managed by municipal governments and intended for the welfare of the wider community [7]. These areas include various types such as urban parks, public cemeteries, and green corridors that cross roads, rivers, and coastal areas. In addition, the arrangement and distribution of green open spaces are designed based on the population and existing service levels, taking into account the spatial planning plans that have been established in the structure and pattern of regional spatial development. Recently, the Indonesian

Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency had released a regulation concerning the provision and utilization of green open spaces. Green open spaces (GOS) are classified into several groups, namely green open space areas/zones, other areas/zones that function as green open spaces, and objects that are used as green open space. The green open spaces can be in the form of areas/zones referred to in this regulation are urban forests, city parks, sub-district parks, urban village parks, community parks to support a community area), neighborhood parks for neighborhoods areas, cemeteries, and/or green belts [8].

The definition of a public open space from landscape architecture perspective also tends to be positivistic. Kostof [9] stated that public open spaces are artifacts of collective passion that bind communities together, and their presence bears witness to the evolution of human needs over time and the identity of a community in the city center. A similar statement from [10] also defines public open space as spaces that are publicly accessible in urban environments that have various dimensions and play a crucial role in shaping the social, visual, functional, temporal, morphological, and perceptual aspects of a city [10].

In the past, particularly on the island of Java, public open spaces were commonly referred to as *alun-alun* (a town square). People used *alun-alun* as a space for interaction and transactions. On certain days known as hari pasaran (market days) when buying and selling activities took place, the *alun-alun* would transform into a vivid marketplace. These were times when economic activity dominated interactions among people. At other times the *alun-alun* could be dominated by artistic activities, such as dance, music, or other entertainment performances that typically held during local celebrations. Meanwhile the *alun-alun* kept providing people as a place to meet and socialize while seeking shelter from the hot sun on daily basis.

The *alun-alun* serves and accommodates people in a public space which accommodate the operations of power. According to Habermas [3], the concept of public space is an area that emerged at a certain phase of bourgeois society. Public space is a space that mediates civil society with the state, where the public organizes itself, a space where public opinion is formed.

B. The Concept of Spatial Arrangement of Alun-alun in Java

The traditional *alun-alun* in Java is a rectangular field with banyan trees (*Ficus benjamina*) at the center (Fig.2). It has a distinctive spatial arrangement that particularly relate to the Javanese cosmological concept of Catur Sagotra. The Catur Sagotra concept is a interconnection of four spaces of old Javanese town arrangement. Those four vital components are cultural functions (*alun-alun*), economic functions (market), government functions (palace), and religious, ethical, and moral functions (mosque). Those spaces are connected by road line and form the core of the

city [11].



Fig. 2. Alun-Alun Yogyakarta with banyan trees in the center

According to Paulus (in Hadinoto [12]), *alun-alun* is described as a large grass field surrounded by banyan trees in the center, which is generally found in front of the residences of regents and district heads. Former ancient royal cities such as Surakarta and Yogyakarta have two town *alun-alun*, one located north and one south of the palace, with surfaces ideally covered in fine sand without grass. Moreover, Paulus (in Hadinoto [12]) has mentioned that *alun-alun* functions as a multifunctional public space, as evidenced by the presence of a pavilion on the south side that serves as a place for servants and the community to wait for an audience with the king or regent, as well as a strategic arena for various ceremonial activities and historical performances. In addition, smaller *alun-alun*, such as those in villages in West Java, which are located in front of the village head's house, often do not have banyan trees, but generally have a strong spatial association with mosques.

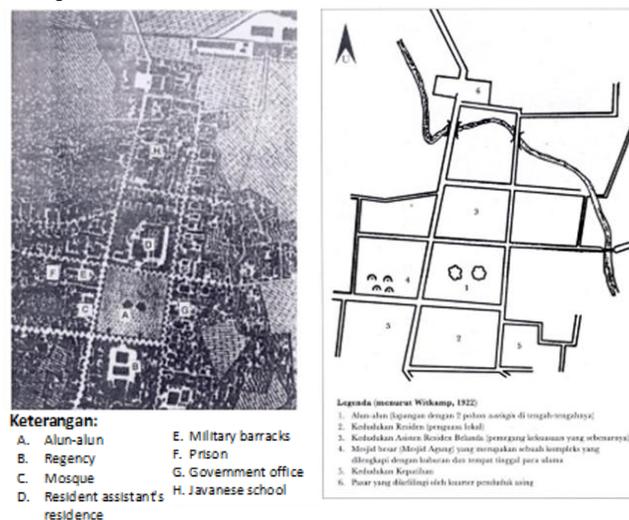


Fig. 3. Structure of Javanese urban space according to Tillema and Witkamp

Source: Tillema and Santoso (in Ashadi [13])

The physical structure of regency towns in Java before the Pacific War, as described by Tillema and Witkamp in 1918, featured a typology of local and colonial government

centers integrated through the element of the *alun-alun*. On the north-south axis on both sides of the *alun-alun* were the residences of the assistant resident and regent as symbols of colonial administration and local power, while to the west of the *alun-alun* stood a mosque complete with a sacred place and a cemetery area behind it, accompanied by the house of the *pengulu* as the leader of Islam and the military police barracks. The east side of the *alun-alun* is surrounded by inns and private entrepreneurs' houses, whose status is lower than that of government officials, and a little further to the northwest is a ballroom as a Dutch gathering place. In addition, supporting buildings such as schools, hospitals, tax collection offices, and courts are also located not far from the *alun-alun*. The Chinatown area is located near the city's main road and river, marked by rows of shops owned by small traders and various craftsmen [13].

The elements that shape Javanese urban space according to Sunaryo [14] can be classified into two main categories, namely traditional elements and colonial elements, both of which interact dynamically in determining the morphology in Javanese cities. In the traditional realm, key elements include the palace as the center of power, the mosque and Kauman which are usually located on the west side of the *alun-alun*, and the market which is the focal point of commercial activity. Meanwhile, colonial elements include the resident's office, fort, church, park (often located in front of the church, the resident's residence, or a major intersection), railway station, and telecommunications and trade offices. The combination and arrangement of these elements are not uniform because each city displays a unique layout, influenced by local historical, political, economic, and topographical circumstances.

The spatial concept of the town square demonstrates the presence of social elements that interact and dominate the public space. The exercise of power by actors and agents is represented in each spatial segment of a city. The palace represents the state government, the mosque represents spirituality, the market reflects the activity of capital, and the town square serves as a meeting place for the various forces that drive the life of a city.

C. The Characteristic of Alun-alun in Java

The *alun-alun* as a traditional Javanese public space is formed by seven main physical elements that reflect its philosophical and functional as well [15]. These seven physical elements are translated into the design of form, materials, and facilities. The town square is designed as a rectangle, adhering to the *macapat* (the concept of four spaces, sides) in a traditional city planning system. Fine sand forms the main area of the town square, along with a small number of specific plant species, including the banyan tree (*Ficus benjamina*). A central path typically divides the town square. Another feature sometimes encountered is the *pendopo* that is a hall without wall.

Kohori [4], in her research on 13 *alun-alun* old maps of

Java from the Dutch colonial era, describes the main characteristics of *alun-alun* are located near the palace or the regent's office. In cities such as Surakarta and Yogyakarta, the *alun-alun* located close to the palace, with two rectangular *alun-alun* separated by the palace itself. In addition, on the north side of the *alun-alun* there was a connecting building that was part of the palace, while the city mosque is located on the west side of the north *alun-alun* (Fig. 4).

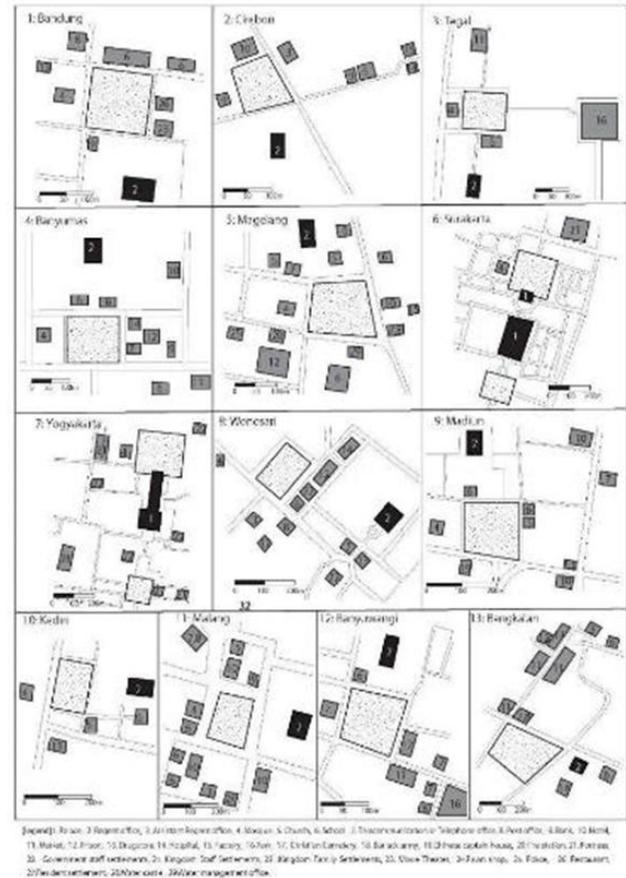


Fig. 4. Spatial map of 13 *alun-alun* from the Dutch colonial era

Source: Kohori [4]

Cities such as Bandung, Cirebon, Tegal, Banyumas, Magelang, and several other cities show that *alun-alun* located adjacent to regent's offices also have a rectangular shape. The other buildings adjacent to *alun-alun* in 10 cities were mosques and schools. There were schools such as vocational training schools and European schools. Other important buildings during the colonial period that built around *alun-alun* are prisons, post offices, telegraph stations, and telephone offices. Based on these results, the spatial form of the *alun-alun* can be defined by the presence of the regent's office or palace, mosque, and school. Kohori's study confirms the actual relationship between the *alun-alun* and various supporting facilities, showing the role of the *alun-alun* as a center of administration, education, and religion during the colonial period.

D. Alun-Alun Empang

In Stuart Hall's concept of political representation, *alun-alun* can be viewed as double-coded subjects. On the one hand, *alun-alun* are seen as a physical reality that can be touched, seen, visited, and given meaning by the community. At the same time, the *alun-alun* is seen as a discourse of democracy, citizenship, and public space. Barker [16] says that citizenship is a mechanism to connect micro-politics of representation or identity with macro-politics of institutional and cultural rights.

Alun-alun Empang is one of the oldest *alun-alun* in the city of Bogor, which according to a number of studies is believed to be a relic of the Pakuan Pajajaran kingdom. Alun-alun Empang covers an area of 3.660,54 m² and is located on Jalan Empang, Kelurahan Empang, Kecamatan Bogor Selatan, Kota Bogor (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Alun-Alun Empang

Source: Google Earth

The Empang area was known to be the center of the Buitenzorg Regency government in 1760. The former land of the Pakuan Pajajaran Kingdom was divided into several areas consisting of plantations, open spaces, and government areas. The open space, referred to as *alun-alun* during this phase, was designed to be rectangular in shape with wooden fences around it. With the *alun-alun* in place, a mosque was built on the west side and the demang's residence was built on the south side. In addition, a pond was built to the west of the demang's residence. There was also a banyan tree, the presence of which is synonymous with the concept of *alun-alun* in Java [17].

The traditional administrative center of Kampung Baru at this time maintained Javanese cosmology, as reflected in the orientation of the demang's house and the elements of the pond, which faced the North Sea and had its back to Mount Salak in the south. The role of the demang's house is described as a miniature palace that dominates the center of government, while *alun-alun* with its macapat concept, which is characteristic of Javanese government, is not yet explicitly visible [18].

The legal status of the Alun-Alun Empang land has historically been confirmed as waqf land since 1819, based on a statement from Rd. Dadang Hermansyah as the current nadzir (a manager for waqf property). A waqf land is a

ongoing charitable endowment land to benefit a community. This waqf was initiated by Rd. Muhammad Tohir, known as the Regent of Selawat, with the aim of honoring the waqf donor, maintaining the integrity of the waqf, and ensuring that there was no deviation from the early teachings of Islam embraced by the waqf donor. The formal confirmation of the waqf status was subsequently recorded on June 12, 1971, by Rd. Dadang Ali, who acted as the administrator and supervisor of the waqf, and was later reinforced through Notarial Deed PW Mandagie No. 429 on January 19, 1952. The management structure of this waqf land has continued through several generations of heirs, with the last transfer of authority to Rd. Dadang Hermansyah on August 5, 2009 [19]. Although the waqf status of the Alun-alun Empang is clear and legal, efforts to preserve and manage it has faced a number of complex challenges. Claims by several parties over ownership of the land without valid legal evidence are a major obstacle for the Bogor City Government in maintaining and preserving Alun-alun Empang. In addition, the many economic interests, especially from street vendors surrounding the area, complicate effective control and management (Fig.6).



Fig. 6. Street vendors on the east side of Alun-alun Empang

E. Alun-Alun Kota Bogor

Alun-alun Kota Bogor is one of the green open spaces in Bogor City and was recently inaugurated on December 17, 2021. This green open space covers an area of 17.000 m² and functions as a city park. Before being inaugurated as Alun-Alun Kota Bogor, this green open space was known as Taman Ade Irma Suryani or is more commonly referred to by the residents of Bogor as Taman Topi. Alun-alun Kota Bogor is located at Kaptan Muslihat street, Bogor Tengah subdistrict, Bogor City. The site is surrounded by areas of high activity, such as Bogor Rail Station, Bogor City Police Headquarters, and a shopping complex. The *alun-alun* serves as the main access point for the mobility of residents who are engaged in the area (Fig. 7). The distance between the city's zero point, which is located in front of the Bogor Mayor's Office, and the *alun-alun* is approximately 650 meters. This vicinity indicates its strategic center position in the urban layout.



Fig. 7. Alun-Alun Kota Bogor
Source: Google Earth

Alun-alun Kota Bogor is an open space that has changed over time in terms of both design and use. The transformation is in line with the development of the city. During the Dutch colonial period, this area was known as Wilhelmina Park, located west of Bogor Station and functioning as an exclusive recreational place for Dutch women and European immigrants. The site was referred to as a park on a map of Bogor City in 1930. There was no indication of a mosque in the vicinity of the park (Fig. 8). Over time, this green open space has evolved and become part of the public realm. It was integrated into the development of transportation infrastructure after the inauguration of the Buitenzorg–Batavia railway line in the early 20th century [20].

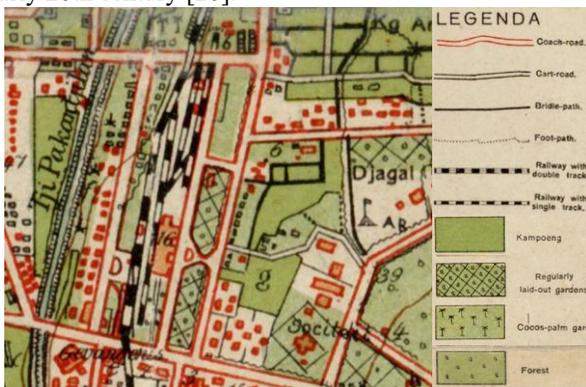


Fig. 8. Map of Bogor City in 1930
Source: KITLV

After Indonesia's independence, the structure of the space underwent fragmentation. Some of the land was converted into commercial areas, while the rest remained as a city park, which became known as Taman Kebon Kembang, a name derived from the local community's habit of referring to the park because of its beautiful variety of flowers. In 1975, the park was renamed Taman Ade Irma Suryani and transformed into a public transportation terminal. Its location that close to Anyar Market and the rail station, has made the park a strategic public space [21], [20].

The Bogor Municipal Government handed over a 23,750 m² recreational area of Taman Ade Irma Suryani, to PT Exotica to develop and manage it based on Decree No. 61 in 1986, issued by the House of Representative. The main

objective of this initiative is to preserve the existence of urban green open spaces, so that the area is not converted for other purposes that are not in line with its strategic role as the lungs of the city [21].

Along with the development of infrastructure and public needs, in 1990 the public transportation terminal underwent renovation and was transformed into Plaza Kapten Muslihat, but it is well known as Taman Topi (hat garden). The name became popular because the architectural design of the roof of the building in the park resembles a hat, which has become a local landmark for the locals (Fig. 9). The concept of the park was specifically designed as a green open space in the city center that functions as a recreational facility and a place for children to play [21].



Fig. 9. Taman Topi and Plaza Kapten Muslihat
Source: <https://ameera.republika.co.id/>

On December 20, 1988, the Bogor City Government and PT. Exotica signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the development and management of the Taman Topi area through a Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) scheme. The agreement was valid for a period of 30 years, ending on December 20, 2018. Towards the end of the contract period, in 2018, a proposal for assistance from the provincial government was initiated for the restoration and development of the area. The preparatory stages for construction were carried out in 2019, including the preparation of proposals, initial planning and design, and the implementation of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) as part of the participatory process involving stakeholders. Subsequently, in 2020, a series of work stages were carried out, such as the demolition of old building structures, the auction process, asset disposal, and fencing of the Taman Topi area. These steps formed the basis for the transformation of the area into Alun-Alun Kota Bogor, which was officially inaugurated in 2021 [20] (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Alun-Alun Kota Bogor

F. Comparing the Softscape and Hardscape Elements

The transformation of Alun-alun Empang and Alun-alun Kota Bogor also affects the quantity of plant species and construction materials as well. Alun-alun Kota Bogor has a much higher species diversity than Alun-alun Empang. The first *alun-alun* mentioned has 30 species of plants, including grass, groundcover, shrubs, and trees, while the other has only 11 species (Table 1).

TABLE I
LIST OF VEGETATION IN ALUN-ALUN EMPANG AND ALUN-ALUN KOTA BOGOR

No.	Scientific Name	Local Name	Location	
			AAE	AAKB
Grass and Groundcover				
1	<i>Aerva sanguinolenta</i> (L.) Blume	Bayam merah		√
2	<i>Alternanthera ficoidea</i>	Krokot		√
3	<i>Arachis pintoi</i>	Kacang-kacangan		√
4	<i>Asparagus densiflorus</i>	Ekor tupai		√
5	<i>Axonopus compressus</i>	Rumput gajah	√	
6	<i>Bromelia</i> sp.	Bromelia		√
7	<i>Cuphea hyssopifolia</i>	Taiwan beauty		√
8	<i>Ruellia simplex</i> C.Wright	Ruelia		√
9	<i>Rhoeo discolor</i>	Adam hawa		√
10	<i>Zoysia matrella</i>	Rumput manila		√
Shrub				
11	<i>Calathea lutea</i>	Pisang calathea		√
12	<i>Canna indica</i> L.	Bunga tasbih		√
13	<i>Codiaeum variegatum</i>	Puring		√
14	<i>Crinum asiaticum</i> L.	Bakung		√
15	<i>Coleus scutellarioides</i>	Miana		√
16	<i>Dracaena marginata</i> Lam	Dracaena tricolor		√
17	<i>Heliconia densiflora</i>	Pisang hias		√
18	<i>Osmoxylon lineare</i> (Merr.) Philipson	Aralia		√
19	<i>Pseuderanthemum maculatum</i>	Melati jepang		√
Tree				
20	<i>Alstonia scholaris</i> L. R. Br.	Pulai		√
21	<i>Callistemon citrinus</i>	Sikat botol		√
22	<i>Carica papaya</i> L.	Pepaya		√
23	<i>Cerbera odollam</i> Gaertn	Bintaro	√	
24	<i>Ficus benjamina</i> L.	Beringin	√	√
25	<i>Filicium decipiens</i>	Kerai payung		√
26	<i>Lagestromia speciosa</i>	Bungur	√	
27	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Lamtoro	√	
28	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mangga	√	
29	<i>Nephelium lappaceum</i>	Rambutan	√	
30	<i>Pinus merkusii</i> Jungh	Pinus	√	
31	<i>Plumeria rubra</i>	Kamboja		√
32	<i>Polyalthia longifolia</i>	Glodokan tiang		√
33	<i>Pterocarpus indica</i>	Angsana	√	

No.	Scientific Name	Local Name	Location	
			AAE	AAKB
34	<i>Roystonea regia</i>	Palem raja	√	
35	<i>Samanea saman</i>	Trembesi		√
36	<i>Swietenia mahagoni</i>	Mahoni		√
37	<i>Syzygium myrtifolium</i>	Pucuk merah		√
38	<i>Syzygium samarangense</i>	Jambu air	√	
39	<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Ketapang		√
40	<i>Terminalia mantaly</i>	Ketapang kencana		√
Total species			11	30

Description: AAE: Alun-Alun Empang; AAKB: Alun-alun Kota Bogor
Source: Pamungkas [22] and field survey

The concept of traditional *alun-alun* in Indonesia, especially in Java, has historically been that of a predominantly open space with limited softscape elements such as grass fields and one or two tree species; or open areas dominated by vast expanses of sand. Another characteristic feature of traditional *alun-alun* is the presence of banyan trees (*Ficus benjamina*).

The significant difference in plant species diversity in Alun-alun Kota Bogor indicates a shift in the interpretation and development of the concept of *alun-alun*. It has extremely high plant diversity, reflects a modern approach to the design of public green open spaces that not only emphasizes traditional functions but also integrates the ecological and aesthetic values of landscape theories (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Plant species diversity in Alun-alun Kota Bogor

The presence of trees surrounding the AAE shows that the original concept of the traditional *alun-alun* is still well preserved and implemented, even though a small number of new plant species have been added during its development (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Alun-alun Empang around 1900 and today
Source: KITLV and personal documentation

The hardscape elements at Alun-alun Empang and Alun-alun Kota Bogor show significant differences. Table 2 details the hardscape facilities found at both locations.

TABLE II
TYPES OF FACILITIES AT ALUN-ALUN EMPANG AND
ALUN-ALUN KOTA BOGOR

No.	Facility	Location	
		AAE	AAKB
1	Grass field/lawn	√	√
2	Fence	√	√
3	Bench		√
4	Trash can	√	√
5	Planter box		√
6	Signage		√
7	Bollard		√
8	Information Board		√
9	Flag pole		√
10	Garden lamp	√	√
11	Shelter	√	√
12	Multipurpose building		√
13	Toilet		√
14	Security post	√	√
15	Plaza		√
16	Pedestrian path		√
17	Ramp		√
18	Jogging track		√
19	Children playground		√
20	Outdoor Gym		√
21	Parking lot	√	√
Total		7	21

Description: **AAE**: Alun-alun Empang; **AAKB**: Alun-alun Kota Bogor

Traditional *alun-alun* are generally known as large grassy fields, without any complex hardscape elements. At Alun-alun Empang, although traditional characteristics such as lawns are still maintained, the presence of parking lots within the *alun-alun* marks a modest change from the original concept. Parking lots and vehicle shelters, while important in the context of modern parks to support accessibility, might intrinsically change the main character of the *alun-alun* from a multipurpose communal space to an area that also accommodates vehicle mobility. This has the potential to reduce the main focus of the *alun-alun* as an open space for various social and cultural activities. The integration of parking lots within or around the main area of the *alun-alun* can be interpreted as an adaptation to modern needs, but at the same time, it represents an insignificant change from the idealism of traditional *alun-alun* (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Parking lot within Alun-Alun Empang

The parking lot inside Alun-Alun Empang is also used by hospital visitors. The transformation of the function of *alun-alun* from a ceremonial or government center to a space that is more responsive to the demands of the community is reflected in this change, which goes beyond straight changes in appearance. As a result, Alun-Alun Empang's position as the center of the city is gradually fading. This shift shows how external forces can modify the spatial and functional narrative of a space.

The hardscape elements of Alun-alun Kota Bogor shows that it has more and varied facilities. It has a children's playground, outdoor gym, different types of benches, information boards, jogging tracks, and plazas, which are pretty much common facilities found in a modern city park. The design and variety of facilities are more focused on accommodating the needs for active recreation, health, and education, making it an integrated activity center. This suggests that Alun-alun Kota Bogor stresses the role of an urban park that offers a range of facilities for modern community activities rather than fully embodying the idea of a traditional *alun-alun* with its extensive and well-designed facilities (Fig. 14).

Overall, Alun-Alun Kota Bogor today works as a modern city park that is essential for recreation and social interaction among the community. Its more modern construction and facilities indicate an adaptation to urban lifestyles. However, major changes in layout and orientation compared to traditional Javanese *alun-alun* highlight the need for a better understanding of the term "*alun-alun*." Therefore, it is vital to distinguish between *alun-alun* as a traditional concept full of philosophical value and modern city parks or public spaces that focus on contemporary recreational and social activities.



Fig. 14. Variety of Facilities in Alun-Alun Kota Bogor

The significant difference in plants variety and facilities types between Alun-alun Empang and Alun-alun Kota Bogor reveals the dominant actors in each. As of the completion of this study, Alun-alun Empang remains an arena where elite actors to compete for dominance. The traditional elite does not have enough cultural and economic capitals to develop the *alun-alun*. They only have symbolic capital that was endowed by their elders. Their knowledge and power have only exercised to a limited extent. On the contrary, Alun-alun Kota Bogor shows that the actors in government and private sectors have been work together to create the nowadays *alun-alun*. The private sector elites are respresented by the company and landscape architects and architects involved in designing the *alun-alun*. Their economic, cultural, and symbolic capitals have been dominating the arena. They bring modern design theory to the site and a full amount of money to build it. The public open space is built according to the modern design concept for public park while claiming the name '*alun-alun*' to show that space is a public domain, even the design concept has applying none of it. The '*alun-alun*' is used to represent public access to the site as an inclusive space.

IV. CONCLUSION

The comparison between Alun-alun Empang and Alun-alun Kota Bogor reveals a shift in meaning and form. Alun-alun Empang retains elements of traditional symbolism but faces functional adaptation and management challenges, while Alun-alun Kota Bogor reflects a modern reinterpretation shaped by government and private collaboration, emphasizing recreation and contemporary urban needs. The transformation highlights a transition from *alun-alun* as a cosmological-political space to a modern public park concept, underscoring the need to distinguish between its traditional philosophical essence and its contemporary adaptation

The *alun-alun* reading as a text has proven that Alun-alun Kota Bogor was given new meaning by the elite actors. Meanwhile, the Alun-alun Empang has been a battlefield arena for elite actors to gain dominance over others. It shows that a public open space is a social arena to exercise the modalities owned by actors to construct a new meaning and to create cultural practices.

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