

Concept of Self-Conservation in a Traditional Village: an Empirical Study of Kampong Kauman Semarang, Indonesia

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Concept of Self-Conservation in a Traditional Village: an Empirical Study of Kampong Kauman Semarang Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Kampong Kauman Semarang is a Moslem traditional village which is located in the center of traditional Javanese city Semarang, Indonesia. The pressure from modern capitalism in urban centers has strangled so many inherited cultural artifacts. As the substitute, there is new orientation which is the commercial world. It becomes a threat to Kampong Kauman Semarang Indonesia, which was built based on social blend for three centuries. Kauman possesses individual trick in preserving/ preventing and managing the settlement space. As Kampong is using this familial system, preserving the culture is considered important, since it preserve both of social and economic life. The method of research is ethnography-architecture that combines ideographical and architectural approach. The result shows that the self-conservation concept is found in both of material domain and in immaterial one. Firstly, the community completes maintenance toward historical artifacts. Secondly, the trader community handles the property for exploiting to social and economic. Thirdly, there is an establishment of moral-spiritual for youth. In the power of social cohesion, it becomes an important social asset to prevent the urban culture. The concept of self-conservation is a local wisdom that possesses important role in the cultural preservation.

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1 Introduction

Kauman is a dwelling of faithful Moslem located near the Great Mosque in Javanese cities (Darban, 2000). Particular in Semarang city people have the expertise to trade, and

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have always wanted to maintain the 'purity'. Modernization-industrialization pressure was experienced by Semarang, which grew as Java's cosmic city. The concept of cosmic city combines the spiritual and political power. Java's cosmic city is complemented by its settlements that are grouped by ethnics or based on its daily activity. In this case Prijotomo (2004) stated as architecture in politics. Kauman is located in the center city of Semarang. Since the completion of development of Johar market in 1937 in downtown, the trading activity slowly but significantly increased. The capitalist pressure impacted Kauman, for example in the growth of commercial business activity, rented rooms/houses for workers, home industries, and warehouses. These activities appeared as a form of penetration towards the business in Johar and its surrounding. Now Kauman is one of 'central socio-cultural' areas in Semarang that is transitioning due to the pressure of central business district. This condition forced Kauman to adapt to make changes in the expression of the living space. It seems Kauman apply the Muslim concept of *Habluminallah, Hablumminannas* in daily life. Tajuddin (1999) described the principals of *Habluminallah, Hablumminannas* & *Habluminnaalamin* which were the way to maintain balance between the human relationship with God, with man and with nature.

2 Research Method

The locus of this research is in kampong Kauman Semarang in Java Island Indonesia (see Figure. 1), which is a village for pious Moslem located in the center of traditional Javanese city (B. Suprpti, 2010). Kampong Kauman grows and develops in line with the development of Semarang city for more than two centuries. The method is used in this research in *ethnography-architecture*, which is purpose to discover thought hidden behind the symbol (B. Suprpti, 2010). Ethnography is now used to describe both *ethnography as a practice fieldwork in which participant is central* (Atkinson et al., 2008). In this research, data can be categorized to *primary data (from the field) and secondary data (from literatures and documents)*. Field data is made up of *physical data* such as buildings and their environment, elements that make a space; while non physical data includes the view of life of the people, ideology, spirituality, and social system, mainly those in relationship with maintenance and space arrangement. Spatial and building architecture data is compiled through measuring, documenting, sketching. More importantly, interviews were conducted with various levels of the society: children, school children, teenagers, housewives, head of households, public figures, *ustadz* (religious teachers), director of religious and education institutions, and so on. The research steps are described bellow:

- i. Grand Tour: in grand tour, an observation is conducted to the entire research area, to obtain an early image of the condition of research area as a whole. Here, an active and participative observation was done and documented in notes, diagrams, photos, sketches, maps, and so on, as well as physical data of buildings and building groups.

- ii. Mini Tour: this includes in-depth observation with documentations of the phenomena in the field. The first one is the *domain* analysis, which is to find a general overview and a thorough study from locus. Domain means one empiric category of social situation (Sradley, 2007). The second one is to do a taxonomy analysis, which will describe selected domains, this part analyze direct it to the internal structure of selected *domain*, aiming to find principles of the arrangement of original term in the domain. The third one is componential analysis to determine themes, which is to seek the relation between each term and with overall. Each theme has four criteria: measurable, logical and *emic* (means how local people think (Kottak, 2006). This step also done by looking for meanings through observation on how each term is connected one another.

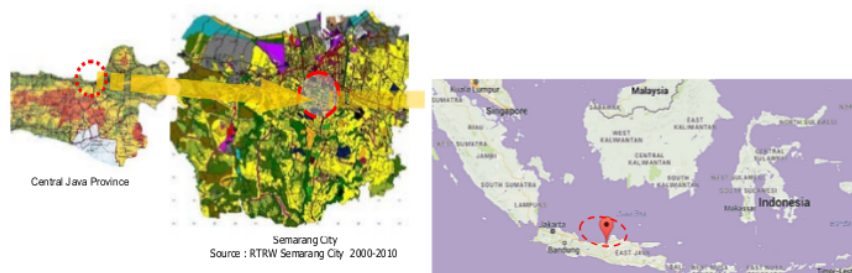


Figure 1: The Location of Kauman Semarang, Indonesia.

3 Result: The Self Conservation Concept

More than three centuries Kauman Semarang has survived as a traditional settlement for Muslim community. Two parties of actors that holds important role in Kauman's continuity are the religious leaders (Kyai) and traders/merchants (local businessman). Both of them maintain the balance of the basic aspects of human needs, which are socio-cultural life and economic life. To prevent changes due to external influences, Kauman retains to conserve it's ideology by community participation. The result of research finds three themes from the concept of self-conservation of Kauman, which are consisted of the following descriptions.

3.1 Space Acquisition by Local Businessman

Ownership of the buildings is held by a group of local businessmen, by buying them from the previous owner (See Figure. 02). This was done as a measure to prevent the entry of external influences that are not in line with their ideology. It is also to protect and develop the business. As the business grows, the authorization of these buildings by local businessmen gives economical benefits to them. Internal capitalism then grows inside Kauman, monopolized by its own people. This theme is triggered by: the development of the business owned by local businessmen; the weakening of some of local people to stay in Kauman; and the idealism to protect foreign penetration to do business in the village. In the same time, they

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do spread the Islam teaching, and develop social-kinship, also business, upon controlling of space. It can be classified into:

1. Businessman purchased the building and used it as a home or a business place.
2. Businessman purchased the building to be used as a house or a business place, and then after a while, gift it to religious activities managed by the people of Kauman.
3. Businessman purchased the building to be used as a residence or business place, and also a place for religious congregations.
4. Businessman bought the building to donate it as *wakaf*.

This phenomenon shows that the strength of social, economic, political influence in the architectural development. This is similar to what was presented by Kusno (2004) that the historical construction and architecture in Indonesia cannot be missed from the political & social forces.



Figure 2: Space Acquisition by local businessman tends to cluster pattern. They acquired a house (yellow), then bought one by one building, further it was functioned to be store/warehouse (orange), and for donation to religious activity /*wakaf* (color blue)

3.2 Space for Celebrations

1. Carnival space surrounding Kauman, covering the main roads and highways. This space is commonly used by the institutions to hold ritual celebrations. Carnival for 'Khataman' (completing a course) from the Institute of Quran is a tradition that do celebrate the victory of the students. It is also an attempt to revive the glory of Kauman as a center of Islamic guide. Procession around the Kampong Kauman is intended show to residents and surroundings the success of the students who have read through the Al-Quran, strengthening the title 'guards of the Quran'. According to Maslow (1986), need for self-existence is the pinnacle of the hierarchy of someone's psychological needs. The existence of self-fulfillment will demonstrate self-perfection as a human being (See Figure 3).

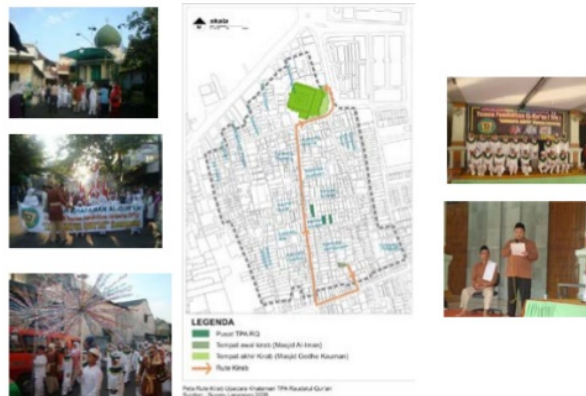


Figure 3: Graduation of Young *Santris* (*Khataman*). Graduation or for young *santris* as a symbol of fluency in reading Quran. The event begins with a procession that traced along the main road of Kauman toward the Kauman's Great Mosque (KGM). The KGM treated as climax for all processions.

2. Celebration space around *kyai*'s house within the public spaces (main road and open spaces) used for celebrations. For example is the celebration of graduation for students who memorize Quranic (*hafidz*) from *pesantren*. The place of the celebration is on street Jalan Kauman, around alley near the houses of *pesantren*'s officials. At these times, Jalan Kauman is packed with public and private vehicles, and all the trading activities are diverted. In this event, the committee borrows spaces from the neighbors; some houses used to prepare, some terraces used to accept guesses. People are volunteering these spaces because it's for charity. The good relationship between the *pesantren* and the community support the well-executed event (See Figure 04).



Figure 4: Celebration for *Hafidzs* from *Pesantren* Raudhatul Quran, taking place in main street of Jalan Kauman. This event is the symbol of Kauman's existence to the reproductions of new teachers and a promotion to the city.

Next is Islamic Elementary School, that celebrated Islam holidays, such as Prophet Muhammad's birthday by inviting *Kyai* and holding congregations to students and teachers. They also hold an event in around the month of the anniversary. This activity is supported by local figure businessess and parents of the students. The purpose of this event is to promote the school's advances to be categorized one of the best schools in the city (See Figure 05).

3. Kauman's Great Mosque (KGM) as the center of the celebration. This mosque is the center of the oldest Islamic religious activities in the city of Semarang. Every time they celebrate major Islamic days, they always hold a grand recitation/congregation. One of the most festive events organized by MGK is "*Dugderan*". This event was first introduced by the Duke Purbaningrat in 1881. The event was held to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. Nowadays, *Dugderan* is still held around the Great Mosque, with the festivities of food stalls and Muslim necessities bazaar (See Figure 06).



Figure 5: Islamic Art Celebration organized by Islamic Elementary School at every month of *Maulud*. This suggests the existence of educational institutions, as well as promotional efforts.



Figure 06: *Dugderan* is held at Great Mosque of Kauman. *Dugderan* is a people's party, held to welcome *Ramadhan*. This event is placed with the Mosque as a centre of activity and it occupies the open space around the Mosque.

Space for the celebration is a space that is used to demonstrate the identity of the "People of Kauman" by doing celebrations as a sign of the success of a particular achievement. For the citizens, these activities actually have three meanings: (1) a sense of gratitude to God, (2) forms of broadcasting religion / belief, and (3) expression and embodiment of identity in order to uphold the name of Kauman relatives.

Some celebrations are a means to foster social capital owned by the community. As described by Coleman (1988) that the inherited social capital in the social structure between actors or organizations. For organizations that exist in Kauman, this method is quite effective for the achievement of the objectives *habluminallah* to be received within and outside the community.

3.3 Kinship Space

Kinship space is an area that is used by certain families to organize family cultural traditions would thus strengthen the family ties. Kinship space usually consists of several houses occupied by several households that have the attachment of blood relationship. The buildings are clustered in one area / alley, so it seems the village is synonymous with a certain kinship. The kinship space can be classified into the following:

1. Setting up a space for events or activities like Islamic education in order to continue teaching (*Mulang*) religious knowledge as has been pioneered by his ancestors. *Kyai* with blood ties stay and build a family, a life devoted to the public as teachers and activists in KGM, while carrying out activities as a trader or businessman. *Kyai* then tighten kinship with marriage endogamy. The relatives then set up study groups (*majlis taklim*), led by members of their relatives. *Majlis taklim* then grow bigger and stronger, and eventually co-manage the *madrasah* (Islamic school). Bellow (Figure 07) is the illustration of *Kyai* Ridwan's house.

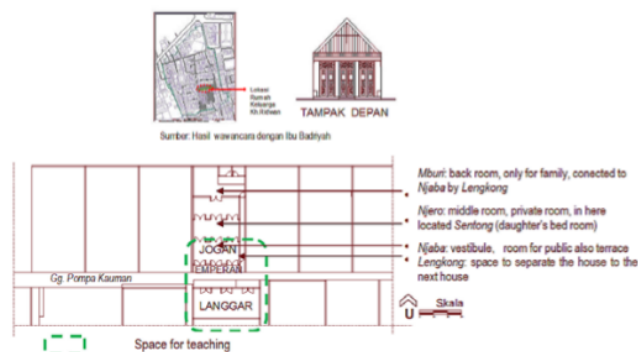


Figure 7: Kyai Ridwan's house, since the Dutch period have been used to teach students.

This activity is done in *njogan* (living room). He also taught in Langgar (little mosque) located in front of the house. Sometimes two places are integrated into one unit.

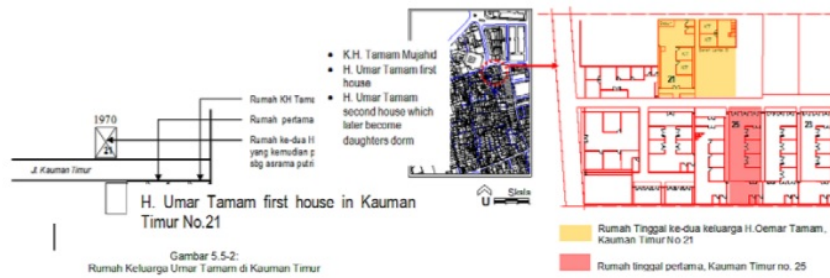


Figure 08: The Family Kinship Space of Kyai Mujahid Period before 1965.

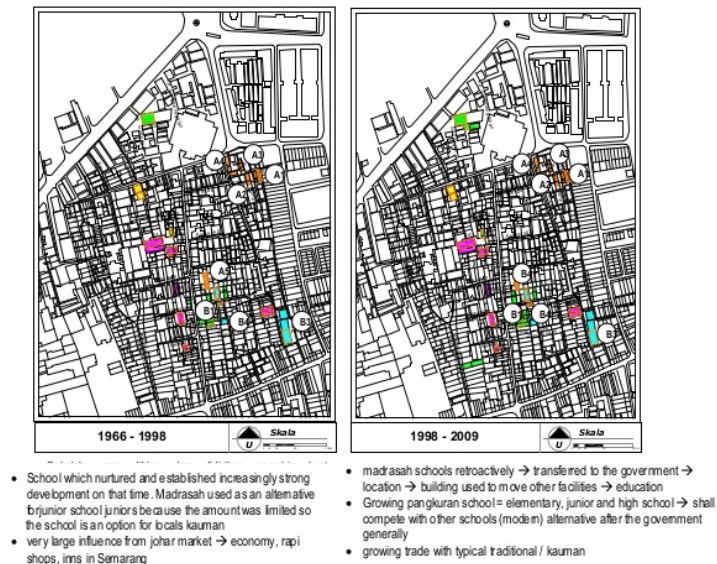


Figure 9: The Kinship space of Kyai Mujahid (period 1966 – 2009).

2. Donate the *Wakaf* building for education. For Mr. Umar family, house has a meaning, a place to continue the family tradition to set up and establish Muslim educational institutions for people around it. Space means a place to distribute alms every year with extended family (relatives). Space means a place to be donated, especially with relatives and with other Muslim societies. Space also means a place to run the propaganda to this family and the surrounding residents, thus also a means of connecting social inequality. This is a form of embodiment of Javanese philosophy: “*mikul duwur mendhem jero*”, meaning to uphold all that is good and bury things that are not good, it should be opened to uphold kinship that was passed down from generation to generation (See Figures 08 & 09).

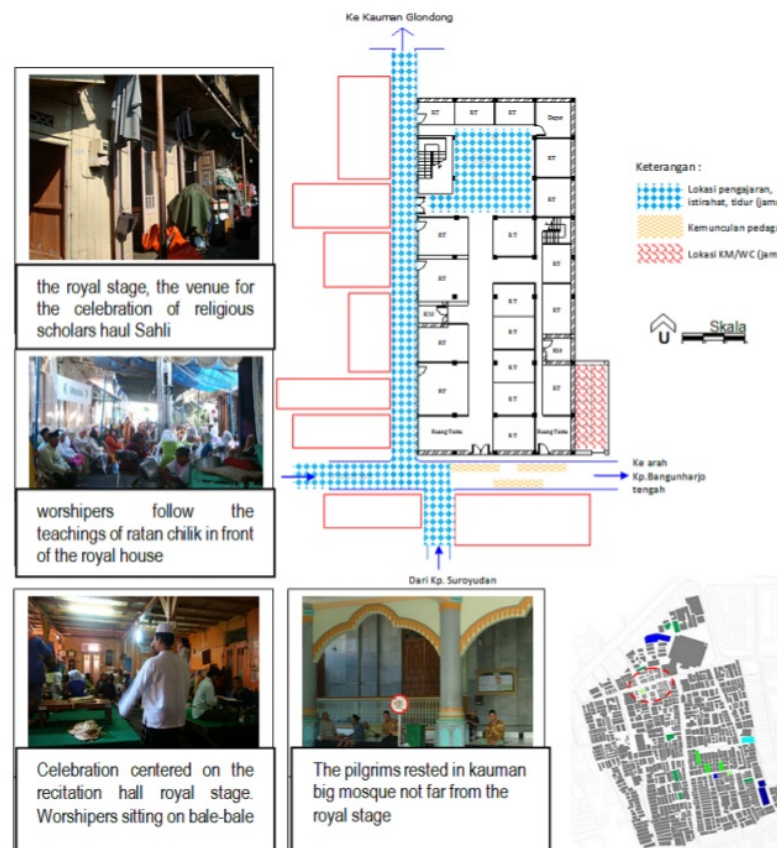


Figure 10: *Pengajian Khol* (religious meeting) to commemorate the 71st year of Kyai Sahli's passing. This Activity used space inside and outside the house, and spilling up to the street and around the house and up to the Great Mosque of Kauman.

3. Mandating Family Wakaf for Teaching. Kyai Sahli (one of famous kyai lived at the beginning of the 20th century) had 40 children. He made the house to be occupied with his wives and 40 children, and then he built a two-story wooden house, with floor area

measure 15 x 25 meters. The house has many rooms to accommodate wives and their offspring, and equipped with a ballroom. Multipurpose room can be used for teaching Quran, or hanging out with family. These families also conduct economic activity, which is done by the women by selling traditional foods around the alley in front of the house. For Kyai Sahli and his descendants, space was a means to foster kinship and gather families - according to Javanese philosophy of "mangan ora mangan yen kumpul", translated to "to eat or not to eat, the most important is to get together with family". Space also means the willingness to be able to share with other family members and the Majlis Taklim congregation founded by his ancestors, namely Kyai Sahli. Space also means the union between household's functions, economic functions, and religious functions (Figure 10).

Islam views the family as foundation of the entire socio-cultural structure, that guarantee the ideology stability (Murtada, 2003). In his case, Kauman community here are well aware that the family is very important role in the ideology establishment of Islam. Good name of the family as religious leaders still fought through the teaching of religious knowledge and providing endowments for educational activities of Islamic morality.

4 Discussion

There is a significant relationship between the theme of Space Acquisition by Local Businessmen and Space for Celebration, and the theme of Kinship Space. Due to the similarity, which is about the effort of self-protection to continue or preserve the good tradition carried on by the family. In the first theme, it is done by external factors, while the second and third themes are internal. The third theme is then classified into a concept of, Kinship Space and Space Acquisition by Local Businessmen are independent variables, while Space for Celebrations is dependent variable. The idealism of local culture creates a community convention, where as people who are able financially suggests to participate to maintains the sustainability of community through controlling the setting system of kampong. This situation explained by Rapoport (2001) as the theory of housing and culture. In this case the local businessmen exquisite buildings also purpose to improve their business.

Theme of Kinship Space is influenced by cultural "guyub" (togetherness, peace) kinship. Neighborhood is a gathering place for relatives, living side by side with friends, helping each other and putting the interests of the group higher than individual interests, mutual cooperation in the use of space, producing the warmth and comfort of residence. The second factor is the kinship or blood relationship; it brings a sense of kinship and high solidarity. The solidarity among Muslims community is an implementation form of the principles

habluminannas and *habluminallah*, which must be maintained their stability (Tajuddin, 1999).

Theme of Space Acquisition by Local Businessmen is influenced by values of religious and cultural also economic factors, the same case is in Muslim Ampel Settlement (Supriharjo, 2000). Muslims are taught to always keep the 'blessing' of a building, so as to transfer ownership of building there are separate procedures, namely the relative priority first, and then the neighbors around the house, and then to others. It is intended that the ownership of a building is handed to the right person to keep the blessing alive. Economic factors, on the one hand is the buyer pressured by economic necessity and decided to sell the building, while the other side is traders willing to expand space for business activities, and the two met on the transfer of ownership rights through buying and selling buildings. Henry Lefebvre (1988) wrote regarding to the production space which is indicated with mobilization of capital and labours. In Kauman the economic production space getting more and more, by acquisition of local businessmen, but this thing built upon of aims to make social cohesion stronger.

Theme of Space for Celebration is affected by the factors of needs, kinship, and culture. The needs will always uphold self-existence (Maslow, 1986) as a social being with pride of the main group. Family of religious leaders has offspring and relatives that grow large, and by doing these celebrations, they're tightening the relationship among people who live far away from each other. In Islam, we are supposed to celebrate winning to commemorate, support, and spread religious propaganda.

Every self-conservation consists of elements such as the subject of space, including merchants and the main group with their own roles. Merchants move by increasing building acquisition so it doesn't fall to people from outside of Kauman, while religious leaders lend spaces for religious education by preparing teachers to transfer knowledge to the mass.

The concept of Self Conservation in Kauman is influenced by values of religious culture, kinship system, and the necessities in life. This reminds us to the Theory of Culture, and Housing of Rapoport (2001) that explains that in one side it is culture – view of life – values – norms – idealism – lifestyle; and in other side it is kinship – status and role – blood relationship, and all have their own role in forming a setting. In the case of Kauman, three factors of religious culture, kinship, and economy hold equally important roles in the forming of spatial settings.

The concept of self-conservation forms a space spontaneously, and its nature as a

controller of a space appears as an organic space (Kostof, 1991). Kostof stated that the characteristic of organic cities are the controlling functions, a symbiosis between one and another. The appearance of businessmen space that owns building spontaneously acts as filter to the penetration of external influence. Meanwhile, the celebration of self existence will strengthen the social ties in the ethnic. This is a social capital to integrate a nation.

In the theme of Space Acquisition by Local Businessmen, there is a tendency that if a building is owned by businessmen, it will leave traditional style and be more modern, and the function will change from housing to commercial use. This shows that capitalism changes the face or the style of local buildings to modern buildings. Internal capitalism done by businessmen in Kauman that are still relatives to religious leaders spreads around the business place in inside Kauman. In a lower level, this will protect Kauman from the threat of outside penetration. In a higher level, this threatens the existence of the community, because the business function suppress the settlement function means human nature in Kauman settlement will also be pressured by commercial business nature. This is a threat to the sustainability of Kauman's community in Semarang.

5 Conclusion

Kauman in Semarang is known as Muslim settlement around the city's Grand Mosque. The condition of Kauman is experiencing the pressure of modernization-capitalization from the city center that acts as central business district. Facing this pressure, the community in Kauman has original local ideas to be able to sustain itself with the concept of Self-Conservation. Two of the most important stakeholders in the existence of Kauman's space are the religious leaders and the merchants/businessmen. The concept of Self Conservation in Kauman is built by three themes, which are the theme of Space Acquisition by Local Business, Space for Celebrations, and Kinship Spaces.

The first theme will impact the level of self protection in Kauman, while the second theme affects the level of social relationship in Kauman community. The Kinship Space affects both of them. If the first theme is done mainly by the businessmen or the working class that are also related to the religious leaders, the nature of self-protection will improve. If it improves, then this will threaten the second theme of celebration, and then it will also threaten the sustainability of Kauman community in Semarang. The recommendation of this research is to arrange the next research to find how those variables works. Further needed an evaluation research in the next 5 years to recheck the existance of that variables.

6 Glossary

Domain	: One empiric category of a social situation
Dugderan	: A Traditional ceremony to welcome <i>Ramadhan</i> (Fasting month)
Emic	: <i>Emic</i> in Anthropology/ Folkloristic known as an approaches besides <i>etic</i> . <i>Emic</i> means an investigation based on how local people think. <i>Etic</i> means scientist oriented
Emperan	: Terrace in Javanese house
Guyub	: The behavior of Javanese people that promote togetherness and peace
Hafidz	: People who memorized whole of Al Qur'an
Khataman	: Celebration after someone finish studying Al-Qur'an
Kyai	: Master of Islamic religious in Java, usually a <i>Kyai</i> leads a <i>pondok pesantren</i>
Langgar	: Little mosque (<i>musholla</i>)
Lengkong	: Side entrance
Locus	: A particular position, point, place
Grand Mosque	: A mosque that hierarchically serve a city
Madrasah	: Islamic education level low to middle
Majlis Taklim	: An institution or informal religious studies from the people for the people.
Mangan ora mangan yen kumpul	: A Javanese Philosophy. A free translation can mean Together in joy and sorrow
Maulud	: Name of a month in Islamic calendar, which is the month when Prophet Muhammad was born.
Mikul dhuwur mendem jero	: A Javanese Philosophy. Free translation can mean honoring the leader or the family by remembering their service and hiding all their depravity.
Mulang	: Teaching religious knowledge
Mburi	: Back room of Javanese house
Njaba	: Vestibule of Javanese house
Njero	: Middle room of Javanese house
Njogan	: Guest room of Javanese house
Pesantren	: Place to study Islamic teachings for adults or children, that is led by a <i>Kyai</i> , usually complemented with a dormitory.
Pondok Pesantren	: A boarding school of <i>pesantren</i>
Ratan cilik	: Literally means "small big street", in comparison with <i>ratan gede</i> (big street). <i>Cilik</i> is Javanese for small.
Ramadhan	: Fasting month
Santri	: Student of <i>Pesantren</i>
Ustadz	: Religious teacher
Wakaf	: Someone's act of giving goods or properties like a building and plot of land voluntarily to Islamic institution, with the purpose of supporting the religious propaganda of the said institution.

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