Proceedings of Symposium on Mosque Architecture, Vol. 3B, pp 23 - 42, College of Architecture & Planning, King Saud University (1419H-1999)

The Contemporary Urban Setting of the Great Mosque and its Urban Community (Kauman) in Javanese Historic Cities - *Indonesia*

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Abstract: In the late fifteenth century, the decline of the Hindu Javanese political role was followed by the increase of trading activities of the north coast towns of Java. Some towns became strategic port towns linked to other islands. The coming of muslim traders especially from Arabia, China or Java sailing the trade route to Malacca introduced Islamic religion to the local people. After the Javanese leaders embraced Islam, the most significant Islamic urban form in which the great mosque and its surrounding urban settlement (compound=*kampung*) called *Kauman*, was inhabited by Muslim followers of the Islamic way of life. It began to be inserted into the fabric of the Javanese city adding a new component to the traditional pattern of: the palace (*kraton*), square (*alun alun*) and market (*pasar*).

At the present time, the great mosque and its *Kauman* surroundings, have become a historic urban center which faces the dynamic rapid change of the surrounding urban settings. As the historical urban setting, *Kauman* today can be discussed not only within the context of contemporary setting as a "trace" of monumental and unique architectural heritage, but also as a "space" for the Muslim community to continue their social life, and as a "place" which experiences the increase of land values because of economic rationalization. This paper attempts to identify problems of the Muslim community surrounding the Javanese great mosque within the context of social religious ties defined by the setting of small mosques (*langgars*), and within the context of social economy challenged by commercialization. This study will also contribute to efforts that guide the development of historic areas.

Introduction

It is believed that Islam penetrated the Javanese Hindu through the early Muslim religious leaders. There were nine traditionally known religious men in Java's history, some of whom were known to be of non Javanese origin. They were often connected with particular palaces or port towns of Java's north coast, such as *Sunan Giri*, known to be connected to the city of Gresik, *Sunan Kalijaga* to the city of Demak, *Sunan Gunung Djati* to Cirebon , *Sunan Bonang* to Tuban, and *Sunan Kudus* to Kudus.

The religious men gave their teachings to small groups of selected students, attracted to them. [1, p.5] They also taught Islam so that Islam was integrated into existing culture, society and politics. Therefore, this new religion was accepted by the Javanese without much resistance. It was alleged that traditional Javanese puppet show (*wayang*) and orchestra (*gamelan*) were introduced by the religious men in their effort to integrate Javanese Hindu belief with Islamic philosophy. The era of the religious men produced no temples, but left instead the mosque of Demak and Kudus both of which retain the Hindu's style: the mix of a traditional sacred building and worship of a new belief/religion. The mosque was built as

the center to spread the Islam thought (*da'wah*) and became a great mosque which then became the embryo of a Javanese Islamic city. In this early Javanese Islamic city, we categorize the great mosque into the religious men type, which is different from the *sultanate* type of the great mosque in the later Javanese Islamic city. The later Javanese Islamic City was shaped mostly by a political ruler. Thus the original city formed around the palace (*kraton*) where the king resided in, or around the official residence (*kabupaten/kawedanan*) of state local officers in the colonial era.

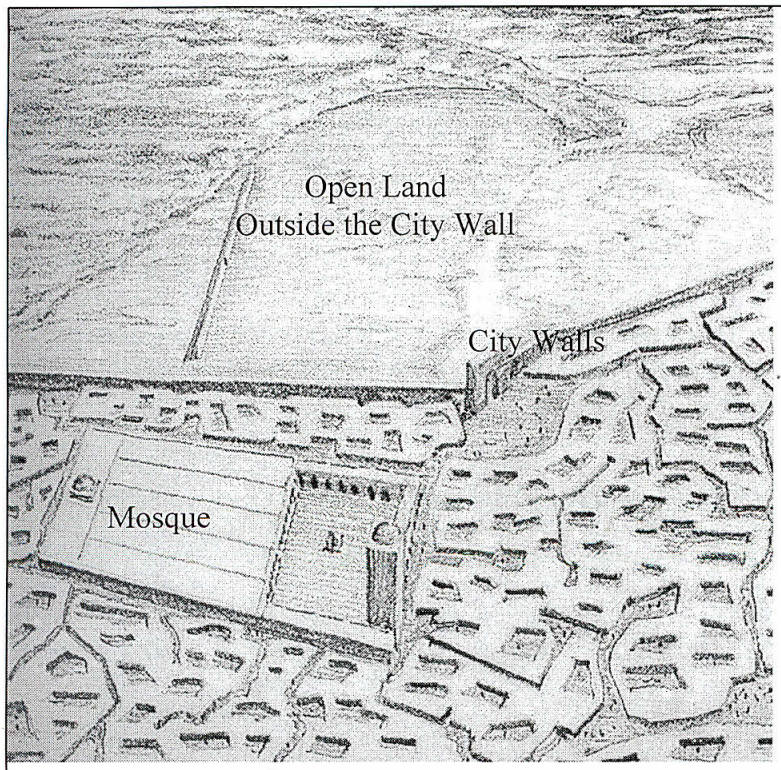
The Javanese ruler, to reinforce his status as the Javanese Islamic society's leader had set a great mosque to serve the Islamic spiritual life. However, at the same time the palace square (*alun alun*) at which perimeters the palace and the great mosque were built and served as the ground for social rites and rituals which were both influenced by Hindu or Javanese belief ("*Javanism*") and Islam. The role of the square as the place for mixing social rituals can be traced throughout the history of the Javanese city, going through the influences of animism, Hindu, Buddha and finally, Islam.

The three city components, i.e. the palace (*kraton*), the great mosque (*Jami* mosque) and the palace square(*alun alun*), were integrated together with a fourth components, the city market. The ruler built the market to serve as the center of the urban economy. These four components palace, mosque, square and market formed a singular spatial unit within the structure of the Javanese Islamic city (it is known as *catur tunggal*).[2] The royal palace and the great mosque were usually set closely together in a certain place at the Palace Square (*alun alun*), while the market was built at some distance from the square in various locations. In the colonial era, the four component pattern became a prototype for the design and development of the smaller towns (*kabupaten/kawedanan*).

The most significant indicator of Islamic influence is the place of worships. Physically speaking, on the city scale, the setting of the place of worship became important not on individual praying but on congregational praying with other Muslims (*jamaah* praying) hence the construction of a great mosque. Kostof illustrated that in general in Islamic countries, the preferred location of the great mosque is near open ground (it is not necessary to be attached) to provide space for the entire *Muslim* community to pray together (Fig. 1). [3, p. 131] For the two most important Muslim feasts, one being the breaking of the fast of Ramadhan (*Ayd al Fitr*) and the other the Feast of the Sacrifice (*Ayd al Kabir*), many Islamic cities choose an open land outside the city walls, devoid any buildings, large enough to contain the entire urban population—the men, at any rate.[4, p.78] In the case of Java, the setting of the great mosque and the square is outside the palace wall. The great mosque is generally placed at and attached to the western part of the palace square (*alun alun*) (Fig. 2). This setting of the mosque is due to the orientation toward Mecca (*Al qibla*), which in Java is to the relatively west as well as the availability of the space for *jamaah* prayers on the square grounds towards the east.[5, p.4]

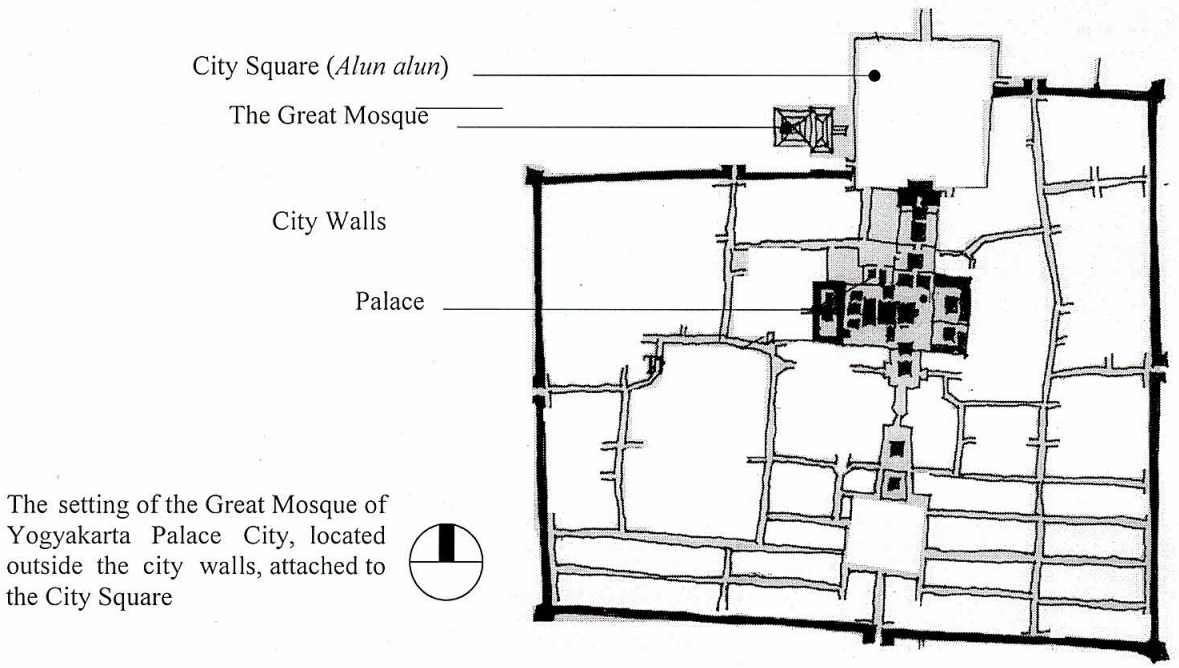
The Muslim Urban Settlement

Definition: The word *Kauman* is derived from an Arabic word, "*qaum*" which means community. The word "*qaum*" became the Javanese word *Kauman* by adding the suffix "*an*" which suggests a place on a settlement for the community. The use of the Arabic word also suggests that there is a The link between the *Kauman* and Islam is clear because this community is a Muslim community living around the great mosque of Javanese urban city centers.



The setting of Mosque found in Algeria. There is an open land , along straight wall oriented to Mecca, to serve as a place of worship on Special feast days.

Fig. 1: The setting of mosque towards city walls and open land.[6, p.131]



The setting of the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta Palace City, located outside the city walls, attached to the City Square

Fig. 2: The setting of mosque towards city walls and open land.

Location in the Javanese City Spatial Setting

The location of *Kauman* could not be separated from the great mosque (Fig. 3). Great mosques in Javanese cities usually are located to the west of the city squares, while the palaces are to the south. In the *sultanate* type city, the great mosque is considered as a symbol to legitimize the Islamic kingdom of Java; while, in the Javanese *wali* type city was built by a Muslim leader (*ulama/kyiai*) the great mosque is considered as a center for spreading the Islamic thought to others (*da'wah*). Although the reason for constructing the great mosque was different between the *sultanate* and religious man type city, in fact, the great mosque is not only a symbolic monument, it is a real place for worship.[7, p. 1] Therefore, Muslim communities have naturally grown around the great mosque. They take care of the building and maintain the existence of the great mosque as the place for learning Islam, praying and keeping rituals regularly. This religious community has lived and occupied land around the great mosque. They built the *Kauman* settlement.

Elements of the *Kauman* Urban Settlement

At the Muslim leader Type City, there are two important elements of the *Kauman* settlement besides the mosque. Those are the leader's lot and students' (*santri*) lots. The students were followers of the leader who played a role as their religious teacher (*kyiai*) as well as the Muslim leader (*ulama*) of the area. The students' lots were placed around the mosque, while the holy man's lot occupied land next to the students' lots and mosque. The students' lots became a settlement so called *Kauman* with the mosque as the focal point. The holy man's lot which was believed to be used for his residence grew into a settlement too (Fig. 4).

Meanwhile, at the *sultanate* city type, the king built the great mosque and in the same time he also formed an institution called *pengulon* to manage and deal with the mosque activities. The religious leader of the great mosque institution was known as a *pengulu* who was appointed by the king himself as a *sultanate* official. Other religious officials who can be mentioned as follows supported the pengulu: [8, pp. 10-16]

- *ketib* (in Arabic= *khateeb,* a person who preaches a sermon in Friday prayer. The *pengulon* used to have 9 *ketibs*);
- *modin* (in Arabic= *mu'adzin,* person who calls for praying through the voice of *azan*. There used to be five *modins* at least, to match with the five times praying);
- *barjamaah* (a group of 40 persons who keep a congregational praying (*jamaah* praying)
- *merbot* (= person who cleans and maintains the mosque)

Each official (from *pengulu* to *merbot*) received a piece of land (*gadhuhan*) which was granted by the king to the great mosque's officials, in return to their services.[9, p. 5 & 10, p. 8] Their lands have turned into *Kauman* urban settlement today. The element which remains significant today is a relatively big residence of the religious official leader (*dalem pengulon*), while residences of other officials (*ketib, modin, barjamaah* and *merbot*) were built in many parts of *Kauman* and blend in with houses of their relatives (Fig. 4).

The Historic Growth and Change

The *Kauman* started as a living place for student (*santri*) studying the Islamic way of life. They were allowed to occupy land owned by the religious leader *and* build a mosque for

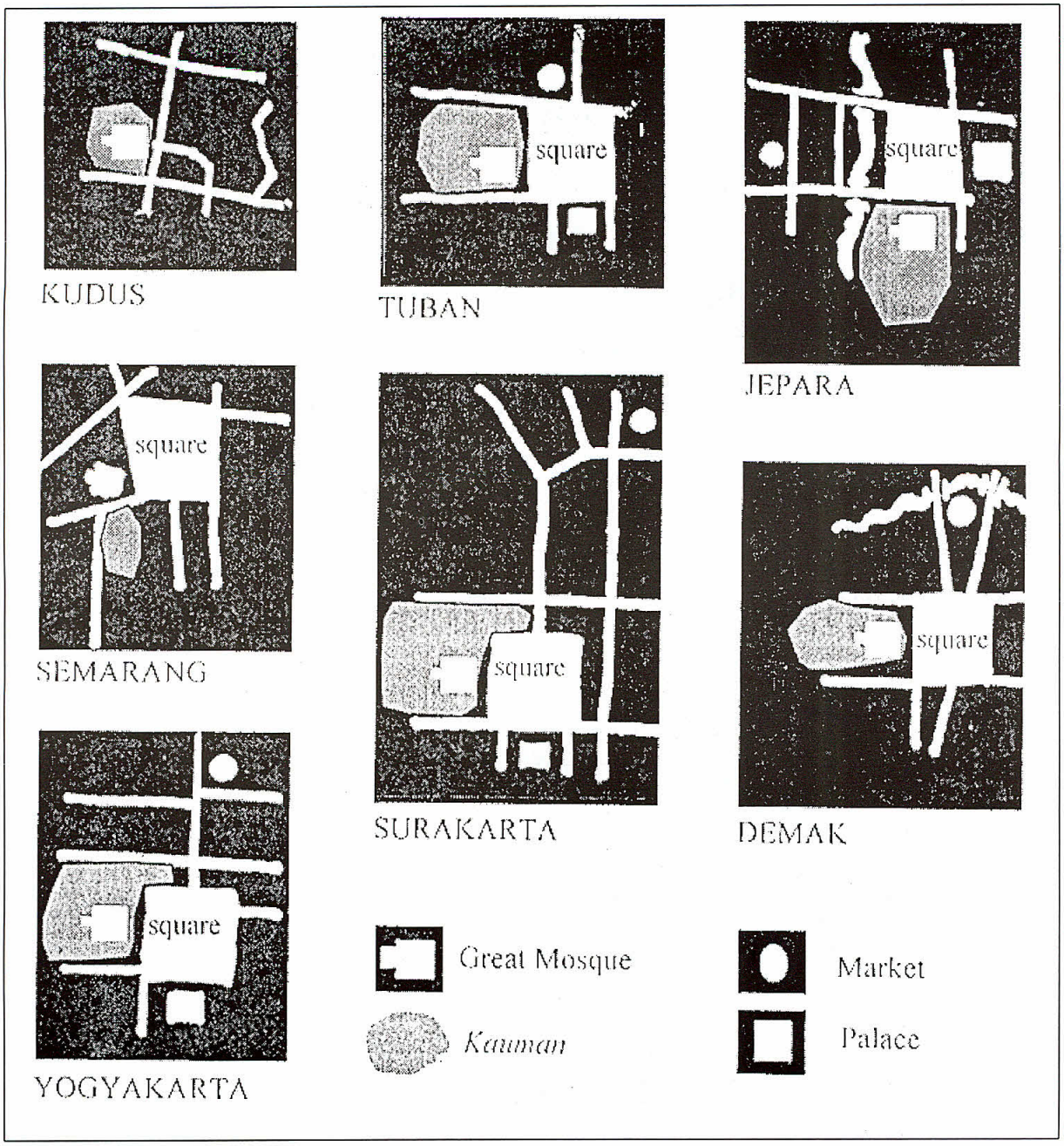
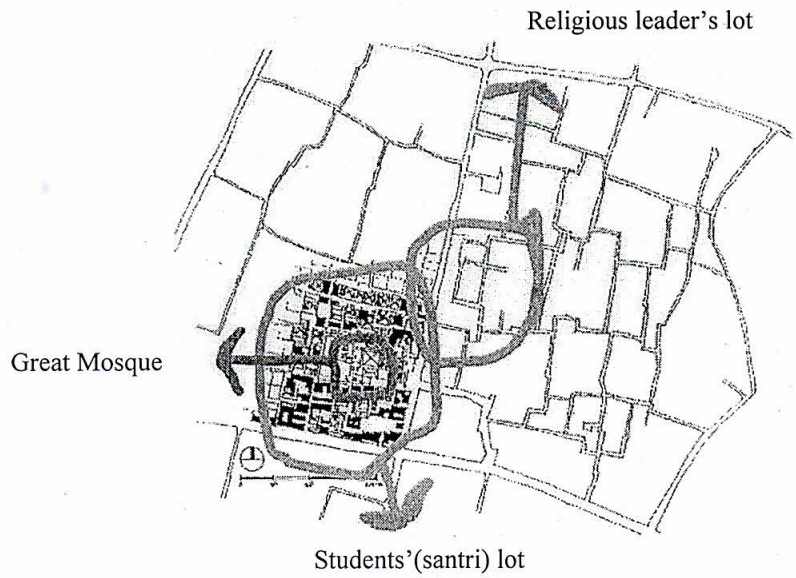


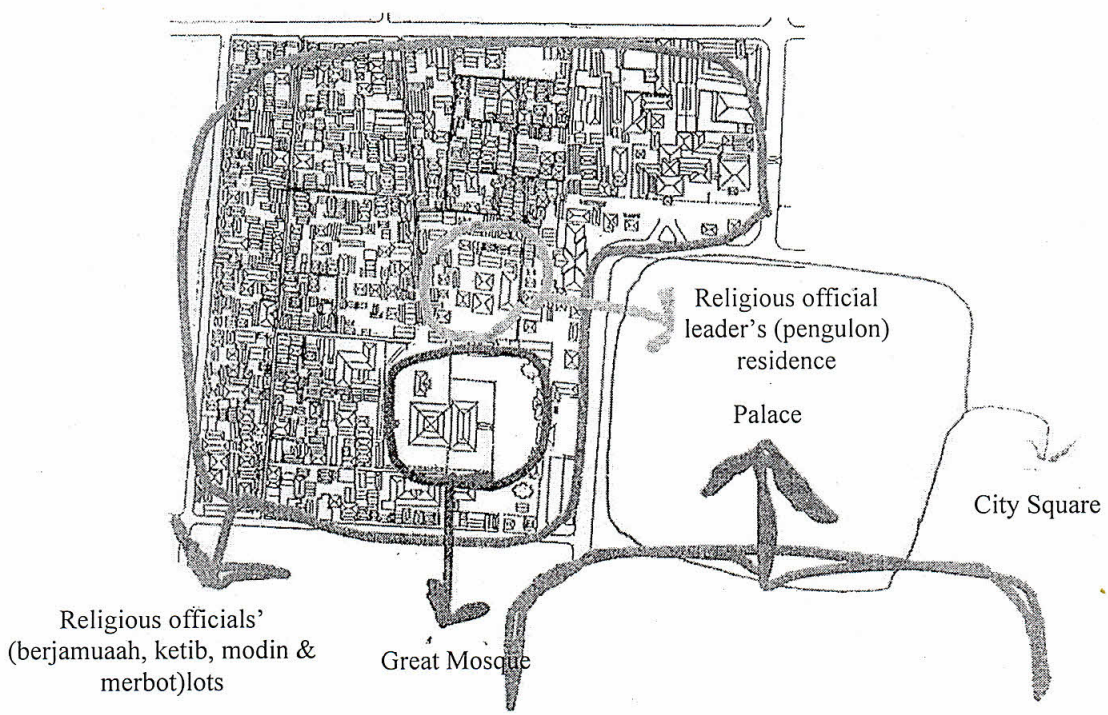
Fig. 3: Kauman Urban Settlements within Javanese City Structures.

spreading the Islamic thought to others (*da'wah*) on the land. The student living place around the mosque, the *Kauman*, was relatively small area. This "small" *Kauman* and the mosque was under direct management of the religious leader. The more influential he became in playing his role to spread the Islam, the greater influence he had on the surrounding communities and the easier it became for him to expand his territory.

Our observation on two Kauman type cities Kudus and Semarang indicates a particular historic development. The old city of Kudus has left original *Kauman* as it was. However, it influenced the



a. Elements of Kauman type city



b. Elements of Kauman in Sultanate type city

Fig. 4: Elements of *Kauman*.

development of its surrounding settlements to become similar religious communities without expanding its identity by naming the place with *Kauman*. In city of the Semarang, the original *Kauman* was under the rule of the Muslim leader (*kyai*) who became the local political ruler later on. In this case, the original *Kauman* grew spatially toward the south of the great mosque and occupied nearby land, splitting the neighborhood into the East *Kauman* and West *Kauman* (Fig. 5).

The *sultanate* type of *Kauman* can be understood as a settlement which had been set in a certain site toward the West of the great mosque by the king since the beginning of his palace city planning. A relatively big *sultanate* land (*gadhuhan*) was provided for the religious officials by the king. This particular land, later on, grew into a densely settlement for families of the religious officials which was then called as *Kauman.* The two most remarkable *sultanate* cities in Java are Yogyakarta and Surakarta. The *Kauman* in Yogyakarta City was planned and located in approximately 192,000 square meters of land toward the West of the royal square. A similar area of land was provided for the Surakarta's *Kauman* (Fig. 6).

The Setting of Small Mosque (*Langgar*)

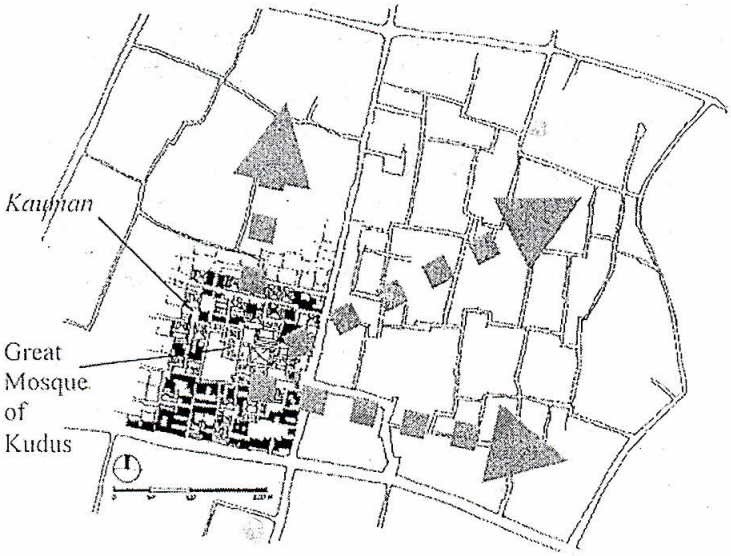
Significant social change in *Kauman* was characterized by the growth of the population. *Kauman* was not only inhabited by individual students of Islam (*santris*) or the great mosque officials, but also had grown into a communal living compound (*kampung*) for their families and relatives. The communities sustain their social and religious identities through the practice of the five Islamic commandments, among them, the five daily prayers. The relationship between the spatial setting and true faith can be observed through the communally shared institutions which make up the Islamic social system. The most important religious and social institutions are mosques.

Gelani[11, p. 62] mentioned that in Muslim housing, there should be only one main focal point, i.e. the Friday mosque, but there can also be other sub focal points. *Kauman* urban settlements in Java obviously has the one main focal point the great mosque, where people gather to perform the Friday noon prayer and hear a sermon concerning a religious, or a pressing individual problem or communal issue of the day. The *Kauman* sub focal points consist of small mosques known as *langgar* or *mushalla.* The *langgars* have been created not only as a place perform the five daily prayers for members of surrounding communities, but also as means to reinforce social ties. Traditionally, the *langgar* has served as a place for education in the absence of schools.

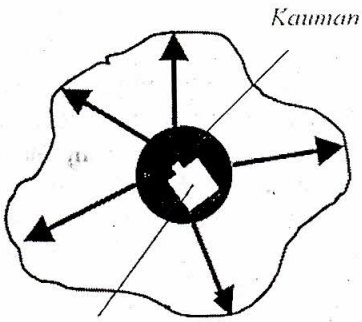
A langgar generally serves a small neighborhood unit composed of 15 to 50 households (Fig. 7). We observed in Kudus 13 langgars around the great mosque, 6 langgars in Semarang, 7 langgars in Surakarta and 6 langgars Yogyakarta. The location of langgars in Kauman have an enough distance to hear easily the voice of the call for prayer (azan) came from the great mosque, in the days when loudspeakers were not available. [9, p. 7 & 12]

The Islamic concept of waqf, which means to delimit commercial transactions involving real or movable property for Muslim or their institution,[4, p. 81] is the basis of establishment of a langgar. Historically, in Kauman, when the sultanate land or the Muslim leader's land was transferred into family ownership property, the family could provide a piece of its land for a langgar based on this waqf designation. The rich Muslim family might also allocate

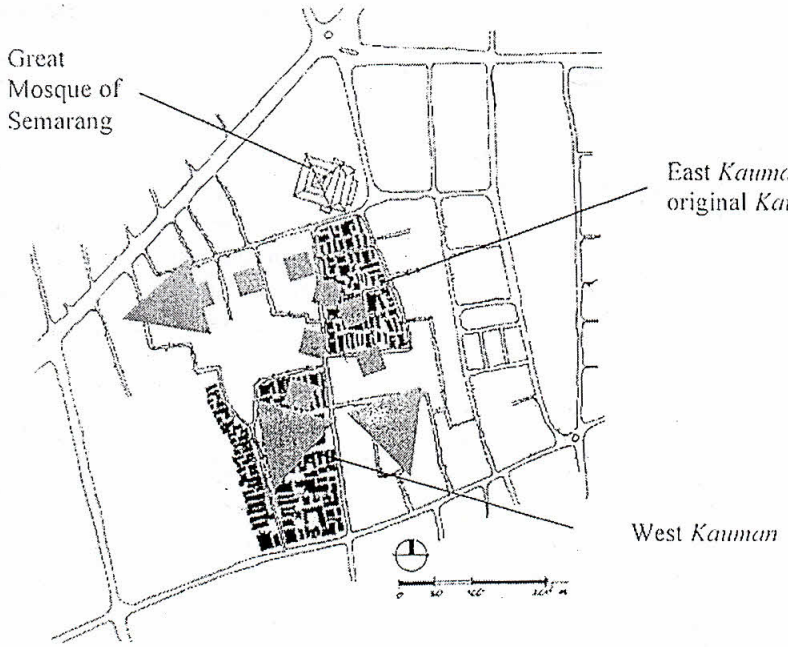
The "samll" *Kauman* Moslem settlement was expanded its influence to surrounding environment with or without changing the village's name into "*kauman*".



MODEL OF THE EXTERNAL GROWTH



The Influence of the "small" *Kauman* in Kudus to the surrounding urban settlement. (Base modified from Ria Wikantari 1997)



The influence of the "original" *Kauman* to the surrounding urban settlement in Semarang, creating the split West-East Kauman.

Fig. 5: The External Growth of *Kauman* Type City.

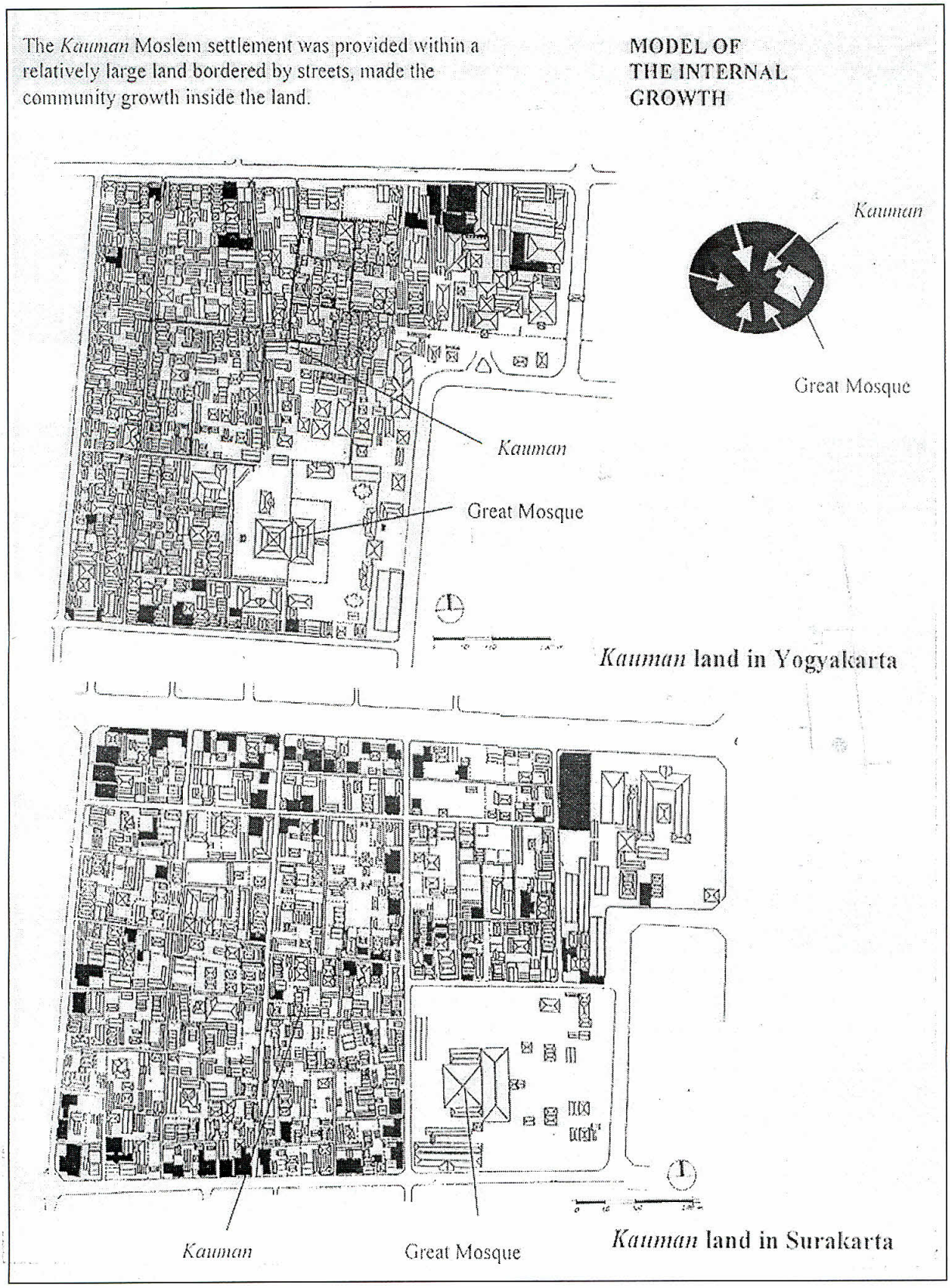


Fig. 6: The internal growth of Kauman around the Sultanate Type City.

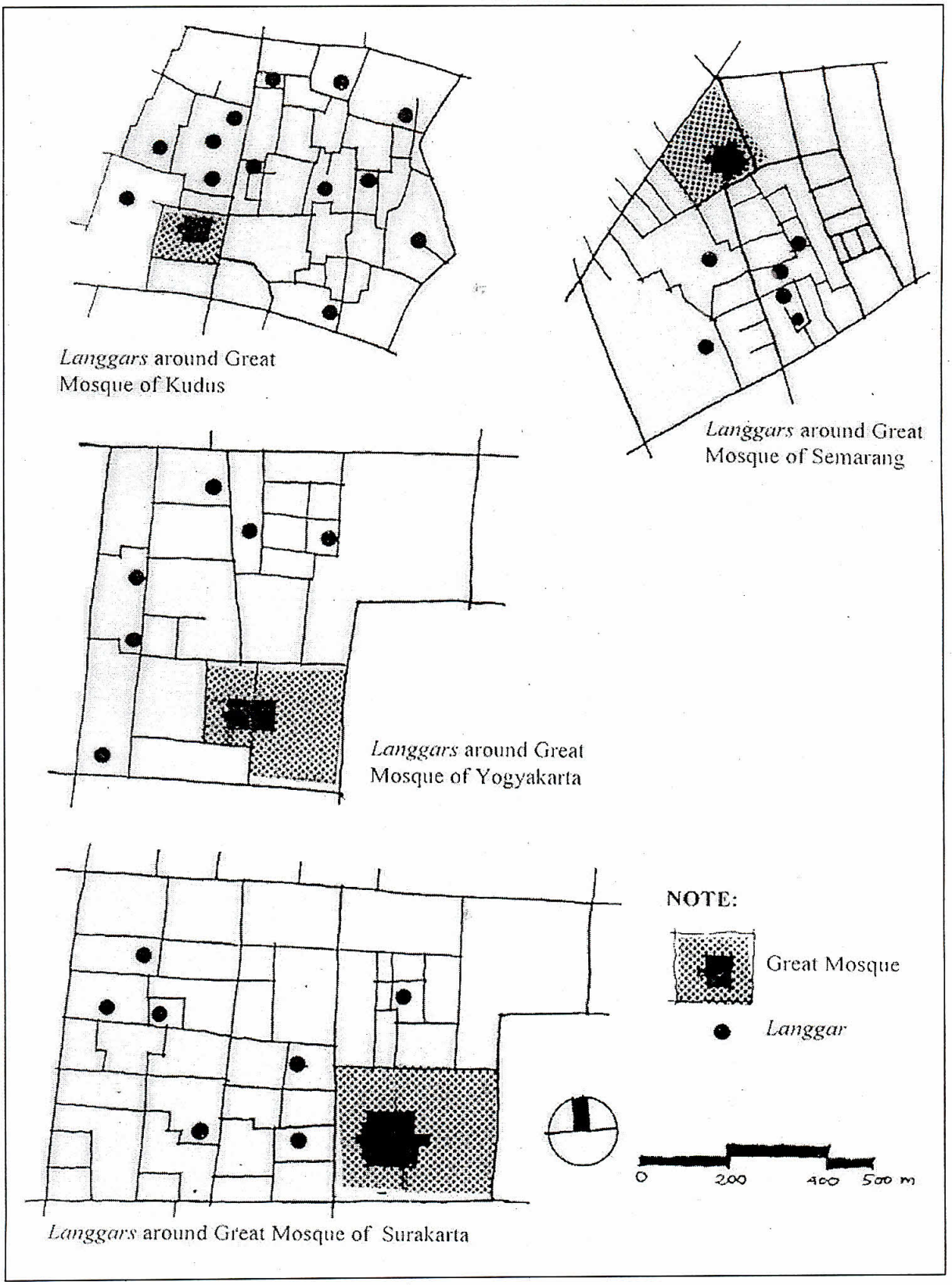


Fig. 7: The setting of langgars around the Great Mosque.

more land around a langgar for establishing Islamic schools (*madrasa*) and dormitory (*pondok pesantren*) for Muslim students (*santri*). These sub centers the langgar, Islamic schools and Muslim dormitory (*pondok pesantren*) within the small neighborhood in Kauman created the structure of a specific social network (Fig. 8).

The network reinforced social ties by greeting other attendances or inviting other families (after the prayer if time permits to celebrate the birth of a child, a marriage festival, circumcision etc. Moreover, *langgars* became the smallest religious learning hub for the neighborhood. Since the Islamic school (*madrasa*) was built next to the *langgar*, children could can study the Islamic religion more effectively. Muslim students (*santris*) might experience and live directly under the Islamic code by staying in Muslim dormitory (*pondok pesantren*) and doing daily practices of Islam.

Kauman Crucial Problems

Islamic Architecture has often been misrepresented, lifted out of its social context by an approach whose main concern has been to describe and promulgate the richness and splendors of the monumental architecture and palaces created for royalty.[13, p.2] Therefore, as the historical urban setting of both the great mosque and of Muslim urban settlement, *Kauman* today can not be discussed within the context of contemporary setting only as a "trace" of monumental and unique architectural heritage, but also as a "space" for the Muslim community to continue their social life, and as a "place" which experiences the increase of land values because of economic rationalization.

Kauman as a Trace of Architectural Heritage

Serageldin characterized the unique of Muslim architecture as a *flexible formalism, which* gave a strong current of interplay with nature and its surroundings so that the interplay produced a different domain than vernacular architecture. [14, p.22] Flexible formalism can be found not only in the various architectural form of the great mosque in Java (Fig. 9), but also in the architecture of dwellings which differ from one *Kauman* to another. This suggests the idea of adaptability of this Muslim architecture with its *locality*.

Papageorgiou[15, p. 28] contends that a "historic settlement" must posses the originality of the urban structure and its significant architectural quality. In this way, the setting of *Kauman* can be traced as a historic site of a specific architectural heritage by exploring its unique local identity which is believed to be the true origin of this religious settlement in Javanese historic city. The unique group of traditional houses of *Kauman* in Kudus city stand densely in a row, linked to each other by a linear open space without fences, and its façade adorned in rich wood carving.[16, pp. 81-105] Mixed colonial vernacular houses, in the tradition of the so called *Indisch* architecture using the verandah and small front yard with fences fronting the street can be found in *Kauman* in Semarang. *Kauman* in Yogyakarta is colored by two story old houses which indicate the owners' wealth in the past.[8, p.21] The walled dwellings in *Kauman* Surakarta show the concept of enclosure to reinforce the private space for family (Fig. 10). However, these traces suggest the need of a new method for preserving the architectural heritage of each *Kauman's* identity in the face of rapid changes in their environments such as population growth, shifting social structures, land use transformation, and commercialization.

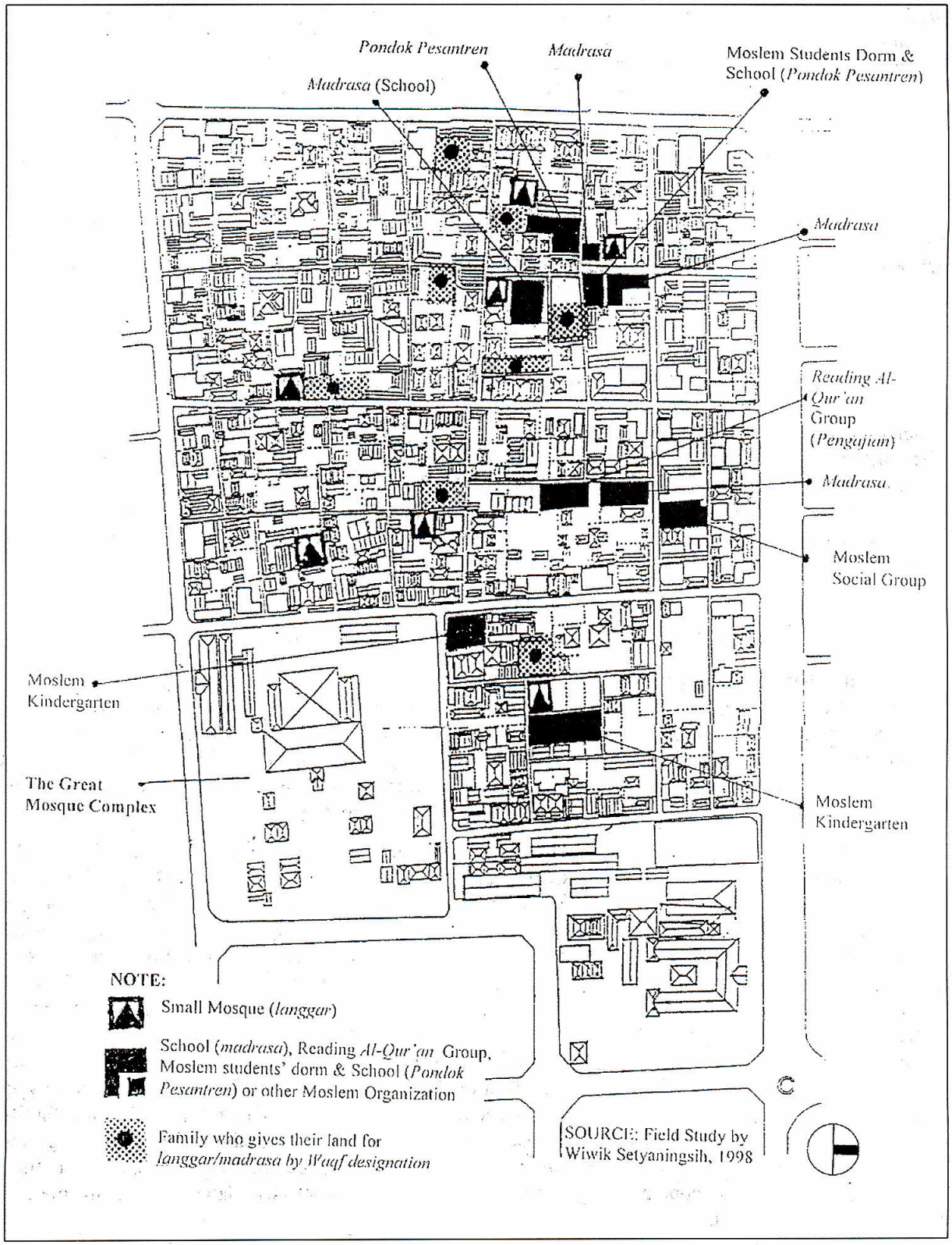
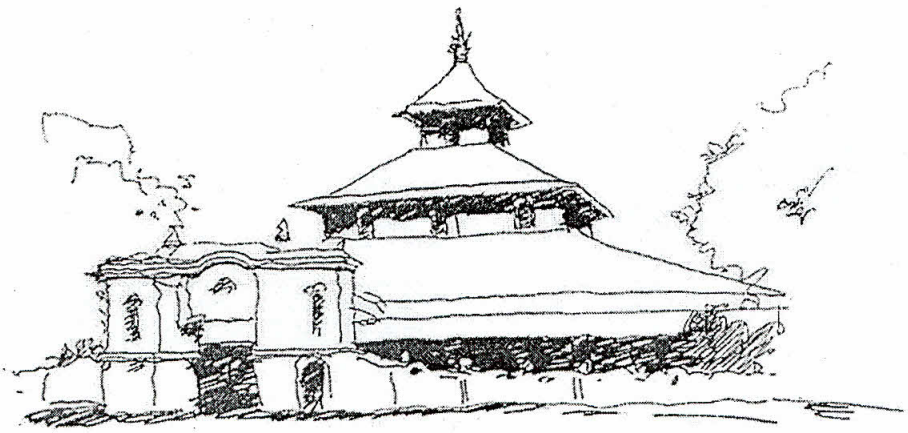
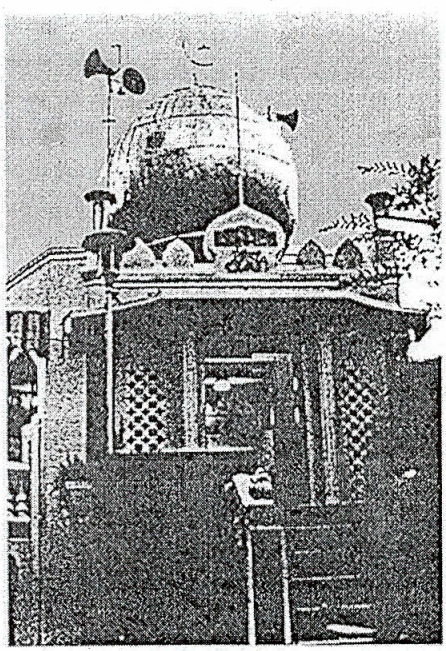


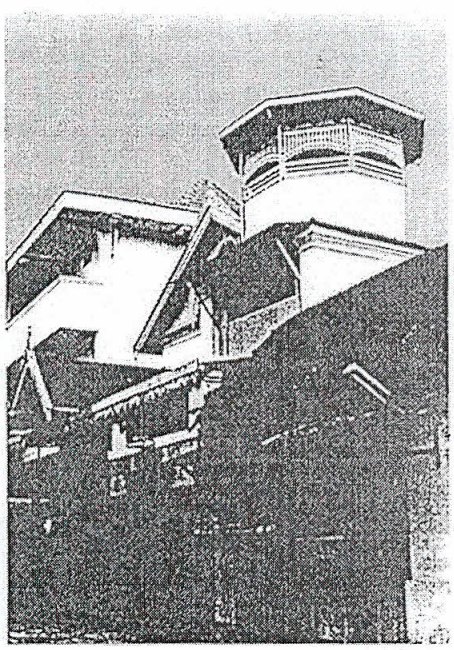
Fig. 8: The neighborhood sub center and *Waqf*: the case of *Kauman* in Surakarta.



The Great Mosque of Semarang



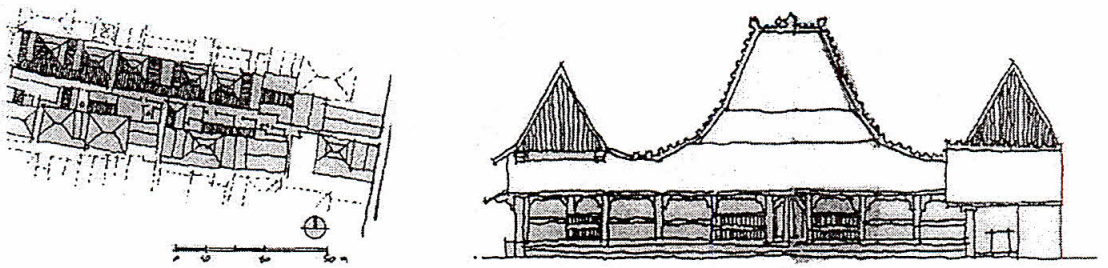
A *Langgar* at
Kauman-Semarang



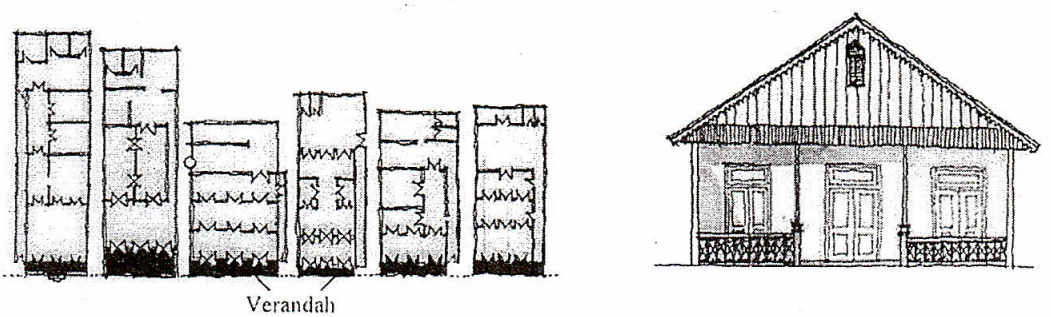
A Langgar at
Kauman-Surakarta

Photograph: Courtesy of A.U. Hatmoko

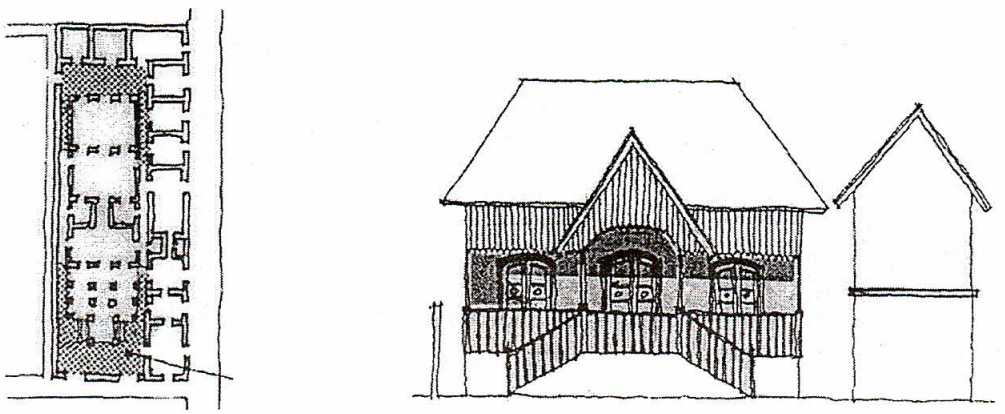
Fig. 9: The architecture of the Great Mosque and Langgars.



A Group of traditional houses in *Kauman*, Kudus Source: Sardjono [1, pp..83-199]



Colonial-vernacular houses with verandah in *Kauman*, Semarang. Source: Febriant et.al: [17, p.87]



The enclosure dwellings within its wall in *Kauman*, Surakarta. Source: Field Survey by Musyawaroh, 1988

Fig. 10: *Kauman's* Architecture with its Locality.

Kauman as a Dynamic Place for Social Changes

The increased size of population was accompanied by the transition of *Kauman* as a living place for Muslim students (*santris*) or the great mosque officials into a settlement for a Muslim community. The transition not only resulted in overcrowding caused by land congestion, but also influenced the social and educational pattern of behaviors. Formerly, the greater part of *Kauman* residents got religious education from their own small mosques (*langgars*) which were erected in many places in the *Kauman* as a Muslim urban settlement [9, p.8] Today, *Kauman* people tend to send their children to get education in public education institutions outside *Kauman.*

This phenomenon may be a positive for *Kauman* residents in the sense that it provides opportunities to broaden their knowledge and social contacts, but it has decreased the full day usage of the *langgar.* Our observation in the *Kauman* Kudus where most people go to school outside the *kampung,* indicates that *langgars* are closed in the morning, and open at noon or mostly in the evening. Although to a certain extent, the change makes the function of the *langgar* less efficient than before, one can argue that there is an effective coordination between learning at the public school outside the *Kauman* during the day, and studying the religious knowledge and experiences at the *langgar* in the evening. People from outside *Kauman* often choose to come to *Kauman* for attending the Qur'an reading and discussion at *langgar* in the evening. Actually the *Kauman's* image as a religious settlement is still attracting many people to come today. If not for that, the *langgar* will have been left empty and lost a tool to spread the Islamic thought (*da'wah*).

Kauman as an Urban Land access for Commercialization

Problems faced by *Kauman* as a structural component of the city center have always had a tendency to grow along with economic activities and increasing land values. The increase of land values influences people to have efforts to make the land benefit or provide the place for productive change[18, p. 180] Historically, the families living in *Kauman* had business of their own to increase their income. They mostly engage in home industry such as intricately designed traditional textile (*batik*), ornamental knitted garment, and woven cloth which became significant businesses at *Kauman.*[10, p.11-20 & 16, pp. 42-45] The similarity of home industries among the various *Kaumans* was probably caused by the fact that it was the women who play a role at their family's home industry. Moreover, the kind of garment, clothes and traditional textile (*batik*) were specifically designed according to Islamic requirements attracted buyers from outside *Kauman.*

The home industries were located mostly inside the settlement's land proper rather than at the peripheral land next to the main street. Such activities did not very much change the physical appearance of *Kauman*, rather they gave more color to the *Kauman* architecture. and even gave more color to the *Kauman* architecture. Meanwhile, the peripheral land of *Kauman*, located next to the main street, provided place for contacts with outside people and were more to be used for contemporary commercial activities. We observed that the Yogyakarta's *Kauman* commercialized the street frontage selectively with shop houses selling Muslim praying items and clothing, mixed with convenience good shops, banks, hotels and guest houses etc. In Kudus too, we can still find kiosks selling the Muslim praying outfits and handy craft, lined up along the streets in front of the great mosque in the old city. However, *Kauman* main street in Surakarta and Semarang do not show significant commercialization related to the religious goods. In Surakarta, *Kauman* peripheral lands on the main street are used for gold shops owned mostly by the Chinese. There also textile shops, carpet and plastic sheets shops and other shops selling goods unrelated to the

Muslim needs. In Semarang, although we can still find shops selling Muslim praying items and clothing, the entirely image of its *Kauman* main street is the building materials trade and a busy daily market (Fig. 11).

If the land inside the *Kauman* suggests more adaptable business within the context of existing traditional houses, the land on the main street easily becomes the subject of commercialization or contemporary usage which are open to the influences of the local economic activities. The contemporary usage, then, may lead to rapid physical change which is often in conflict with the goal of preserving architectural heritage.

The *Kauman* case has forced us to face the issue of providing opportunities for economic growth for *Kauman* residents by allowing for commercial tendency without loosing the *Kauman's* role as leading community in spreading the Islam nor ruining its identity or image as a Muslim settlement defined by its specific architectural heritage.

Kauman in the Future

Our recommendation in this study is that typical problems of the great mosque and *Kauman* (which is still alive until the present as a vital living space for the Muslim communities, a prospective place for commercial and as an Islamic urban archaeological site) have to be carefully solved by understanding the following planning attitudes or strategy:

- **Maintaining Social ties based on religious approach by preserving the setting of sub centers in *Kauman*.**

The case of *Kauman* indicates that maintaining function of sub centers, the small mosques (*langgar*), Islamic schools (*madrasa*) and Muslim dormitory (*pondok pesantren*) are necessary to reinforce the social ties, which, have been shown in other urban areas to shift to more individual modes. The setting of sub centers also play an effective role to support the function of the great mosque to spread the Islam religion (*da'wah*).

- **Developing "commercial opportunity" to anticipate the increase of urban land value.**

Commercialization in the living community in historic site such *Kauman*, demonstrates the contemporary tendency to create multiplicity of functions along with the increase of the urban land value. It has been suggested that multiplicity of functions is fundamental and in compliance with the purpose of planning for the urban future.

- **Preserving the *Kauman* urban heritage concerning the future.**

The way in which *Kauman* has been preserved as an urban heritage showing the Muslim settlement as a significant architectural identity and should allow for physical change or modification to accommodate changes in land use. Physical changes and modifications which should properly be placed in the stream of the *Kauman's* own history, are required to implement the idea of adaptive re use with regards to the potential resources of the heritage itself and the pressures of introducing "new function" resulting from commercialization or according to the need of its Muslim community for the future.

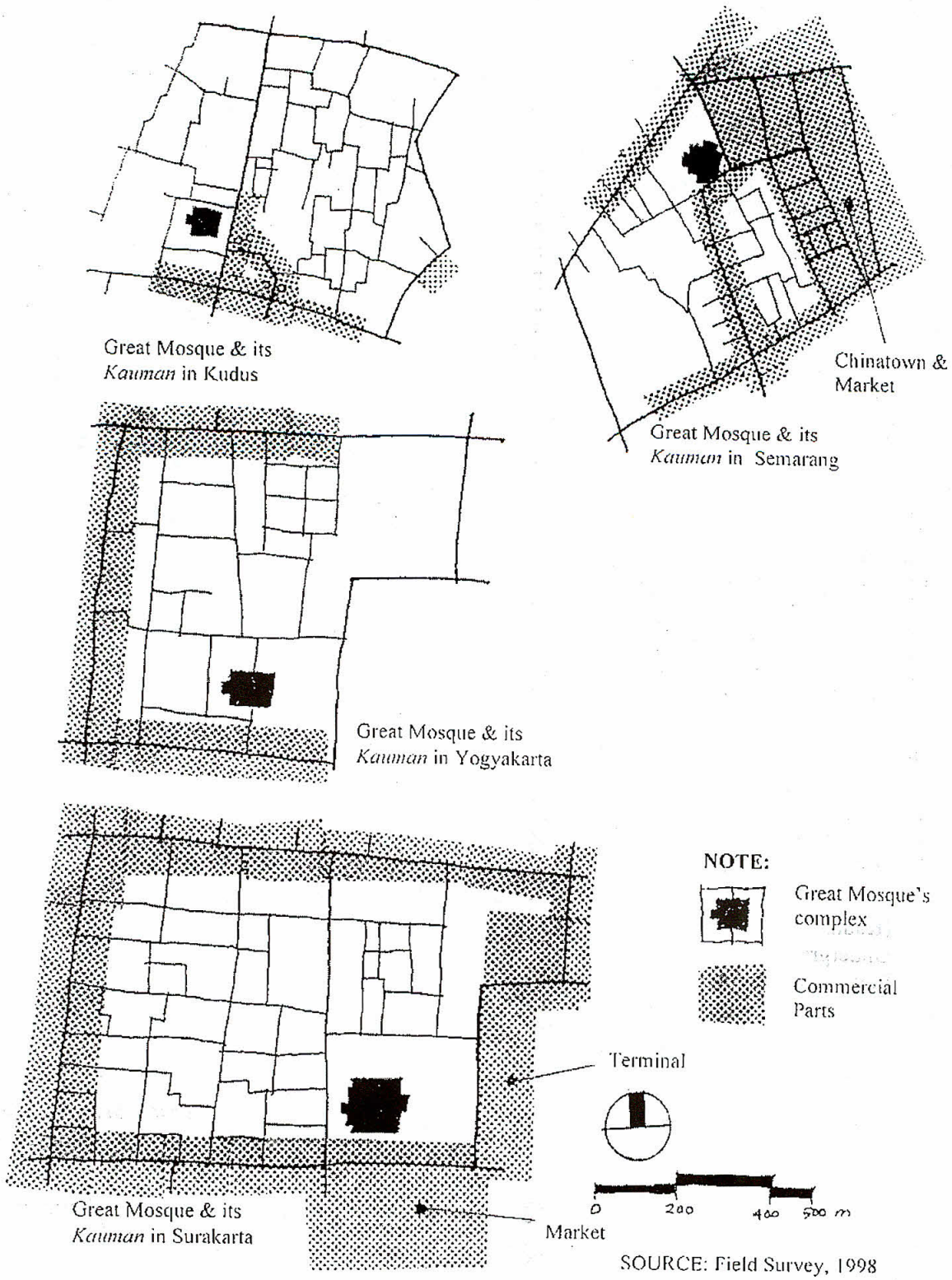


Fig. 11: Commercialization around the Great Mosque and Its *Kauman* Settlement.

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التشكيل العمراني المعاصر للمسجد الكبير ومحيطه العمراني في المدن الإندونيسية التاريخية

ايكابوترا و سيكيت سايوكيو

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ملخص البحث: في أواخر القرن الخامس عشر، تبع انحطاط الدور السياسي للإندونيسيين الهندوس تزايد في النشاط التجاري في مدن الساحل الشمالي لجزيرة جاوة. وقد أصبحت بعض المدن موانئ استراتيجية ترتبط بالجزر الأخرى. لقد ساهم قدوم التجار المسلمين وبخاصة من العرب والصينيين والإندونيسيين في نشر الدين الاسلامي عند السكان المحليين. وقد حصل التطور العمراني الإسلامي المتميز بعد اعتناق الحكام الإندونيسيين للدين الإسلامي، حيث بدأ النسيج العمراني للمدينة الجاوية باحتواء المسجد الكبير وتجمعه العمراني الذي يقطنه المسلمون الذين يتبعون الطريقة الإسلامية في الحياة. وبذلك أضيف عنصر جديد إلى النموذج التقليدي للقصر وللساحة والسوق.

لقد أصبح المسجد الكبير ومحيطه في المدن الإندونيسية التاريخية في الوقت الحالي مركزا" عمرانيا" تاريخيا" يواجه التغييرات العديدة المتسارعة في تشكيل المحيط العمراني. و يمكن مناقشة التشكيل العمراني التاريخي للمدن الإندونيسية التاريخية ليس فقط ضمن المحيط المعاصر كدليل على التراث المعماري الأثري المتميز ولكن كفراغ يؤمن الحياة الاجتماعية للمجتمع المسلم و كمكان ترتفع فيه قيمة الأراضي بسبب التأثير الاقتصادي الناجم. تحاول هذه الورقة أن تحدد مشاكل المجتمع المسلم المحيط بالمسجد الجاوي الكبير ضمن محيط الروابط الاجتماعية الدينية المحددة عن طريق تشكيل المساجد الصغيرة (لانكارس)، وضمن محيط الاقتصاد الاجتماعي المواجه لتحدي العوامل التجارية. وتساهم هذه الدراسة في الجهود التي تقود عملية تطور المناطق التاريخية.