Abstract

Mataram in Java and Aceh in Sumatra were two contemporary kingdoms in the 17th century Indonesia Archipelago. Therefore it can be hypothesized that the Palace City of both kingdoms shares a distinct similarities in their topological characteristic. This study aims to look at that hypothesis.

The knowledge that was used to compare the Palace City of both kingdoms was abstracted from various secondary sources such as Graff and Arraniry. From those sources the topological arrangement of the Palace City were constructed and compared. From the study it can concluded that in terms of spatial nodes, such as the inner and central sanctum of both kingdoms are very similar (in both kingdoms the inner sanctum are known as the “dalam”). In both Kingdoms the capital city were organized in term of a virtual axis (inner to periphery). However, the virtual axis that governs the Palace City of Mataram has much more cosmological meaning than that of the Acehnese Kingdom.

Keywords: topological, nodes axis, Palace City.

Introduction

The terms Palace City is used to describe a city which has a palace as its determinant. In the past, Palace City can be found in various islands in Indonesia Archipelago (Reed, 1976). This Paper will discuss the topology of two Palace City in Indonesia, i.e. Aceh and Mataram in the 17th century.

Bustanussalatin or literally “The Garden of Kings” is a book written by the famous Islamic scholar Syeikh Nuruddin Arraniry of Aceh in the 17th Century. Within the book Nuruddin described the Palace of the King of Aceh at the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda. Topological description of the Garden of The Kings was done by the author of this paper in 2006 (Agus, 2006). A topological description of the Palace of The Kings in Aceh to this Author knowledge has not been done by anyone before.
The Kraton (palace) of Mataram in Java at the time of Sultan Agung is the contemporary of the Garden of the Kings of Aceh at the time Sultan Iskandar Muda. Many studies have described the Kraton of Mataram from the time of Sultan Agung and up to this day of the Kraton of Jogyakarta (for example Woodward, 1999).

Both Kingdoms are contemporary in the 17th century (Ricklefs, 1991). As contemporaries, in this paper the Author hypothesize that there is a topological similarities between the palaces (kraton) of both kingdoms as it its described by many author in he case of Mataram and from Bustanussalatin in the case of Aceh. Thus in accord with the hypothesis, the purpose of this paper is to describe the topological similarities and differences that exist between the palace of the king in Mataram and Aceh in the 17th century.

**Topological Description**

A topology can be discerned into the following components. First a topology contains a set of nodes. Secondly a topology contains a set of edges which connect the nodes to a certain form of a graph. Thus the third component of a topology is a graph.

In an urban planning terminology, nodes can be identified as building, space, vegetation or any other form of artifact that is non-axial or non directional. Edges that connect the nodes can be identified as a path, route or other linier element such as river, wall perimeter etc. Therefore an edge is directional as it is described by its axis. Graph is delineated by a set of information that describes how nodes are connected by edges. Therefore a Graph can have a direction, but also sometime is not directional. Topological comparison is then done by comparing the existence of functionally and also philosophically similar nodes, edges and graph that existed in both palace in Mataram and Aceh.

Topologically the Garden of The Kings described by Nuruddin Arraniry can be seen at Figure 1. In Bustanussalatin, Nuruddin Arraniry describes the Garden of the Kings as to have several nodes that are part of the river Darul Isky. All of the nodes are two ponds, one bay and two islands. At the Garden there are also several nodes in the form of buildings. Eight buildings, one palace and two gates were mentioned in the Bustanussalatin. There are also several types of vegetation that can be considered as nodes. Several artifacts are also mentioned in the Bustanussalatin, such as the stone where the Sultan usually fishing, one waterfall and several fountains. In terms of edges, in Bustanussalatin description about the Garden of the King we could find the Darul Isky River and the walls which surround the compound. From the descriptions thus we can conclude that the organizing element is the Darul Isky River. All other nodes and
edges are always in several ways related to the River. Thus the total configuration forms a linear set of nodes and edges along the River Darul Isky.

Figure 1. The Garden of the Kings According to Bustanussalatin (Agus, 2006).

Topologically the Palace City of Mataram can be seen at Figure 2. From several Dutch source such as Jan Vos and van Goens (Graaf, 1958), we also have a detailed but incomplete description of the Palace City of Mataram in the 17th century. For example in Jan Vos description about Kerta in 1624 topologically can be described as in Figure 2. From the figure, several nodes can be seen in Kerta. For example in Kerta we can see a set of Gates (Gerbang), Halls (Bangsal), throne (singasana), open spaces and trees. All the nodes are arranged along a virtual axe that culminates near the throne. The compound is surrounded by walls, and the spaces are separated by walls and connected by gates.

Compare to the description on the Jogjakarta Palace by Woodward (1991), Kerta is much simpler than Jogjakarta. However the total form of the Palace City between Kerta and Yogyakarta is very similar. Even though separated almost more than a century, for more detailed comparison we also compare some of the Palace element in Jogjakarta to that of Aceh in the 17th century.

As in the case of Yogyakarta, the nodes are also arranged along south to north axe. Information about vegetation and the symbolic meaning of each node that are missing in Jan Vos' description can be filled from Woodward description about Yogyakarta. Since the purpose of this paper is a topological
comparison between Aceh and Mataram in the 17th century, here, on this paper the author will not explain the details about the symbolic meaning contained by the nodes, edges and the total configuration of Yogyakarta Palace City.

Kerta According to Jan Vos in 1624 (Graaf, 1958)

Yogyakarta According to Woodward (1961)

Figure 2. The Palace City of Mataram.

Topological Comparison

According to Bustanussalatin there are also several state or court functions that are done on the waterfront of Darul Isky. The river also functions as a pleasure garden for the king. Further downstream, in the Garden of the Kings there are several lakes and wall of stones that is lined with willow trees. Along the river there is also another lake with a small island and pond planted with lotus. The theme related to the water body such as lakes and river also exists in the Palace City of Mataram. According to van Goens who had visited Sultan Agung's Palace City in 1633, in the palace compound there is a pond as wide and breath as long as the firing distance of a rifle and a depth of about 6 meter (Graaf, 1958). The pond also functions as a place where Kings Harem bath. In the pond there is also miniature boats thus according to...
Graaf (1958) the pond is very similar to the Taman Sari of the present day Yogyakarta. Very similar to the fishing pond in the case of the Garden of the King in Aceh (Iskandar, 1966), in Sultan Agung's Palace City there was also ponds full of fishes in the eastern part of the axe.

Bustanussalatin also mentions about various trees (65 types) and flowers (50 types) that were planted along the riverside. On the other side of the river, there are many other buildings such as the Balai Rekanan Cina built by Chinese craftsmen, Balai Kemasan (Golden Room) built by People from where the Wind Come (West), Balai Cermin (Room of Mirror) and a small mosque that is surrounded by various coconut trees. In Mataram's case the existence of vegetation whether physically or symbolically plays an important role in the Palace City of Mataram. According to Jan Vos a Dutch who had visited the Palace City of Sultan Agung at Karta mentioned how the Waringin trees place an important role in delineating the Alun-alun or open spaces where he was asked to pass before he could meet Sultan Agung (Graaf, 1958). Although more recent, Woodward again eschatologically mention how various vegetation symbolically functions as the delineation and compartmentalization of the spaces in the Palace City of Yogyakarta (1991).

There is a conscious consideration on the importance of water in the design of the Garden of the Kings. This conscious consideration of the importance of the river can be seen on the realigned river so it could pass the king's palace compound. The centrality of Darul al Isky in the design of the garden (Lombard, 1986) also indicates the conscious consideration about the importance of water in the design. In Mataram's case, according to Babad Momana, the river Opak was dammed as to form into a lake for the sake of the king (Graff, 1958). Though most of the pleasure lake of Sultan Agung was devastated by flood and can not be seen again today, several recent archaeological excavation had indicates the possibility of the existence of the moats around Sultan Agung's Palace and was known as Jagang (lnajati, 2007).

Bustanussalatin describes the garden as a meeting place between a river (Darul Isky or Krueng Daroy) and other land located facilities of the garden such as the Medan Khayali, Gegunungan Menara Permata and the Stone where Sultan Iskandar Muda usually fishing etc. If we look at the description of van Goens about Sultan Agung's Place City, very similar to the Acehnese case, along the procession to meet the Sultan van Goens indicate the existence of several stately buildings, throne and space surrounded by walls and planted by trees of various species (Graaf, 1958). Though Graaf has not mention in detail about the various functions along the axe, we can surmise that the condition in Sultan Agung time is not far detached from the
condition of Yogyakarta's palace as it is described by Woodward. As in Aceh, the case, every space and other artifact that existed along the axe contain functional and symbolical meanings (Woodward, 1991). Unfortunately the depth of meaning describes by Woodward the case of Yogyakarta Palace does not exits in the case Aceh due to a very limited source that describes Acehnese Palace City. However if we look at the pompous names attached to the buildings along the river Darul Isky (for example Balai Kemasan (Golden Room) built by People from where the Wind Come i.e. West) as it is described in the Bustanussalatin, we can assume that most of the buildings and artifacts that existed along the river, similar as in the Palace of Yogyakarta described by Woodward, contains a prominence symbolical meanings.

In the Garden of the Kings that Nuruddin describes in the Bustanussalatin a river called Darul Isky can be considered as the organizing elements of the Garden. In Mataram's case the organizing elements is an axe beginning form the south and ends at the north. According van Goens who visits the Sultan Agung's Palace City, along the axis, the compound is compartmentalize into several different open space and delineated by walls and connected to each other by Gapuras (or stately gate). Thus topologically the Palace City in Aceh and Mataram can be considered to have a strong similarity but with different physical organizing element.

According to Bustanussalatin compiled by Iskandar (1966) the Garden of the Kings in the age of Sultan Iskandar Muda is located south of the King's palace. The river enters the Garden from the South via an opening on the Garden's wall and framed by two small forests both on the riverside. The Dutch van Goens enter the Sultan Agung's Palace City from the south (Graaf, 1958). It seems the procession direction along the axis in Aceh and Mataram is different. However, according to van Goens, in another of Sultan Agung's Palace City located in Plered, there is no South Alun-alun. On the south part of the Plered Palace is located the inner sanctum of the palace. Therefore the movement along the axis in both case Mataram and Aceh topologically indicates that both Palace City is quite similar. In both Palace City the graph contains only one dominant axe.

The organizing element of Garden of the Kings in Aceh is a river, while in Mataram case it is an axe. In both cases the organizing element is oriented to the south and north cardinal direction. However physically the organizing element in Aceh is waterways, while in Mataram is a circulation axe. The orientation of the organizing element in Aceh and Mataram is also different. In Aceh's case the organizing elements start from the south and ends in the north, while in Mataram's case, the axis are traveled beginning from the south and end in the north. However, if we
consider the eschatological explanation on the movement in Yogyakarta Palace done by Woodward (1991), the movement in both cases is quite similar. According Woodward (1991), eschatologically the sacredness of places along the axe of the palace in Yogyakarta moves from the south to the north. The places along the southern part of the axe are considered a more profane the ones exist on the northern part of the axe that are considered as more sacral and related to the netherworld of God. Eschatologically, the most scared part of the organizing element in Aceh's case is located in the south. The activity on the Garden of the Kings as it is stated by Nuruddin Arraniry in Bustanussalatin is less detailed as its narration move from south to the north. However, the descriptions of the foreign dignitaries who had visited the Acehnese Palace City are more about the Northern part since the southern part where the Garden of the Kings is located, is prohibited to be seen by others except by the King and his closest aides (inner sanctum). Therefore in both cases the axe represents the spectrum of profanity to sacredness. In pragmatic terms, it is this axe that determines the expansion of more mundane development such as housing and commercial center and the extension of the city to modern era.

The garden of Bustanussalatin has a certain theme which echoes the Mughal Gardens (Koch, 2001) and an image of a Paradise according to Islam. The Qur'an describes that in paradise there are rivers with cool clear water and full of fishes. In Acehnese case, the taste of Mughal Gardens is stronger than that of Mataram's case. This fact can be understood since the influence of Islam in both contemporary Kingdoms is quite different. In Aceh in the 17th century Islam has been deeply accepted so as to have more influence to the court while the early Hindu influence is largely diminished. In Mataram in 17th century, Islam have been adopted by the court, in practice; the syncretism still largely prevailed in most of the court procession. Unlike in Aceh, in Mataram in the 17th century the mixture between the beliefs in monotheism (Allah) still largely mixed with the belief in the Ratu Kidul (the Queen of the South Sea).

If we look the real motive in writing, it seems the real reason in writing Bustanussalatin is that the writer Nuruddin Arraniry was symbolically praising the grand King, Sultan Iskandar Muda. The Garden of the Kings of Bustanussalatin contains a romanticized reality. The events mentioned in the Babad or chronicles (e.g. Babad Momana) that was compared by Graaf with the events from Dutch sources also indicates the same elaboration to praise the king not unlike that was done by Nuruddin Arraniry in writing the Bustanussalatin. Therefore if we intend to look for symbolical events, we should look at the Babad, while for accuracy we can look the events that are mentioned in Dutch sources.
Scholars have difficulties in locating the Garden of the Kings in the present context. Questions still need to be answered is whether the garden described in the Bustanussalatin had really ever existed or is it only a mere imagination or romanticized reality of Nuruddin Arraniry. Similar condition appears for the case in Mataram. If we look at the full history of Mataram, we can see that the Palace City move in accord with the reigning king. According to Javanese belief in the 17th century, the miasma of the deceased king is a strong reason for the new king to make a new Palace City removed from the old one. Therefore each king has his own Palace City. For that reason, similar to the Palace City of Aceh in the 17th century, today we could not see any worthy remnants of Sultan Agung's palace whether in Karta or in Plered.

Conclusion
After comparing both Palace City of Aceh and Mataram in the 17th century, the discussion can be conclude as the followings:

1. The overall form of the topology of Palace City in Aceh in the 17th century and its contemporary, Mataram, is very similar. Both Palace City have linear topology with a dominating axe.

2. In both cases, there are similar nodes and edges such the set of gates, vegetation and buildings.

3. The significant difference exists between in the form of physical characteristics of the organizing element. In Aceh's case the organizing element is a river, while in Mataram's case the organizing element is a circulation axe.

Finally, in terms of the hypothesis set in the Introduction, we can say that as contemporary kingdoms, their Palace City to a certain degree topologically similar. However due to data limitation, a more detailed comparison had not been done. Future study with a more complete source of information should fill the gap and do a more detailed comparison on both contemporary Kingdoms.

References
