

EXAMINING SPATIAL IDENTITY OF KAMPUNGS THROUGH YOUNG ADULTS' PERCEPTION IN SURABAYA – INDONESIA

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Abstract. Spatial identity is a result of a connection between people, physical elements of places, and activities associated with them. The development of identity occurs through the psychological process place attachment. This article is based on a research project that observed the spatial identity of young adults living in kampungs (urban villages), in Surabaya city. The young adults are faced with the contrast of a two-sided modernity between the kampungs and the city, which affects their attachment. The study of place attachment has been undertaken through an observation of social life of the participants and spatial perception. Through this study of spatial identity not only physical characteristics were identified, but also social characteristics. This is due to physical conditions of space and social interactions in these spaces are intertwined. The study found that the identity with the strongest attachment is related to social behaviour of the young adults but which is not recognised by current planning strategies. This study of spatial identity is suggesting that policy changes are needed to improve spatial environment of the kampungs.

Keywords: spatial identity, place attachment, perception, kampungs.

Introduction and empirical study

Today, kampungs¹ in Surabaya are places in the central city that offer accessible and affordable settlements for the city centre workers. Kampungs and the city have a different speed of development and different adaptation processes of modernization. They have been located side by side for periods of time. Surabaya city was initiated by many villages or *kampungs* that slowly merged towards one city; the city constituted of agriculture land (sugar fields) mixed with kampungs as settlement areas for the farmers (Dick 2002). This situation remained until mid of 18th century. Since then, groups of kampungs have survived on locations inserted in the urban area especially along main arterial streets (Basundoro 2009). This parallel development of the city and the kampungs has also lead to a difficult situation for planning strategies with city officials and

planners not having the right instruments for dealing with the preservation of kampungs.

This article is based on empirical fieldwork in kampungs in Surabaya which aimed to answer several key questions: what is the spatial identity of young adults living in kampungs that is crucial for public policy in preserving this area? Moreover, what is the specific social life of the participants that affect their spatial attachment to develop spatial identity? Since this research relates to spatial identity development of a specific group through social life, a semi-ethnographical approach is needed, and it allows the researcher to interpret the meaning of the findings (Dillabough, Kennelly 2010). The methods used in this research are a combination of Kevin Lynch's methods as outlined in his books 'Image of the City' (Lynch 1960) and 'Growing Up in Cities' (Lynch 1977), and ethnographical research methods from studies related to young people living in marginal areas here Chawla (2002) and Soja (1996) in particular.

The empirical work was a qualitative research that applied a multifaceted methodological approach, com-

¹ The term 'kampung' is used in this article instead of 'kampong', which is written mostly in other articles; it is to highlight the original Indonesian word of villages or 'kampungs'. Recently, the term 'kampong' often applied is adopted from a Malay word.

bined with an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. The methods for data collection were semi-structured interviews (one-on-one and group), mapping, and field observation. Interviews covered types of written and oral. Two types of mapping had been adopted here: mental map making and map identification; while field observation was conducted by directly experienced living in the kampungs. In the stage of data reduction (coding) of this qualitative research, the use of a simple quantitative approach were undertaken instead of using qualitative approach only such as through relationship study. The quantitative approach was to analyse (quantify) the image of the environment through urban elements identification in mental maps (as in Lynch's theory 1960).

Participants in this empirical study were 13 young adults aged 20–26 years old, and who have lived in the kampungs since they were born. Four participants are women, the rest are men. In terms of educational level, they continued their education until high school, and one of them finished college; most of them work in casual/projects basis whether in their kampungs or the city.

The spatial identity investigation in this article is divided into four sections: theoretical background that gives knowledge in identifying spatial identity through spaces and urban elements perceptions; the investigation of social life that explores daily living activity of the participants which affects their perception of the urban environments; the spatial perception, which is investigated through spatial knowledge in mental map drawings; and, concluding, a discussion regarding spatial identity that is based on the study of social life and spatial perception.

Theoretical background

In identifying the term 'spatial identity', ideas from several scholars are combined and applied. Spatial identity, which some experts call 'spatial preferences' or 'symbols', is a product of culture that is intertwined with social dimensions and the capacity of humans in relation to their social experiences in places (Nas 2002). It is a cultural element that relates to a specific meaning (Colombijn 1993); it can be an object, act or another expression that connected with emotional dimensions of attachment (Nas 1993). There are four types of identity in expressions: material (or physical elements), discursive (or urban images and narratives), iconic (sacred and profane in nature), and behavioural (or rituals or events) (Evers 2011).

According to Jacobs (1962), spatial identity is determined by two important factors: the quality of places and the qualities of activities. Both qualities

are studied through human perception. The quality of places is mainly determined by the perceptions in terms of legibility, vitality, diversity and comfort of elements (Shamsuddin, Ujang 2008) whereas the quality of activities that occur within a place is the main indicator in defining the identity of the place (Jacobs 1962). These types of quality are affected by human's feeling of attachment through its recognizable and familiar elements (Tuan 1977). The dialog of the observers (human)-activity-elements develops the identity; and the development is through a process of creating images, memories, conceptions (Proshansky *et al.* 1983). In highlighting the dialog of humans-activity-elements for the development of spatial identity in the role of conception, Canter asserts that "*we have not fully identified the place until we know what behaviour is associated with, what the physical parameters of that setting are, and the conception, which people hold on that behaviour in that physical environment*" (Canter 1977: 159).

Canter has used the term conception rather than perception in order to emphasize the process of peoples' perception in conceptualising the urban settings, for instance through drawings or descriptive narration. Perception is a mental representation of spatial identity or spatial knowledge (Tuan 1977). It creates a connection between the observer and the urban setting. There is a variety of ways to study perception, and mental map making is the most common way. According to Downs and Stea (2011), cognitive maps such as mental maps are the processes to understand peoples' perceptions especially in spatial knowledge. The maps are composed of a series of transformations: acquired codes, memory stores, and recalls. This coded information is about the environment and its attributes in the human's everyday spatial environment. It is affected by culture and the experiences of the observers through an interaction and attachment process between people in their urban setting, including urban elements, the structural pattern of the city, and the observers' imagination.

In the observation of the quality of places and activities in the kampungs this research looked at two specific yet related aspects: social life has been observed in terms of the daily activities related to young adults' spatial preferences; and spatial perception has been studied in terms of how the participants perceived (Canter's would use 'conceived') their urban environments and social life through mental maps (as in Lynch's method in 1960) and interviews (as in Lynch's 1977). Both observations are to identify the development of spatial identity, that later to be analysed in place attachment study (as in Chawla's theory 2002).

Social life

This research worked with young adults who have settled in two kampungs: the kampungs of Keputran Pasar Kecil and Kedondong, which are both located adjacent/close to Basuki Rahmad, the business district of Surabaya (see Fig. 1).

Time and activities

Through interviews, the research aimed to establish the connection between social activities in relation to time and space. Questions related to the participant's work and social activity patterns. A number of activities and patterns were related to a larger number of participants as can be seen in Figure 2. As shown in the Figure 2, a small number of the participants are



Fig. 1. The map of the case study

WEEKDAYS ACTIVITIES-am					
< 4.00	4.00-6.00	6.00-8.00	8.00-10.00	10.00-12.00	12.00-14.00
SLEEP	SLEEP	SLEEP	DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES	WORK OUTSIDE THE KAMPUNGS	SLEEP
WORK AT THE KAMPUNG	WORK AT THE KAMPUNG	ABLUTIONS	ABLUTIONS	DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES	WORK OUTSIDE THE KAMPUNGS
PLAYING IN THE CYBER CAFÉ	PLAYING IN THE CYBER CAFÉ	DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES	SLEEP	SLEEP	DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES
SHALAT AT THE MUSHALLA	WORK AT THE KEPUTRAN MARKET	WORK AT THE KAMPUNG		WORK AT THE KEPUTRAN MARKET	
WORK AT THE KEPUTRAN MARKET		PLAYING IN THE CYBER CAFÉ		HANGING OUT IN THE KAMPUNGS	
		WORK AT THE KEPUTRAN MARKET			
		SCHOOL			
WEEKDAYS ACTIVITIES-pm					
14.00-16.00	16.00-18.00	18.00-20.00	20.00-22.00	22.00-24.00	> 24.00
WORK OUTSIDE THE KAMPUNGS	WORK OUTSIDE THE KAMPUNGS	HANGING OUT IN THE KAMPUNGS	HANGING OUT IN THE KAMPUNGS	RELAXING IN THE CITY	SLEEP
HANGING OUT IN THE KAMPUNGS	HANGING OUT IN THE KAMPUNGS	DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES	WORK OUTSIDE THE KAMPUNGS	SLEEP	WORK AT THE KAMPUNG
DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES	RELAXING IN THE CITY	WORK OUTSIDE THE KAMPUNGS	RELAXING IN THE CITY	DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES	PLAYING IN THE CYBER CAFÉ
		PLAYING IN THE CYBER CAFÉ		WORK AT THE KEPUTRAN MARKET	HANGING OUT IN THE KAMPUNGS
					RELAXING IN THE CITY
					WORK AT THE KEPUTRAN MARKET

note: darker color shows more participants involve in the type of activity

Fig. 2. Time allocation and activities

earning money for living from outside the kampungs in formal institutions. They have a flexible daily schedule because they are jobless or work from home or work on a casual/project basis. Some of them have shops in their houses run by family members. Hence they have to wake up early morning to prepare foods/drinks and pack them. At a particular time of day, they are responsible for taking care the shop while relaxing with their friends in the shop. Most of them have casual jobs; therefore their leisure time is relatively high compared to those who work in formal institutions. Their daily schedule depends on their working time, but for those who have casual work or are jobless, they do hang out² in the kampung almost every day until early morning around 3AM.

The participants spent most of their daily time in the kampungs, whether for work or socialising and relaxing with friends. Activity patterns at the weekend show that they like to spend their free time regularly in particular places of the kampungs. Often they did also drink and gamble at nights in these places. The best time to experience the young adults' life was in the afternoon until late evening. There were no extraordinary activities in the morning, but later in the af-

ternoon, the kampungs' main alleys became crowded. Young adults' favourite places to gather in the kampung of Kedondong were around a corner close to a barber shop, snacks/food shop, and one-room dwellings around the corner (see Fig. 3); in the kampung of Keputran, the favourite place is in front of a cyber café that is located near the entrance gate and facing the Mushalla ground (an open space). In both places, the young adults liked to spend their daily time (as in Fig. 2) by socializing together and mostly continued with drinking and gambling into the evenings.

Within an immersed observation lasting for several weeks, below description is a typical day in the kampungs with specific focus on the young adults' activities:

- In the afternoon, people of many ages liked to chat, play, smoke, eat afternoon snacks, drink coffee or just sit along the corner, especially along the kampungs' alleys. Children are playing around while some small children were dressed by their moms in front of their one-room dwellings after having their showers. Men and women chatted in a very relaxed way. They made jokes, laugh at each other and sometimes talk about serious topics. While they converse, they also drank and eat snacks bought from shops or hawkers.
- In the evening, more young men from the kampungs were present in this area. Approaching midnight, some young men from outside the kampung

² The expression 'to hang out' is deliberately used throughout this study because, although being an informal phrase, it is to distinguish this activity from another more formal expression like 'to socialise' that would not succinctly describe the activity.



Fig. 3. The favourite place to socialize in kampung Kedondong

came to gather in this area. One of them collected money from the others, and later bought from outside the kampungs an illegal alcoholic drink, illegally brewed alcoholic liquid mixed with energy drinks or sodas.

- At around 2AM they finished their drinks, some left the kampung, and some could not even stand up and kept lying on the floor until the early morning. Adults just watched them from a distance and continued with their chatting and chess games. Sometimes, the young adult had brawls until the elders stop them and asked them to leave the area.

In the observation of the young adults' social life, it has shown that most of them are making full use of the public space, the alleys, in the kampungs, to conduct their social, daily activities. The activities were not only undertaken by the group from the kampungs but included also people from outside the kampungs. In terms of frequency of space usage, the participants spend most their time in the kampungs, whether to work (at home) or to relax in their own ways (drinking and gambling).

After identifying the most frequent activity and its location, and in order to understand the young adults' social life in terms of their urban elements preferences, the next step of the study was a qualitative observation regarding some specific topics, including the most favourite places to socialize, the disliked places, and also changes and hopes that the participants experienced in their neighbourhood. These investigations aimed to understand the participants' spatial preferences at that moment in time, but also their conception regarding the past (changes) and the future (hopes).

The favourite places

In identifying favourite places in the kampung, the participants have been asked several questions related to places: What are the most important places in the kampung? What are the best places for their social activity? and What is overall the best place in the kampung?. These questions were asked in the interviews that were mostly undertaken in informal situation, ie while the participants were going about their social life in specific locations in alleys of the kampungs.

“My favourite place in this kampung is the cyber café, it is the place where I can play with my friends, work to earn money and kill my time. We like to sit on the bench for hours just to chat and watch people passing by until morning” (male, 26 years old)



Fig. 4. The favourite place to socialize in kampung Keputran Pasar Kecil (the cyber café)

The cyber café in the kampung of Keputran is open 24/7 and located in a house that provides computers to be rented by the hour. The computers are only used for Internet connection, especially online games. The location of the café and the open space is very close to the kampung's entrance, people from outside the kampung also use the café or play in the open space, especially children in the afternoon. The participants are good players of any online games and they (can) earn money from playing games (real transactions with real money). Sometimes, if they have enough money, they like to buy an alcoholic drink, one that is illegal and involves self-mixed brewing, and share it with others by held a party. A spot for the party (and hanging out) is a wooden bench just in front of the café, placed in the alley and facing the open space that belongs to the Mushalla.

"I do not live in this area, but I come here every day to hang out with friends. This place is nice, the people are also nice, many friends from different kampungs gather here. It is close to a snack shop and a barber shop that opens 24/7" (male, 20 years old)

The favourite place for hanging out in the kampung of Kedondong is also a favourite place for young adults from different kampungs. The participants said that this spot is 'nice and comfortable' for sitting and chatting, therefore they come to this place almost every evening. The activity of drinking and gambling is common in this spot, which is mostly ignored by adults and other people who do not agree with such activities. Recently, the gambling has become rare because policemen liked to patrol in this area after brawls often occurred in conjunction with gambling. The young adults still secretly gamble. However, in contrast to dove gambling (dove racing by releasing the bird in streets) and boat gambling (wooden toy-boats racing in the gutter next to their kampungs) it not place-focused.

The disliked places

For the observation of social life in the kampungs it has also been crucial to identify the disliked spaces, not only the liked (or favourite) places. This is important in order to identify negative conceptions behind the participants understanding of specific urban elements in the kampungs. Negative conceptions will lead to weak place attachment, while positive conceptions (as discussed previously in favourite places) lead to strong attachment. Based on the interviews with participants, a number of disliked places could be identified: 'a house number 38', the gutter, as well as some other kampungs next to their own kampung. House number 38 is known as a haunted house located in the

middle of kampung Keputran Pasar Kecil. It is easily accessible from any places in the kampung. Although it is a haunted house, young adults like to hang out here until late evening, mostly because of its accessible location even though they named this house as haunted and not to be afraid of.

Young adults from the kampung of Kedondong have mentioned several kampungs next to their areas, the kampung Among Siswa, Kejambon, Panjunan and Karang Bulak, as being disliked places. They said these kampungs are dark and too quiet; not many people like to hang out in the alley; hence it brings feelings of insecurity and danger. Based on the field observation, the dwellers of these kampungs have a smaller proportion of young adults compared to the participants' kampungs. Young adults from those nearby kampungs therefore like to hang out in the two kampungs of the case study, mostly because of easy accessibility and public facilities near that places.

"I hate the area near the cyber café and the Mushalla ground, every time I walked from work at late night, many young men sit on the benches and stared at me; I feel unsecure" (female, 21 years old)

In regard of the public facility of the cyber café, which was previously mentioned as a favourite place to hang out, the study showed a contradiction of its meaning. For young (male) adults belonging to the kampung Keputran, the place is their favourite place to hang out, which results in a positive meaning or strong attachment. Contrary, for some young women who also live in the kampung, the activity in front of the cyber café is giving them an unsecure feeling when they have to pass it at night since it is the only access to their homes from the main road when they come home from work. Moreover, just opposite the café, there is a Mushalla ground where male adults like to hang out and continue with drinks and gambles. Therefore, most young women mentioned the cyber café as a place they dislike, resulting in negative meaning or less attachment.

Changes and hopes

"The kampung is more liveable since we had a new place for community meetings. The improvement of the night lighting along the alley and surface hardening of the alley is also great" (male, 26 years old)

In terms of changes of the kampungs, which most of the participants easily recognised, they are aware of the physical development such as the alleys' quality improvement, the development of the building for

community meetings, the introduction of culverts for drainage, and the improvement of the gutter's barrier. In conjunction with these physical changes, the participants also highlighted differences relating to the social condition. They mentioned that the kampungs in the past ten years were more crowded with people and shops (hawkers and non-permanent shops attached to houses). Hence they said that it was more claustrophobic. Additionally, in terms of social life, the young adult said that there are less brawls recently; even though more young people come to this area to drink and gamble.

"I don't want to think about the future, I have never had an opportunity to have a good career. Recently, I'm just doing what I can: earning money, spending money, and playing with my friends. This is my life"
(male, 26 years old)

Even though they feel uncertain about the future, they still want to stay in the kampungs. When asked about leaving the kampung in the event of them having enough money, they said 'no' except to move to new places with their friends. Some said that they would prefer to open a business in the kampung rather than buy a new house in any formal settlements. The important value of the strategic location of their kampung that is attached to the central business district is very crucial to them, and it is not replaceable. They feel no urgency to move to a better settlement area. Even for some adults who have their second house in a formal estate far from the city centre, they prefer to stay in the kampung. Generally, the value of the strategic location of the kampung is something to keep. However, the attachment of young adults to their friends in the kampung, that is their social relation, is still stronger than their attachment to the kampungs.

As a summary, when discussing the experience of living in the kampungs, the young adults had highlighted several points of importance including: having enough room to do their activities; feeling comfortable in being here; feeling safe enough and yet feeling crowded. It became apparent here that their feelings are somewhat paradoxical: feeling crowded but comfortable and free. They understood that kampungs are crowded areas, but living in these kampungs since they were born, they got used to the crowds and never felt uncomfortable. However, they felt a degree of hopelessness regarding their future and resigning to the fact that being in a kampung was their fate, a fact that they didn't need to regret but which led them to enjoy their lives.

Spatial perception

The study based its spatial perception analysis on information gathered from the mental map drawings that showed the participants' imageability of their kampungs. Exploring the young adults' mental maps of the kampungs, the spatial/elements preferences in the kampung are emphasised along the main alley, the only access to the kampung. The participants showed a very detailed knowledge of the kampung: the number of houses, the colour of the benches, trees and greenery; furthermore they could also localize members of groups that gather in specific areas. Particularly, they showed strong preferences in areas along the alley that are also spots for social activities. Figure 5 shows examples of individual maps drawn by the participants. These maps are here further categorised into three groups according to their focus and level detail, yet regardless of their drawing skills.

Mental maps drawn by the participants in this research are varying in terms of drawing skills, scales and extend or range of the maps. Individual maps that are produced in this work could be categorised into three groups particularly according to their drawing ranges. The groups are: mental maps that focused on the entrance of his/her kampung only; mental maps that focused on a broader range outside his/her kampung; and mental maps that could not be categorised in the previous two divisions (see Fig. 5).

The first type is relatively smaller in scale than the others but provides more detail for each element, for instance the inclusion of the owners' names, the names of trees, or the name of each shop. The second type visualises the kampungs' alleys as networking paths. The last type visualises the kampungs' area in different ways to the other two types, for instance a map that focuses on the greenery in his/her kampung, or a map consisting of a single line representing their route of daily journey. These three categorisations show the level of abstraction in terms of visualisation of particular elements. The first to the third is stronger to weaker respectively.

The mental map compilation as presented in Fig. 6 shows four groups of categorisation according to the frequency of recognition in mental maps. The most mentioned element (more than 75%) is the element of their alleys. The other category, which is mentioned by 25%–50% of the participants, is the main street of Urip. Moreover, the last group, which is less than 25%, consists of various elements. The elements are public facilities such as the gutter, the cyber café, houses along the alleys, and high rise buildings that marked their kampungs' territory. The cyber café in Gang 3 and

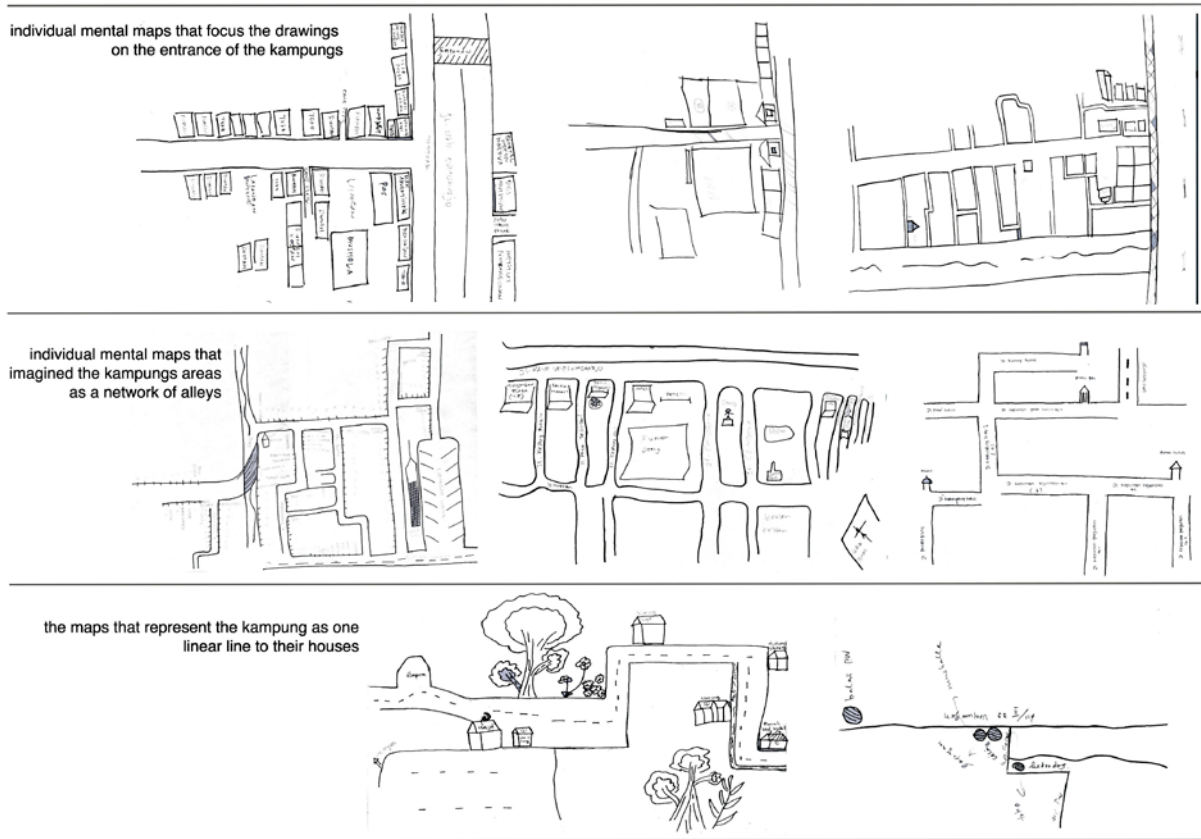


Fig. 5. The Kampungs' maps drawn by the young adults

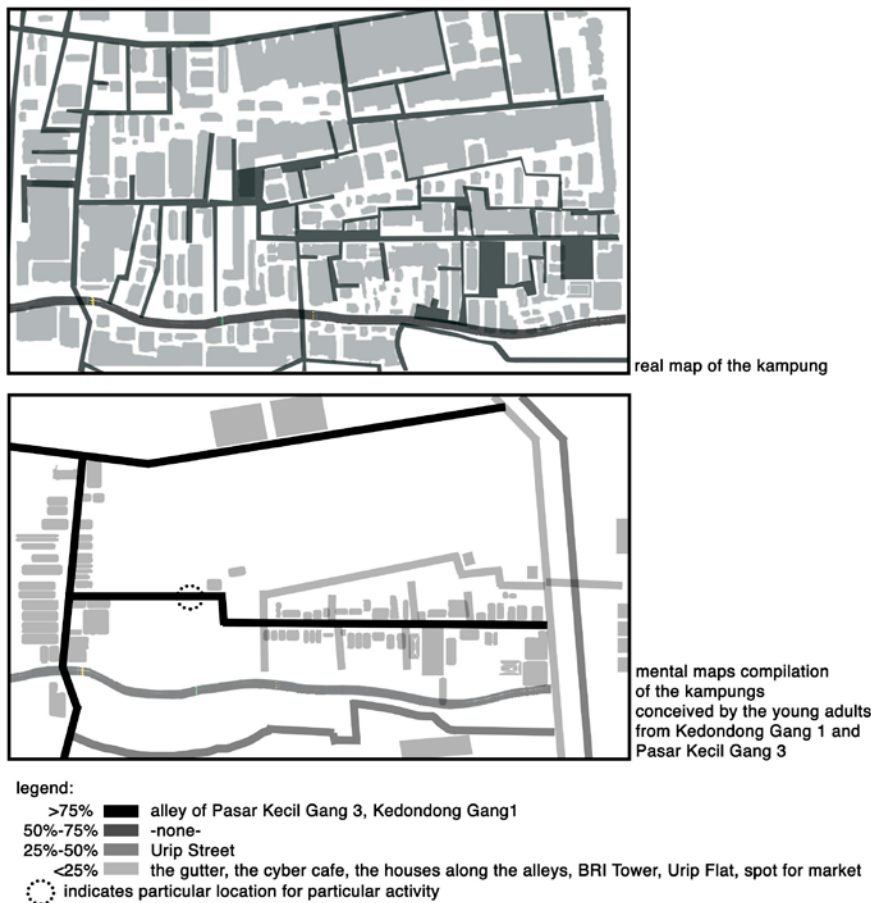


Fig. 6. The compilation of individual mental maps of the kampungs

small shops along the pavement of the main street are also important elements for them mentioned in their mental maps.

Specifically in the interviews, the participants noticed particular spots for the activity of the informal market, yet put them in various places. In the mental map compilation (Fig. 6), they are shown in a low percentage category since they are in various places (drawn as a dotted-circle). The locations of these spots are not permanent, but the function is the same. Some participants recognised this activity in the Banteng Ground; some located this near the bamboo trees.

Place attachment analysis

As been discussed in the Theoretical Background, the quality of places and the quality of activities as conceptualised by the urban observers/participants are affected by the psychological feeling of attachment. The following section studies this notion of attachment through a method adopted from Chawla in 2002. Her method was done through the exploration of social life (practices) and spatial perception (conception) of the participants. She particularly studied the connection between positive/negative social life and positive/negative perception through relationship analysis. The

connections are visualised through two poles of social life (practices) and spatial perception (conception).

Figure 7 shows four quadrants of place attachment analysis in this research. These quadrants are developed from two intersecting poles of Social Life and Spatial Conception, with each pole having positive and negative readings. The readings are: left to right, up: negative spatial conception with positive social life, positive social life with positive spatial conception; left to right, below: negative spatial conception with negative social life, positive spatial conception with negative social life. The judgement of feeling of attachment is determined through both positive values in the reading (the up-right quadrant). On the other hand, the feeling of detachment is stronger when it carries both negative values (the down-left quadrant). Hence, in identifying spatial identity in this research, the focus is within the upper-right quadrant with the double positive value.

Based on the empirical study, it could be summarised that the place attachment is driven by several aspects. The aspects are social bonding, feeling of security/insecurity, territoriality, spatial recognition, sense of community, and sense of life stability. These aspects affect the feeling of being attached to or detached from the urban environment. Referring to the

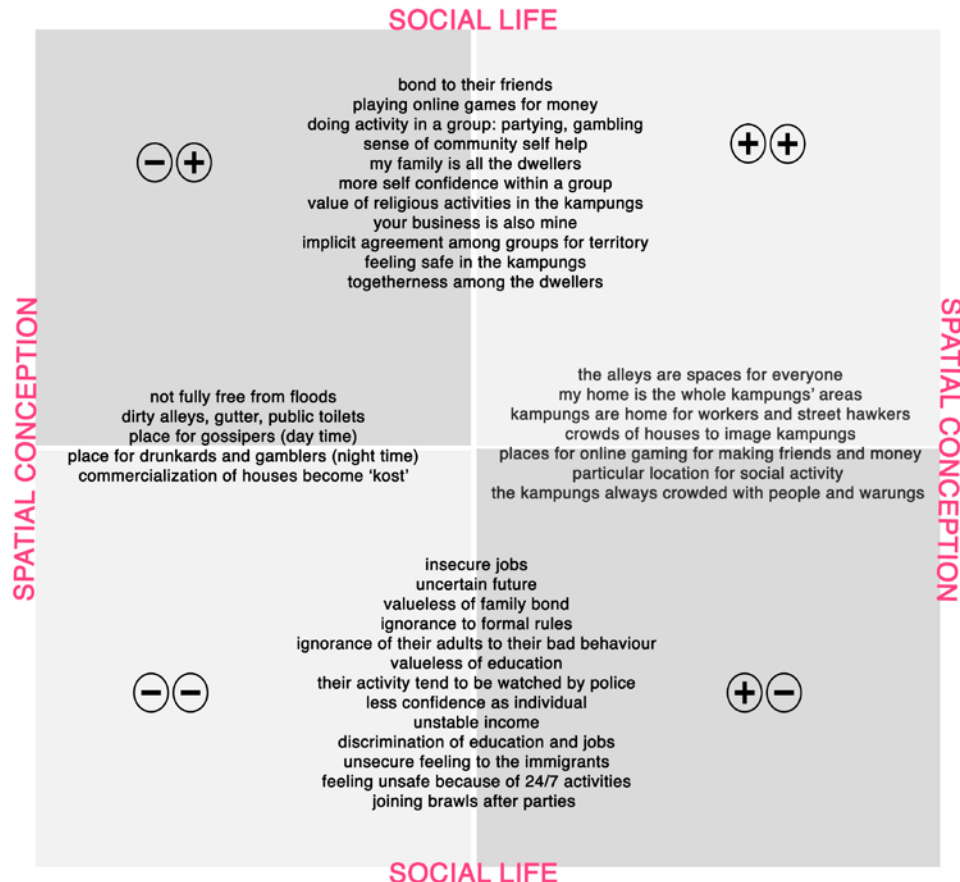


Fig. 7. The young adults' social life and spatial conception

four types of spatial identity expression (see Theoretical Background, Evers 2011), the spatial identity based on the analysis of place attachment as in the figure above could be summarised as follows:

- The material identity such as the alleys and their organic pattern, their homes, the crowds of people and shops, the cyber café and places/spots to socialise are important in developing attachment. These elements contribute to the feeling of attachment through the value of social life that they can afford such as increasing bond with friends, earning money through online gaming, and togetherness among the kampungs' dwellers.
- The behavioural identity is shown through the young adults' behaviour of hanging out, partying and doing trending activity of modern life (such as connection through Internet). Even though these activities are triggered by a negative value of social life (they have insecure jobs, uncertain future, and valueless of education), these activities could increase attachment to their friends and the kampungs. Through having these behaviours, the young adults feel attach to their friends and the kampungs.
- There is an absence of discursive and iconic symbols identification in the field.
- Behavioural identity is the most crucial one as it carries the highest feeling of attachment by the young adults to their kampungs. In contrast to material identity, behavioural identity is notified and shown by the participants through most methods in this empirical work (from interviews, field observation, and mental maps), which means that this behaviour is crucial for their lives.

As previously observed, the recognition of the café is not only based on the activity inside the café (playing games), but also through the activity outside the cafe such as drinking, partying and gambling. The party, for this particular group of young adults, strengthens their friendship when they can express themselves freely through drinking, playing music, chatting, and gambling. The café contains thus a representational function as a building that symbolised the participants' lifestyle and social life. Being connected to trending activities (online games or social media) is a way for the young adults to catch up with modernity, and being connected to their friends is a way to keep the attachment to their kampungs.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article we raised two questions: What is the spatial identity of young adults living in kampungs that is crucial for public policy? and, What is the specific social life of the participants that

affect their spatial attachment to develop spatial identity? The main purpose of this study is to demonstrate a methodology that allows a more nuance and relevant analysis in specific urban setting such as kampungs. By being able to identify modes of place attachment this analysis could be used to suggest public policies in improving spatial environments of specific urban areas such as kampungs.

Until now, the official attempts of developing the kampungs rarely addresses the kampung dwellers' and specifically young adults' needs. And yet, this group of people can be agents of change, especially in low-quality environment such as the kampungs (Lefebvre 1996). Current public policy to develop this environment is mostly focus on the development of physical matters (or material things), such as the provision of public facilities and improvement of the alleys. While this has of course its relevance it could be argued that, in such a type of environment with strong and rich social rather than physical meaning, the social quality of elements is more important than the physical one.

By examining spatial identity through the young adults' perceptions of their kampungs, the crucial identity does not refer to the material identity alone (as current public policy would define it), but includes also behavioural identity. This study has shown that the behavioural identity is more crucial than material identity, because it most affects to the young adults' feeling of attachment to their kampungs. It means that by acknowledging this identity, the future of kampungs could be preserved in the middle of the competitiveness with the city.

In terms of methodology and planning approaches, a socio-anthropological approach should be added to the prevalent one, especially in examining urban environments in marginal positions where social value is more crucial than physical value. The role of the government authorities is crucial here. If they are serious about the future of kampungs, the residents' needs are important to consider. The kampungs' future resides in the young adults' future. Ignoring their perception and identity is also ignoring the future of kampungs.

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