

POSTCOLONIAL STUDY ON *ALUN-ALUN* AREA IN PROBOLINGGO CITY

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Abstract

Probolinggo is a city that continues to grow since the pre-colonial era, then into the Dutch colonial era and became an important port city, and finally after independence of Indonesia, its influence has subsided somewhat, but it is still one of the port cities in the northern coast of East Java. There is a typical historical process from the fortress city, then it becomes a trading city that distributes commodities from Java to the outside world and vice versa. In this city there is alun-alun as a public space/open space of the city since the colonial period with a strong axis (axis) between the city to the port, which was then added to the train station with a large warehouse (called the fort). The research method used in this study is a qualitative research method, by looking at the development of the city and Probolinggo community participation in the process of change that occurs from time to time, the influence of power from a centralized to a more diffuse (diaspora) and deterritorialization/ reterritorialization concept. In practice, this study combines direct observation and document investigation.

This deterritorialization and reterritorialization process in Alun-alun Probolinggo has shown how this city has developed from a Dutch colonial city into a dynamic postcolonial city, and can answer the spatial challenges of the present and the future. This square is able to combine syncretically between tradition and progress, between Probolinggo's local identity and global characteristics.

Keywords: *Alun-alun, Probolinggo City, Postcolonial, Deterritorialization, Reterritorialization*

Backgrounds

Historically, the City of Probolinggo, which is a coastal city in East Java which has a very strategic position for the Dutch Colonial, faces the Madura Strait. Then the city began to be designed with a "grid" system, and became an important trading city, although in the past (in the pre-colonial era), Probolinggo was relatively unknown when compared to Gresik, Tuban or Surabaya which was the big port cities.

The main river that crosses the City of Probolinggo is *Kali Banger*. In the past, Probolinggo was still called by its original name: Banger, a name taken from the name of the river. In the life of the city at that time (even today), the river has a vital role in the progress of the city, especially as a source of drinking water and also as a means of transportation between regions, mainly inland.

When entering the Dutch colonial era, Probolinggo was gradually designed according to the spatial needs of the Dutch. The era that influenced the development of the City of Probolinggo was the Cultivation Period (*cultuurstelsel*) which occurred during the period 1830-1870, and later the Age of Construction of Railroads between 1880-1900 which further strengthened the importance of the City of Probolinggo.

With the Cultivation of Politics or *Cultuurstelsel*, the Dutch began to develop agricultural lands and also plantations in Probolinggo and its surroundings: Pasuruan, Lumajang, Jember, Bondowoso and Situbondo. With the main trade commodities produced include: sugar, tobacco and coffee. Furthermore, the construction of the railroad as a means of transportation and also for the transportation of agricultural products from around Probolinggo to then be shipped to the Netherlands (Europe).

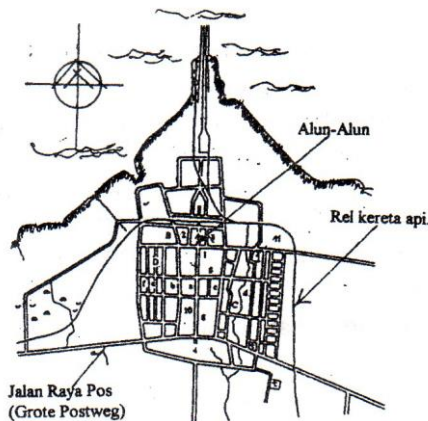
While the development of *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo City - which was the object of this research study - can be traced since the Pre-colonial era, then the Colonial Age or Dutch Colonial, then entered the Age of Independence (which can be divided into the Old Order and New Order) to the present in 21st century. Continuous developments that are still ongoing today.

From the four directions of *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo, there can still be a strong trace of the typical Javanese *Alun-alun*: the presence of a large mosque on the west side, a prison building on the east side and a Regent *pendapa* on the south side. When referring to old documents in the pre-colonial period, it is likely that the area of the *alun-alun* had previously been an open field that functioned as a public space as well as a large city yard.

Also quite interesting from *Alun-alun* Probolinggo is the presence of the Railway Station on the north side of *Alun-alun*. This new function gave a different color to the town square of Probolinggo, which became different from other cities. This railroad station served as a vehicle for the Dutch Colonial Government to open up eastern regions as fertile agricultural and plantation areas, which provided many benefits for the government at that time.

1. *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo in Colonial Period

Then, in a study made by Priyantoko (2010), it was explained about the town *alun-alun* on the north coast of Java, including *the alun-alun* of Probolinggo. The point of view used by Priyantoko is an archaeological point of view in the Dutch colonial period, especially in the early twentieth century, and has not discussed urban space from the point of view of postcolonial architecture.



Picture 1. Map of Alun-alun of Probolinggo and Surroundings, 1880-1940

Source: Handinoto, 2012

In this Priyantoko study, relationships and similarities were sought between cities on the north coast of Java in the early twentieth century. Finally found stable patterns, that *the alun-alun* has the characteristics of being in front of the Regent office and *pendapa*, then in the west there is a mosque, and on the other side there is a market and also a prison. However, Priyantoko has not discussed the present square, which is more suitable to be analyzed from a postcolonial perspective.

2. *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo in Soekarno Period

In Sukarno's Presidential era, *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo became one of the historic squares as well, because here was once the first anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia, namely on August 17, 1946. On August 17, 1946, President Soekarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta was present in *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo.

This shows how important the existence of the City of Probolinggo was in the early days of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition to having bargaining power in the economic and cultural fields, this event also shows that Probolinggo also has political power, as a liaison and at the same time binding to areas in the eastern part of Java. To commemorate this event, a monument was made in the *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo City so that this important event would be remembered by the people of the city, as well as being a symbolic pride in the historical value of the *alun-alun* they had.

3. *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo in Soeharto Period

During the reign of President Soeharto, *the Alun-alun* of Probolinggo also changed according to the times. In this period, which was somewhat militaristic, making the plaza also became a means for "conquest" by the authorities against the people. "Conquest" can be in the form of spatial and architectural conquests (with restrictions).

In his book entitled *Finding Nation Architecture, A Story of Indonesia*, Widyarta (2007) says that the Suharto era was a time when Regionalism (in a narrow sense) sought to be applied in architecture in the cities in Indonesia. What is quite felt in this square is probably similar forms of small *joglo/pendapa* that are in *the alun-alun*, as local formations that appear in the *alun-alun*.

4. *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo in The Present

In the present in the 21st century, the *Alun-alun* area of Probolinggo City and its surroundings has changed and developed into a complex and multifunctional area, with increasingly complicated complexity. It's no longer a sterile square like it used to be, but inherited a pre-existing mix of three ages.

According to Mulyandari (2011: 49), the growth and development of cities in Indonesia today also has adverse effects, such as poverty, urbanization, environmental damage, traffic congestion and other city problems. So, the problem is how can these adverse effects be minimized, so that cities, including the city of Probolinggo, can develop with minimal (little) adverse impacts.

Research Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method. In this method, a comparison is made between the square from a colonial / modern perspective with an approach from a postcolonial (deteritorial / reteritorial) view. Through this qualitative method, it is also easier to compare with the reality in *alun-alun* of Probolinggo. In addition, it can also be directly related to the respondent and more sensitive to make sharpening in research.

In order to support the qualitative method, visual observations were also held to further explore the postcolonial elements, as well as how to follow them up for the development of Probolinggo *alun-alun* in the future. This qualitative research method is carried out holistically with a process that includes: document studies, field studies, interviews and observations, and detailed analysis of the reality in the field.

Analysis

Furthermore, the analysis is carried out using Postcolonial principles, namely: deteritorialization and reteritorialization that occurs in the *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo. So, the data obtained from the previous four processes above are then analyzed from the postcolonial principle, to be compared with existing theories, so that suitabilities and nonsuitabilities are found. This discrepancy actually became the embryo of the emergence of a new postcolonial theory for this Probolinggo *Alun-alun*.

a. Discusson of Postcolonial Issues

There are many issues in this postcolonial discourse, and currently these issues are also increasingly being used by academics. Its use in several studies is of course adapted to the conditions and context of the study. These issues include: discourse, ambivalence, authenticity, contrapuntal reading, diaspora, dislocation, hegemony, hybrid and native and others.

Postcolonial discourse emerged after Modern discourse and had a pluralistic nature (diverse and aware of the diversity of subjects), then postcolonial became an important issue that could be used to analyze various types of phenomena in all fields, ranging from city problems, about society, anthropology and sociology, psychology, economics, literature, art, culture and so on.

Whereas in the context of architecture, postcolonial discourse has become a lively discourse discussed scientifically since the 1990s, and until now it is still relevant to the situation. This issue is also able to map the conditions and conditions of architecture in third world countries (which emerged after World War II) which had been colonized by Westerners for hundreds of years.

a1. Hybridity

This crossing is a condition of meeting between two things (or more). In the condition of this crossing, authenticity or authenticity actually becomes irrelevant

because all things are basically a cross between one thing and another, between the original and the non-original, between the one here and the one from there.

The term *hybrid* is a term raised by Homi Bhaba, a postcolonial figure, to refer to symptoms that occur between the colonizer and colonized. Both of them are in-between conditions, and finally bring out the hybrid culture, which mixes two different (different) cultural elements.

Here, *hybrid* is a cross. The city of Probolinggo itself is also a crossing point, strongly supporting the existence of squares with crossing characteristics as well. In Probolinggo Square, among others, there is a cross between the traditional (Pendapa Kabupaten) and the modern (Masjid Jami '), between the commercial (Toko) and the formal-bureaucratic (offices on the east side), also between functions religious (mosque) and recreational function (central square) which is a means of recreation and center for street vendors.

a2. Diaspora

This is one of the postcolonial concepts related to the problem of the center (central) and the margins (marginal), which then occurs diaspora which does not matter anymore which one is original and which is not, which is higher or lower, basically all have the same degree.

The word "diaspora" comes from Greek which means to spread (to disperse). Diaspora can also be called a human movement from one place to another. (Ashcroft, 1998 p. 68). So, the concept of the diaspora began when Europeans spread throughout the world, thus affecting culture in places they occupied (colonized).

More precisely, the diaspora began since the colonial period, when humans colonized by the West were uprooted and began to imitate other cultures that were not from their place of origin. From here, they then try to find a new identity because they have to adapt to current conditions in various crossings and cultural diversity. This diaspora without a center became one of the prominent postcolonial traits, with a variety of differences that could be combined into a new, more creative and dynamic identity.

The diaspora element seen in *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo shows the central Probolinggo square, and is more likely to spread. If formerly the power was centered in the hands of the government (Dutch colonial) with buildings on the south side and the spiritual-religious power on the west side (Masjid), then at this time there seemed to be many different powers coming in and around the square. For example the power / power of capital (capital) or democratic forces (from the people, by the people, for the people). This is the internal strength of the city to spread in all directions and is more egalitarian (in certain sizes).

a3. Mimicry

Mimicking around or mimicry is a term derived from the field of biology. Which is often used as an example for example chameleon that can change skin color when in a different environment. This shows how people in certain cultures try to

imitate other cultures as a way for the culture to exist (sustainably) and be able to adjust to the continual development.

In the early days of the emergence of the mimicry phenomenon occurred in the colonial period (colonialism), when people or colonized parties tried to imitate the culture of the invaders so that they could be considered higher status, considered more cultured or called more advanced. So, in this case it shows how non-Western societies try to imitate the West even though it is never really the same, or just a mere blurred copy of Western culture.

Mimicry or imitating in *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo shows how in the past the Dutch colonists tried to imitate square in the Western concept combined with the concept of the Java square, so that it became the square as it is now. The Probolinggo city government as manager of Jember Square also wants to emulate the square from other cities, or even abroad as a form of progress.

a4. Marginality

Marginality clearly related to the center or center. In the perspective of binary opposition derived from modern thought, the center or center becomes the dominant and controlling element which is marginal. In the postcolonial view what happens is the opposite, it is precisely this periphery that is used as the starting point of the stand, which has the potential to be aligned with the center (center / central).

Thus, the marginality shows that those on the periphery are not totally marginalized, but they are still able to maintain their own structure and show their power when facing the world conditions that have indeed changed after the end of the colonial period.

In the case of *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo, the issue of marginality is very evident in the inclusion of new functions that were previously or not allowed to enter *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo. These new functions include: sports fields, street vendors and playgrounds. The entry of these new marginal functions has made the *alun-alun* more dynamic and attractive and creative compared to the previous era.

a5. Others

Others can be defined as non-me entities, so that it becomes an object that is necessarily different from me. This liyan is actually not an enemy, but as an opponent of our existence, the opponent of dialogue, versus reflection. So, precisely with the existence of other elements, we can become more meaningful as humans, as entities that deserve to live in the arena of human civilization. Will humans never exist without other human presence?

This Liyan or others discourse was originally a term used by Westerners to see those who were non-Western. In the colonial period, others were considered as parties to be subjugated (even destroyed to the roots). In the postcolonial period, Liyan transformed into a power that (should) be able to define itself, and to prioritize dialogue with different liyans. Liyan also seeks to absorb the West to strengthen the discourse and practice of their lives and culture.

The Probolinggo community, at the present time, has turned into a pluralistic society that interacts with each other (also because there is no "authentic" here). From that interaction, an award will appear to others (others). The other functions (which were previously prohibited or not allowed to enter) were finally able to enter into the *alun-alun*, such as selling food or recreation, so that the square became more rich in functions and uses for the community.

a6. Transculturation

Cultural crossing or transculturation of culture is inevitable from human society, which is always always cultured. The culture is also not "authentic", but is a result of mixing with other cultures as well. In the colonial era, the invaders also often perceived the culture of the colonized parties. Likewise, on the contrary, the colonized parties also perceive the culture of the colonizers. From there this transculturation process surfaced.

In the present, transculturation occurs between many more complex and diverse cultures. Those of us in Indonesia are trying to understand the culture of India, China, the Netherlands, Portugal, Korea, Turkey, France, the United States and other nations, to shape our own culture.

A transculturation process that occurs in an area is inevitable in the present. There is no pure culture without touch with other cultures. So, in essence, every culture is the result of continuous transculturation. Likewise with *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo, which is the result of the transculturation of the city of Probolinggo from the 19th century to the present. Probolinggo and his square defines himself creatively.

a7. Palimpsest

The trace as the palimpsest is the parchment written by deleting pre-existing writing. But it turns out, the deleted writing can never disappear completely, there are still traces (marks) on the parchment and form layer after layer writing, even though the marks are sometimes unclear or blurred.

In human history, there are always traces, can be traces of writing, or traces of goods, and even traces of buildings. A good city will always still maintain its traces that emerge from time to time, as the palimpsest which of course will still be useful for the progress of the city in the future.

The trail, in the context of the *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo can be either a cultural or physical trace. This trail can also be a historical trace or a visual trace. For example, the mosque still shows a very well-preserved trail, as well as the station. The prison still shows its tracks on the east side. The Regent's Hall and also the resident's office on the south side also had a trace of power (power), because it used to be the office of the Probolinggo regional leadership during the Dutch colonial era.

b. Discussion of *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo

Like the *alun-alun* in other cities, the *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo has four (4) unequal sides, according to four wind direction (south, west, north and east),

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where the four sides have different characteristics . This difference has actually emerged since the beginning of the Dutch colonial period, but because of that time the city of Probolinggo was still in the early stages of development, so the four sides still tended to be homogeneous. While at this time, the four sides have increasingly shown quite radical differences, both in terms of the shape of the building and its function.

This condition certainly has shown how the heterogeneity of the square begins to form step by step, both space (spatial) and time (temporal), forming a characteristic Alun-alun which is unique and only exists in the city of Probolinggo, and will never be the same Alun-alun characters in other cities in Java (and also East Java). Although of course there are typological equations (type equations) so that this area can be called the "*alun-alun*".

b1. South Side of Alun-alun of Probolinggo

The South Side of Probolinggo *alun-alun* has been used as a building which is the center of government in Probolinggo since the Dutch era. At that time, Pendapa Regency was established as the official residence of the Regent. The regent as head of the Regency is an "extended arm" from the Dutch. The Regent is under the supervision of the resident who is above him. This is also a trace before the emergence of the city government.



Picture 2. Regent Pendapa in south side

source: *Research Documentation* 2018

The situation on the south side, the old building that used to be a house of residence then transformed, among others, into the office of a political party. This also became a marker of a different era. The era of democracy made the Probolinggo square also change. This marks the era that was previously authoritarian (the New Order era) to be a more democratic (Reformation era).

b2. West Side of Alun-alun of Probolinggo

The west side of the square has different characteristics from the south side. Here is the location of the establishment of Masjid Jami' (Great Mosque) which is a large mosque in the city of Probolinggo. This mosque also develops in terms of shape and size. Initially it was a traditional tajug-roofed mosque, but then experienced changes gradually and now it has a modern character.

The Masjid Jami' (Great Mosque) of Probolinggo is currently a two-story modern mosque with a dome-shaped roof, complete with minarets on the left and right sides. Thus, this mosque can accommodate a larger congregation. This mosque dominates the western side of the square, and is the most important building on the west side.



Picture 3. Masjid Jami' (Great Mosque) of Probolinggo

source: *Research Documentation 2018*

On the west side, there are also several other buildings besides the mosque. However, the mosque remains the main marker. There are several other buildings such as cafes, offices or houses (some of which appear to be neglected), but they have a size that is not so large, so it is still under the "domination" of the mosque.

b3. North Side of Alun-alun of Probolinggo

The outer side of the northern part of the *alun-alun* is the most distinctive part of the Probolinggo square. On this side there is a station building that has existed since the Dutch colonial period. The existence of this station is not only a mode of transportation, but also as a trace of how the former colonial government made this station a chain of transportation of produce from the interior to the global realm.



Picture 4. Train Station in North Side of Alun-alun
source: *Research Documentation 2018*

Besides that, the north side is also a place that has a business element. In the station area itself there is also a place to sell food that is quite crowded. While in the row of squares there are also street vendors who mostly sell food. Even so, the dominant one on the north side is still the Probolinggo train station which is the main marker and at the same time the easiest to be remembered by those who pass this place.

b4. East Side of Alun-alun of Probolinggo

The east side of Alun-alun of Probolinggo is also the other side too. Here there is a prison building which has also been around since the Dutch colonial period. This prison building is the dominant building on this east side. Prison was built as one of the elements of law enforcement, which in the Dutch colonial era might have been the meaning of "shock therapy" for the Probolinggo community in the past.



Picture 5. Prison Building in East Side of Alun-alun
source: *Research Documentation 2018*

Prison can be an element of conquest or "discipline" for people under government. Prisons have enough power to make people not do anything to fight the government. In the colonial period, this disciplinary element became very important, because it became one of the supporters to preserve its occupation of the earth of Probolinggo.

On the east side there are also several other buildings besides the prison (prison), but the prison building is still the dominant one. Other than that buildings include food stalls, there are also prayer rooms. The existence of a prison on the east side is a fairly strong feature of the *alun-alun*.

Conclusion

From the analysis that has been done in the previous section, finally it can be concluded that this square whose position is in the center of Probolinggo in the end could be a quite feasible case for the issues of postcolonial discourse. Postcolonial discourse is a contemporary discourse, which actually also requires equal reciprocity of the object under study. So, the *alun-alun* is also an active object against postcolonial discourse.

So, this *Alun-alun* of Probolinggo also provides a corrective return, that postcolonial issues must be cross-checked in the field. The existence of the Railway station on the north side of the alun-alun, actually carried a long trail with a series of buildings behind it to go to the port of Probolinggo. Stations and trains, in the colonial era became a means to collect crops from the interior to Probolinggo, then stored and shipped through the ports of Probolinggo to Europe (or the whole world). The traces of warehouses and fortifications north of the Station still exist, and still show traces of that colonial era.

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