The utilization of the railway side as children’s public space (the case study of Patukan Station, Gamping, Sleman, D.I Yogyakarta)

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Abstract. The existence of public space, as space for people to socialize and spend their leisure time, is an important thing to be paid attention to in urban planning. However, the lack of urban public space, especially for children, makes some places turned into public space illegally by the community. This study aims to explain the utilization of the railway side as children’s public space, as well as the impact caused. The location of the research is along the railway side of Patukan Station. This research is using the qualitative method. The sampling technique used is an accidental sampling. The research was done through observation to see characteristics of the space, kinds of activities, the doers, also interview toward the visitors and merchants. The result of this study shows that the utilization of the railway side could attract the community to come regularly to do some activities. Meanwhile, there are some limitations to the railway side as an illegal children’s public space. The communities remain uncomfortable and realized that they need proper public space that is more organized and managed legally by the government or other competent sectors. They are expected to provide children public space which can be easily accessed by society.

1. Introduction

The city growth nowadays tends to be dominated by the development of residential areas, economic and business areas. Developed land is increasing and there is less public open space for people to interact. The provision of public space by the government is often neglected. The existence of public space can improve the quality of people's lives and create added value economically, socially, and environmentally if it is well organized.

Article 28 of Law (Undang-Undang) No. 26 of 2007 concerning Spatial Planning mentions the need to provide and utilize Green Open Space and Non-Green Open Space within a city. In this case, the Green Open Space and Non-Green Open Space provided to the public are categorized as public spaces. The need for public space is not only felt by the urban community, but also by the suburban community. Humans are social creatures who need interaction between people in their environment, both individuals and groups.

The need for public space is also felt by the children. Activities carried out by children in public spaces are more directed towards play activities even though the space used is not specifically designed for games or playing [1]. Children's public space does not always have to be structured and risk-free, although safety factors must still be considered [2].
The lack of urban public space causes the community not to have space to interact, to develop the creativity and the space to play especially for children. As a result, spontaneous and illegal public spaces emerge. Those public spaces are generally developed by utilizing available spaces such as fields, vacant land, riverside, or railway side. Then from the land, people’s activities and interactions arise. Railway side usage as a public space does not only happen in urban areas. This phenomenon also occurred in the area of Patukan Station, Gamping Sub-District, Sleman Regency which is quite far from the Central Business District (CBD). There are four train lines in Patukan Station, of which only two lines remain active for now, but line number 1 and 4 are no longer active.

Railway side area in Patukan Station is a side area used as an informal and temporary public space. This public space is created by the people who want a place for entertainment because of the lack of public space in their residential environment. In the afternoon, the Patukan Station area is filled with people involved in various activities, such as children playing, parents feeding their children while waiting for the passing train, or just sitting on the inactive train track.

Therefore, this phenomenon of the Patukan Station railway side that turns into children’s public space needs to be studied and investigated. The Researcher is encouraged to explore further how the Patukan Station railway side can become a public space, the impact caused by the existence of illegal children public space in Patukan Station, and to explore the community perception about the condition of public space in the study area.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Public Space

Public space according to Scruton [3] is a location that is minimally designed, having great access to the surroundings, and a meeting place for the people or one another. Public space based on Setiawan [4] functions as a meeting place between one individual and the local community, the government and its citizens, native inhabitants and immigrants, and also to familiarize various individual necessities in an urban community.

Zhang and Lawson in Haryanto [5] classify public space activities into three, those are:

1. Process activity
   This activity is done as a transition of two or more primary activities. Process activity generally forms as movement from a place to the destination.

2. Physical contact
   This activity forms an interaction between two or more people who do direct communication or other social activities.

3. Transition activity
   This activity is done without a specific aim and usually done alone, for instance observing the view.

Carr in Carmona et al [6] stated that public space in a settlement must have the following elements in order to play a good role:

1. Comfort
   Comfort is one of the absolute requirements for public space success. Comfort in public space is influenced by three things, the environmental comfort in the form of environmental/natural influence such as sunlight and wind, physical comfort in the form of fulfilling supporting facilities availability, and psychological comfort in the form of inner comfort of the public space users.

2. Relaxation
   Relaxation is closely related to psychological comfort. Relax ambience is needed in public space in order to achieve happiness from space users. Relaxation can be realized by presenting natural elements such as plants and locations that avoid noise.

3. Passive engagement
   Passive engagement can be done by relaxing (sit or stand) and watching available surrounding activities and views.
4. Active engagement
   Active engagement is done by people's interaction so that public space can be declared success if it can accommodate people's activities.

5. Discovery
   Discovery is a public space management process meant to improve the quality of activities and to make it less monotonous.

2.2. Temporary Public Space
Temporary public space according to Carr [7] is a space that is formed or designed so that it can accommodate a number of people in carrying out activities that are public. Temporary public space can be defined as the phenomenon of the creation of public space that occurs spontaneously and is used to fulfill community activities at a certain time (temporary). As for the existence of the temporary public space, the initial function of the space is fully transferred or can be used simultaneously [8].

   Factors influencing the sustainability of temporary public space include:
   1. Location
      A good location of public space is what can attract users to a variety of backgrounds and generally on a variety of land use as well.
   2. Size
      The size of public space is determined by how many people are expected to come and use the space. The size will also be related to the enclosure in the public space.
   3. Users and Activities
      To attract people to come to a place, there is usually a "bond" that can make them live in that place both physically and symbolically.
   4. Climate
      In a four-season country, people will generally prefer to come to a space that gets a lot of sunlight. However, in tropical countries, public spaces are required to be in a shady place with enough plants.
   5. Furniture
      The furniture referred to objects that support the comfort of public spaces such as benches, tables, and other complementary facilities.

3. Method
3.1 Research Location
The location of this research is the railway side in Patukan Station, Gamping Sub-District, Sleman Regency. This station is located outside the city area, yet this place is the only place that is considered as children's public space in the surrounding area.
3.2 Research Method
The method used in this research is qualitative. A qualitative method was used to give the depiction of available activities in the railway side area of Patukan Station as children's public space. The sampling technique used in this research is an accidental sampling. Accidental sampling is a technique of determining samples based on coincidences, anyone can be used as a sample if it is seen by the person who happens to meet it as a suitable data source. In this study, researchers directly collected data from the sampling units encountered.

3.3 Data Collecting Technique
The data collecting technique used is the primary data collecting technique by observation and interview. Direct observation was made to space and activities done by the users in the research area so that the researcher can understand the data context relatively. The interview method used is an in-depth interview. The interview was carried out with the visitors and merchants in the research location to obtain further information.

4. Results
The phenomenon of informal public space in the Patukan Station area began since 2007 and it started with the existence of two food merchants serving some people who were spending their afternoon time while looking at the passing trains. Gradually, the Patukan Station area became increasingly crowded with more people and merchants, and from 2014 till now that area is not only filled with the food merchants but also kids’ toy merchants.

Available activities in Patukan Station happen every day in the afternoon from 16.00 to 18.00 with peak hours starting at 17.00 and Sunday is the most crowded day. The activities are majorly carried out by the kids and their parents as supervisors. Others are the food and toy merchants in the Patukan Station area.
4.1 Patukan Station Attractiveness as Public Space
Patukan Station has several attractions for the community that can be classified into two, namely attractions in the form of passing trains and the various children's games available. These attractions are the reason people visit Patukan Station regularly.

4.1.1 Railroad Crossing
Afternoon passing train in Patukan Station becomes an attraction for people to come, especially for kids. Kids generally have an attraction to the transportation mode that they rarely use. Most often the kids also wave their hands to the passing trains as a way of expressing their happiness.

4.1.2 Kids Games
The most popular kids’ games in the Patukan Station area is the carousel (odong-odong). There are two units of carousel in the research area, one is on the north side and the other one on the south side of the railway. There are also some traders who sell children's toys. The children usually buy toys and immediately play in the station area.

4.2 Activities
Various activities can be carried out by the community at Patukan Station. Each type of activity is usually dominated by people of a certain age. The types of activities contained in the Patukan Station include sitting, playing, feeding children, and buying/selling activities.

4.2.1 Sitting
Some people come to the Patukan Station area just sitting on the inactive railway. They enjoy the atmosphere while chatting, looking after their children, and eating snacks until the sunset.

4.2.2 Playing
There are many things that can attract kids’ attention to play in the Patukan Station area i.e. playing with friends, buying toys that are sold by the merchants in the location, or riding carousel (“odong-odong”).
4.2.3 Feeding children
Parents utilize passing trains as an interesting attraction for their children while they feed their children in the afternoon. Parents say that feeding children this way is much easier than doing it at home because they also get a new and pleasant atmosphere by playing or seeing trains passing.

4.2.4 Buying and Selling
Not so many people come to Patukan Station to buy food sold in this area and then sit on the inactive railway with their friends or family members. However, some of the kids buy toys or rent games provided by the merchants whenever they come around.
4.3 Activity Doers
The activities at Patukan Station are carried out by the visitors and merchants. Visitors who come to Patukan Station vary from children, teenagers to the elderly. While the merchants at Patukan Station consist of food merchants and toy merchants.

4.3.1 Visitors
The groups of people who come to the Patukan Station area are kids, parents, and teenagers. Visitors who come to the Patukan Station area not only come from Gamping Sub-District, but also from other areas. Based on the interview results, some of the visitors come from Godean, Seyegan, Moyudan, Kronggahan, and Wirobrajan. The people's average visit time to Patukan Station is once in 2 weeks for the local people of Gamping Sub-District and once or twice in a month for people from outside Gamping Sub-District.

4.3.2 Merchants
The available merchants in the Patukan Station area consist of two types i.e. food merchants and toy merchants with the total amount of 20 merchants. These merchants usually arrive at 16.00 and return home at 18.00 every day. The crowd of the visitors who come to the Patukan Station is the main attraction for the merchants to sell to. The number of visitors is directly related to the profit that they will get.

4.4 Impact of Patukan Station as Public Space
The existence of informal public space in the Patukan Station area created some impacts that can be reviewed from different aspects. From the social aspect, the existence of this public space can be advantageous for the people because they don’t need to go too far to enjoy children's public space. The people’s access to the recent provision of formal children's public space is only available in the Denggung Field area which is quite far from their homes (Gamping Sub-District and the surroundings).

Moreover, the lack of management of the existing children’s public space in the Patukan Station area create problems of accessibility for the people. The motorcycle parking uses the roadside, which is only 2.5 meters wide, and this disrupts the vehicle flow towards Gamping Lor Village. Besides, the existence of the active lines can also be dangerous for children who play in the area. This because the distance between the active line and the inactive line is very close. There are many people who always sit on the inactive lines (line 1 and line 4).

Figure 6. The motorcycle parking lot disrupts vehicle flow.
Figure 7. The distance between active and inactive line (people sitting).

5. Conclusion
Based on this research, it can be summarized that the railway side area of Patukan Station has temporarily been turned into illegal children's public space. This happened because the people needed a meeting place for relaxation, especially for their kids. The activities that took place in the Patukan Station area were sitting and chatting, playing, feeding children, and buying and selling activities. The children's public space in the Patukan Station area does not only serve people from Gamping Sub-District, but also the surrounding areas and other areas with 5 km from the research area. The existence of the children's public space in Patukan Station creates a positive effect such as public socialization and interaction. On the other hand, it equally creates a lack of accessibility because the road width is reduced because of the parking lot. The existence of the active lines can also be dangerous for children who play in the area, especially because the distance between the active line and the inactive line is very close, and many people are always sitting on that inactive lines.

6. Way Forward
This research is expected to contribute towards city planning and its response towards illegal public space. The government is expected to provide children public space that can be easily accessed by society. Furthermore, it also needs an active role from all actors including the planner and the community. In this case, the Patukan Station area has the potential to be developed into a formal public space reviewed from the available land, the peoples’ enthusiasm and its service scale. This research can further be followed up with a result of the planning of children's public space that can accommodate peoples’ needs evenly, and not only concentrated to the city centre.

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