The Contribution of Parks' Facilities to Social Interactions in the Clusters at Kota Baru Parahyangan

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Abstract: As a part of the city and urban elements, park greatly supports human beings in many aspects, especially as a medium for social interactions. With the existence of parks in every *tatar* in Kota Baru Parahyangan (KBP), the residents' needs of social interactions can be accommodated. Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis (1998) categorized people's socializing in two ways; Overt Socializing and Covert Socializing. These two types of socializing define two basic requirements of facilities that a park should have : facilities that support social contacts and some comfortable natural settings to support the recreational purposes. This paper classifies the analysis based on the groups of users, which are children (1-12 years), teenagers, adults (including adults who come with babies or toddler), elders, and people with special needs (disabled and toddlers). Each group has their own expectations regarding the park's facilities, which once fulfilled, will attract them to come and stimulate (or trigger) social interactions. Therefore, a discussion about how the facilities in the KBP's park meet the requirements is performed through a quantified evaluation to find out how many groups of users are actually facilitated and accommodated to have social interactions in the parks.

Keywords: park, social, interaction, playground, natural-setting, facilities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Park as a Media for Social Interaction

In the context of exterior, park is one of many landscape elements, which greatly supports human beings in many aspects. It contributes not only as a green space for the ecology or as a balance to the ecosystem, but also helps serve the citizens' activities as social beings and functions as an esthetic element. As an open area, park provides a space in which people can utilize to support their activities and needs. According to Ashihara (1970), a space is formed by the relationship between an object and a human being who perceives it (p.10). Human being's satisfaction then becomes the parameter of how successful a park is in attaining its purposes.

As parts of the city and urban elements, residential and housing are closely related to human beings with the same needs of a park. Since people as the main users are social beings, park should meet its role to serve as a media for social interactions to the inhabitants. People always need space for any activities, but the most important is not their relationship with space but with other people who share the same space. Children who share playground after school and stay-at-home housewives who share chatters in the neighborhood are the examples. There are space shared with other people of mutual interests at places that fit their sense of comfort. With the existence of parks in the neighborhood, humans' needs of social interactions can be accommodated.

1.2 Park Situations in Kota Baru Parahyangan

In the west, just outside Bandung, lies an exclusive (soon to become a) Satellite City, Kota Baru Parahyangan (KBP). With the concept of Satellite City, KBP is planned to become an independent supporting city to Bandung. Thus, KBP is attached to the regulation to gradually provide up to minimum 30% of the total area for public places in which parks are included. The development and the constructions in KBP are still in progress and will take years to complete, but this independent city has already had 15 listed clusters – named *Tatar* – and a corridor of neighborhood.

The main theme that KBP resonances is Education. It is applied not only by bringing in several private schools, but also by spreading knowledge to the dwellers through the thematic park design in every cluster. Since people who are interested in properties in KBP are mostly families with children, all of these thematic parks are complemented with features that are attractive to children, in addition to playground which is built as the main facility. This approach gives enough space for children to interact with each other and successfully adds esthetic values to the overall outlook of the clusters. However, with children as the main priority, future issues might occur regarding the function of parks as a media for social interactions to other people besides children. This function becomes questionable because other groups of people whose needs are not facilitated may not fully experience the parks.

Based on the situation above, this paper aims to find out the contributions of the park facilities in KBP in providing spaces for social interactions, especially to the residents other than children. It also aims to find findings which are possible for more thorough researches, in addition to becoming a feedback and guidelines for the further park design in new *tatars* or the development of the recent parks.

2. Theoritical Background

2.1 People's Needs of Social Contacts and Natural Settings

Social interactions at the park will happen if people first come to the park; and people come to a place with some reason. Although the needs of parks in the neighborhood might be different depending on social status or wealth (Harnik, 2010, p.38), people generally come to a park to experience the natural settings or to get social contacts to refresh themselves or as a short escape from their routines. Lawson (2001) explains that most of us hate being bored, want some form of amusement and entertainment, and we demand that the space around us should provide this (p.18). Imagine if there was no electronic entertainment media. Almost everyone then would go to the park to get their amusement or recreational needs through meetings with other people, working on some outdoor activities, or a mere interaction with the greenery and the surroundings. Whether the purposes are recreational or social, people will always experience interactions with other people who share the same space at the park.

Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis (1998) categorize two types of how people socialize; Overt Socializing and Covert Socializing. People categorized in the first group often go to a place based on who else goes there rather than what features the place has. This group of people prefer to come to a park because they want to meet other people and do mutual activities together, such as doing physical exercises, pet walking, playing in the playground, or sitting around and gossiping. Regardless the activities, the always want to have social contact with other people.

On the other side, people categorized in Covert Socializing prefer to come to a park for more personal entertainment and have no intention of conversing or meeting with people (p.92). They use the park for such a calming relaxation, such as sitting in a bench while listening to a music player or reading a book, people watching, or simply resting under the shade of the trees. This group of people uses park without any intention to share activities with other people. Nevertheless, they still interact with the natural setting of the surroundings.

With these two types of socializing, there are two categories of facilities that a park should provide in order to make people come, which are facilities that support social contacts and some comfortable natural settings to support the recreational purposes.

2.2 Activities Based on Groups of Users

Activities that people do at the parks are varied depend on the groups of users, but the contributions of the natural settings are equal to anyone. For example, children prefer playing in the playground with their friends rather than sitting on the benches alone and the teenagers prefer being in a secluded area only with some selected people rather than being in the crowd with adults who make them feel as if they were being watched. Meanwhile, both groups experience the same natural settings, such as a good scenery or beautiful plantations, which may bring a comfort or discomfort. Therefore, this paper only differentiates the activities based on the groups of users. Adjusting to the situation in KBP, they are categorized as children, teenagers, adults (including adults who come with babies or toddler), elders, and people with special needs, such as the disabled and babies in strollers. These varied activities thus determine the requirements of the facilities as classified in the table below:

Table 1 User Group's Needs and Requirements That Support Social Contacts
(Adapted from People Places, Marcus and Francis, 1998)

No	Group of Users	Type of Activities	Needs	Requirements
1	Children (4-12 years)	1. Playing together with other children. 2. Playing together with adults	Playground (Conventional and Adventure)	1. Non-slippery and soft surface with minimum inclination 2. Sand under the playground for safety 3. With sitting area for supervising adults 4. Variety of colors, shapes, forms, and textures. 5. Open area adequate for running 6. Visible by the surrounding, no blindspot 7. Provide space for physical activities
			Seating Area	1. Children size.

			Sport Ground	1. Separated from playground 2. Provide open space 3. Non-slippery surface
			Circulation	1. Continuous path 2. Non-slippery surface
2	Teenagers	1. Meeting with friends 2. Chit-chatting 3. Hangout 4. Doing physical exercises 5. Playing cards or board games	Playground (Conventional & Adventure)	1. Separated from playground for children 2. Visible by the surrounding, no blindspot
			Physical Exercise Facilities	1. Separated from children's playground 2. With sitting area for spectators 3. With fence for safety 4. Possible for sport ground or exercise equipment.
			Seating Area	1. Possible for small or large group activities 2. Visible by the surrounding, no blindspot 3. Possible with some tables
			Sport Ground	1. Separated from children's playground and sport ground
			Circulation	1. Continuous path 2. Non-slippery surface
3	Adults	1. Accompanying and supervising children 2. Pet-walking 3. Doing physical exercises 4. Chit-chatting 5. People-watching 6. Relaxing/ enjoying the surroundings 7. Playing board game	Playground	1. Provided with tables and seating area 2. Possible visibility to children's or teenager's playground
			Seating area	1. Close to the playground 2. Arranged for encouraging (or avoiding) social contacts 3. Possible for small or large group activities 4. Easily seen and accessed 5. Possible with some tables
			Sport Ground	1. Separated from children's playground 2. With sitting area for spectators 3. With fence for safety 4. Possible for sport ground or exercise equipment.
			Circulation	1. Passing through areas which encouraging social contacts (e.g. tables, sitting areas)
4	Elders	1. Enjoying the surroundings (by walking or sitting) 2. Sunbathing 3. Chit-chatting 4. People-watching 5. Doing physical exercises	Playground	1. Provided with tables and seating area 2. Possible visibility to children's or teenager's playground
			Seating Area	1. Close to the crowd 2. Shaded 3. Comfortable 4. With back rest 5. Near to the circulation area
			Sport Ground	1. Non-slippery & non-glare surface with min. inclination 2. With ramp 3. With handrail 4. Continuous circulation

			Circulation	1. Gives enough shade (high vegetation) 2. Ramp with minimum inclination 3. Stairs with handrail 4. Non slippery surface 5. Continuous circulation area 6. Adequate for two people passing by
5	Special Needs (toddlers, disabled)	1. Enjoying the surroundings (by sitting only) 2. Sunbathing 3. Chit-chatting 4. People-watching	Playground	1. Provided with tables and seating area 2. Accessible from main circulation
			Seating Area	1. Gives enough shade (high vegetation) 2. Accessible from main circulation 3. Visible by surrounding, no blinspot
			Circulation	1. Possible for interaction with other groups of users 2. Shaded 3. Comfortable 4. Near to the circulation area 5. Non-slippery and soft surface with minimum inclination 6. Ramp with minimum inclination 7. Provide handrail

3. Metods

In order to know the contributions of the park facilities in KBP to the residents' needs of social interactions, this study uses a quantified evaluation which is implemented through:

1. Survey: it is used as a tool to give the data about the park facilities at the study location.
2. Analysis: it is executed by scoring the survey data and some collected information from the interview to the reference table.
3. Interview: it is performed informally to eleven residents met by random as the park users to give complementary information about how the park is used in daily basis.

4. Discussions

4.1 Park Facilities in Kota Baru Parahyangan

Based on the survey in June 2015, there are 15 *tatars* listed in KBP. Bandung Tempo Doeloe is categorized as a corridor and is not included for this study. There are several situations found during the visit to the study location, which are: Tatars Kumalasinta, Kamandaka, and Subanglarang are still under constructions; Tatar Rambutkasih does not actually have a park; and the facilities at the parks in Tatars Purbasari and Tejakancana have not fully completed. Even though some features are seen, but bringing these two tatars as study samples would bring an inaccurate result. There are then 9 *tatars* with total 13 parks remaining for the following discussions.

Table 2 Data of Park Facilities in KBP, June 2015
(Classified based on facilities found in every tatar)

| NO | Name of Tatar | Number of parks | Theme | Facilities | | | | | | | Natural Settings | | |
| | | | | Accessibility | | Designed Playground | | | Features | | Greenery | | |
				Ramp	Pedestrian	Conventional	Adventure	P.E. Facilities	Lighting	Seating	Low (bushes)	High (trees)	View
1	Kumalasinta												
2	Wangsakerta	3	Transportation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	Pitaloka	4	Astronomy	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Rambutkasih	-	Flora										
5	Banyak Sumba	3	Creation	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	Ratnasasih	1	Art	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
7	Jingganagara	1	Geography & Seven Wonders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8	Mayangsunda	1	Information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9	Larangtapa	1	Nature		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Naganingrum	1	History	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11	Candraresmi	2	Literature		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12	Purbasari	1	Music		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Tejakancana	2	Music		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Kamandaka		Communication										
15	Subanglarang		Nature Harmony										

There are different numbers of parks in every *tatar* and at least one of those is designed with a specific theme and primarily facilitated with conventional playground for children up to 12 years old, such as swings, slides, climbing frames, and features with springs. Other facilities that constantly appear in every *tatar* are lighting, seating, and the greenery. Lighting is provided through some park lamps which are placed near the circulation in the playground area; seating is provided through benches or gazebo, in which the adults can sit near to the children whom they supervise; and greenery appears in forms of trees and bushes, all of which appear constantly in every *tatar*. With these main facilities, children are undoubtedly the kings who dominate the parks; and adults who are attached to the children receive some benefit by making use of the seating area to interact with other adults with the same needs. Playground serves as the primary facility, and others (lighting, seating, and greenery) function as complementary fixtures a park must have.

The second most facilities found are physical exercises facilities, mostly in a form of foot reflexology, which is placed inside the playground area and able to be used by people at any ages. Several *tatars* with more physical exercises facilities, such as parallel bars, outdoor gym, and basketball court are also more inviting to make more groups of people come and have social contacts. Following the physical exercises facilities, there are adventure playground which provides more creative opportunity to play and the availability of ramp, all of which are found in two-thirds of the *tatars*. Meanwhile, the view potentials are only found in two *tatars*. These varied facilities shows that each park in every *tatar* has different priorities in accommodating the users' activities.

Referring to the data on the table, it seems that the more numbers of parks a *tatar* has, the more complete the facilities are. In the contrary, the real situation does not tell the same thing. Tatars Jingganagara and Mayangsunda provide the most facilities with only one park. On the other hand, Tatar Pitaloka with 4 parks only provides 8 out of the total 10 facilities. Since this part only discusses facts based on the availability of the facilities, it requires an evaluation based on the quality of the facilities, in order to know the contributions of the park to social interactions.

4.2 Park Facilities as Means for Social Interaction

From the Table 2, it is seen how many classifications of facilities a *tatar* has through it parks that support social interactions. By making a quantification based on the requirements on Table 1 to the facilities on Table 2, it will tell the situation on how the park's facilities accommodating the users' activities and needs of social interactions. Since every park has a thematic design, an additional evaluation about themes is made to find out its contribution to engage the users and make the parks more potential as spaces for social interactions.

Table 3 Scoring Park's Facilities Based on Group of User's Needs
(Scale : 1-Poor, 2-Below Requirement, 3-Acceptable, 4-Good, 5-Excellent)

Groups of Users	Needs	Wangs akerta	Pitalok a	Banya ksumb a	Ratnas asih	Jingga nagara	Mayan gsund a	Larang tapa	Nagani ngrum	Candr aresmi	Score	
Childr en (4-12 years)	**Social Contacts** Playground Seating Area Sport Ground Circulation	4 4 1 4	2 2 0 3	3 2 3 4	2 2 0 4	4 4 1 4	4 2 2 5	3 2 2 3	5 4 2 5	4 3 1 5	31 25 12 37	**101**
	Natural Settings Vegetation View/Esthetic	3 1	3 3	3 1	3 1	4 1	4 1	5 3	2 1	3 1	30 13	**43**
	Others Themes (Education/Esthetic)	4	3	3	3	5	2	4	4	4	32	**32**
	Score	**21**	**16**	**19**	**15**	**23**	**20**	**22**	**23**	**21**	**180**	
Teenag ers	**Social Contacts** Playground Seating Area	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	15	**93**

Sport Ground	4	2	2	3	4	2	2	4	2	25	
Circulation	4	0	3	0	1	2	4	2	1	17	
	4	3	3	4	4	5	3	5	5	36	
Natural Settings											**43**
Vegetation	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	2	3	30	
View/Esthetic	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	13	
Others											**32**
Themes (Education/Esthetic)	4	3	3	3	5	2	4	4	4	32	
Score	**22**	**15**	**16**	**16**	**21**	**18**	**22**	**20**	**18**	**168**	
Adults — **Social Contacts**											**90**
Playground	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	
Seating Area	4	3	3	3	4	3	1	4	4	29	
Sport Ground	4	0	2	0	1	3	4	2	1	17	
Circulation	4	3	2	4	4	5	3	5	5	35	
Natural Settings											**43**
Vegetation	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	2	3	30	
View/Esthetic	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	13	
Others											**27**
Themes (Education/Esthetic)	3	2	2	2	5	3	4	3	3	27	
Score	**20**	**15**	**14**	**14**	**20**	**20**	**21**	**18**	**18**	**160**	
Elders — **Social Contacts**											**59**
Playground	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	
Seating Area	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	4	19	
Sport Ground	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	
Circulation	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	24	
Natural Settings											**43**
Vegetation	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	2	3	30	
View/Esthetic	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	13	
Others											**24**
Themes (Education/Esthetic)	3	2	2	2	5	2	4	3	3	24	
Score	**13**	**15**	**12**	**12**	**16**	**13**	**17**	**13**	**16**	**127**	
Special Needs (toddlers, disabled) — **Social Contacts**											**51**
Playground	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	
Seating Area	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	3	17	
Sport Ground	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	
Circulation	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	1	18	
Natural Settings											**43**
Vegetation	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	2	3	30	
View/Esthetic	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	13	
Others											**26**
Themes (Education/Esthetic)	3	2	2	2	5	2	4	3	3	26	
Score	**12**	**12**	**11**	**12**	**16**	**14**	**16**	**13**	**13**	**119**	
Social Contacts	51	31	40	37	46	49	38	55	49		
Natural Settings	20	30	20	20	25	25	40	15	20		
Themes	17	12	12	12	25	11	20	17	17		
Total Score	**88**	**73**	**72**	**69**	**96**	**85**	**98**	**87**	**86**		

Based on the table above, parks in Tatars Larangtapa and Jingganagara score the two-highest amongst the rest in providing the needs of all groups of users (98 and 96 points respectively) and Tatar Ratnasasih scores the least (69 points), but if the scoring components are classified by social contact, Tatar Ratnasasih scores almost the same as Larangtapa (37 and 38 points) which has the highest average total score. This proves that interactions depend not only on facilities that encourage social contacts, but also supported by natural settings and themes of the parks.

The scoring based on groups of users confirms the previous statement that children are the dominating users in all parks in KBP, but not in every *tatar*. Tatars Wangsakerta and Ratnasasih

are more facilitating for teenagers because they have sport ground and seating area that are more suitable for children above 12 years old, Tatar Mayangsunda shares the same score for children and adult, and Tatar Larangtapa shares the same score for children and teenagers. This indicates that KBP already set the parks to be used by multiple groups of users, from children, teenagers to adults almost equally. Elders and people with special needs are facilitated mostly through the existence of natural settings and the esthetic of the thematic features, as provided by Tatars Larangtapa and Jingganagara. Nevertheless, those *tatars* are still lacking in the specific requirements based on their needs, such as back rest in the seating, handrail along the circulation path, and minimum ramp inclination. These limitation will hinder them from coming to the parks.

Referring to the scoring of social contacts, Naganingrum appears to be the *tatar* that provides the most facilities for social contacts. Ironically, it scores the least in the natural settings Meanwhile, Tatar Larangtapa scores the highest in the natural, but low in the social contacts As the result between the two, Tatar Larangtapa scores the highest in total because the park is supported by a good thematic design. Comparing to Tatar Jingganagara whose total score is the second highest, it is supported by the successful application of the theme into the park features and facilities through which the park achieves the highest score for the park theme. This means that application of theme into the parks also has a role to increase the possibility of social interactions in the parks, besides providing facilities for social contacts and the existence of good natural settings.

5. Conclusions and Other Findings

5.1 Conclusion

Every group of users has different types of activities and requirements to provide in order to invite them to come to the parks and stimulate social interactions. KBP has actually provided park facilities not only for children, but also for teenagers and adult almost equally. Some facilities for the elders and people with special needs are already provided, but are still lacking in the accessibility and circulation. Referring to Table 3 which shows that circulation contributes very high to the total score, an adjustment to the accessibility through the ramp with minimum inclination and to the circulation by providing sufficient width for wheelchair and handrail along the pathway would make parks more approachable by the elders and people with special needs, by which the possibility for social interactions would be bigger.

5.2 Other Findings

The themes apparently play a big role to make the parks more beautiful and inviting. From the case in Tatar Jingganagara, it is seen that the park would be just moderate without the good implementation of the thematic design. Referring back to the general concept, all parks in every *tatar* are designed by theme in an attempt to bring educational knowledge through landscape esthetic features. It indicates that the implementation of the themes does not apply equally to

every park. This could be an interesting finding to discuss furthermore in order to find out the thoroughness and effectiveness of theme implementation into park design.

Acknowledgement

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