

Placemaking Analysis on Improving The Quality of Merjosari Park Public Space

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Abstract- Merjosari Park has recently experienced significant quality degradation due to prolonged neglect and insufficient maintenance. This study aims to assess the public space quality of Merjosari Park and analyze it based on placemaking principles. A descriptive quantitative methodology was employed, involving the identification of phenomena and environmental issues affecting public space quality, followed by numerical assessments derived from community perceptions. The study evaluated aspects of placemaking—including Uses and Activities, Access and Linkages, Comfort and Image, and Sociability. The analysis revealed a score of 125, with the highest contributions from Comfort and Image elements, such as user comfort, safety, cleanliness, and functionality. Despite being classified as good quality, the park's score sits at the lower threshold of this category. The study concludes that Merjosari Park requires targeted improvements to achieve higher quality standards and offers recommendations for development.

Keywords: Placemaking, Public Space, Parks, Quality

I. INTRODUCTION

Green open spaces are vital to urban environments, providing ecological, social, and aesthetic benefits. According to Taylor and Hochuli (2017), green spaces can be defined through quantitative and qualitative approaches. These approaches were explored in a study of 125 related journals, revealing that while definitions vary depending on the focus of the study, the primary goal remains consistent—to provide green spaces that support ecosystem balance. However, Boulton et al. (2018) highlight that urban green spaces often face quantitative gaps, as their provision is frequently measured against recreational standards rather than ecosystem benefits. Aalbers and Sehested (2018) emphasize that community participation is critical to ensuring green spaces are designed inclusively and appropriately.

Urban green spaces, both formal (e.g., city parks and urban forests) and informal (e.g., vacant land and roadsides), play an essential role in urban life by fostering social interactions and providing health benefits. However, Kimpton (2017) identifies a social inequality in the

distribution of urban green spaces, which tend to be more abundant in affluent areas than poorer neighbourhoods. This disparity highlights the importance of equitable planning in urban green space development.

In Indonesia, the Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 5 of 2008 mandates that at least 30% of urban areas be allocated for green open spaces (RTH). These spaces are categorized into natural green spaces, such as wild habitats and national parks, and built green spaces, such as urban parks and sports fields. Despite this regulation, implementation remains suboptimal, as evidenced by persistent ecological and social issues in urban areas. Increasing the role of RTH to meet community needs requires a holistic and integrated approach supported by active collaboration among stakeholders.

Placemaking offers a promising framework to address these challenges by fostering community-driven transformations of public spaces. The Project for Public Spaces (2022) defines placemaking as a process that integrates physical, cultural, and social elements to reimagine and reinvigorate public spaces. This framework emphasizes creativity and participation to unlock the potential of existing spaces, making them appealing and functional for daily life. Schneekloth and Shibley (1995) describe placemaking as a process where communities collectively transform a physical space into an environment they identify as home. Similarly, Ackerman (2012) highlights the transformative nature of placemaking in fostering a sense of belonging.

Placemaking is particularly crucial for urban open spaces as it prioritizes user-centric design, ensuring spaces cater to the diverse needs of communities. By emphasizing accessibility, usability, and sociability, placemaking enhances urban spaces' social and cultural vibrancy. For example, the redesign of Bryant Park in New York City and Federation Square in Melbourne demonstrates how placemaking can turn neglected areas into thriving public spaces, attracting diverse users and encouraging a sense of ownership. These projects illustrate the potential of placemaking to integrate functional design with

community-driven objectives, resulting in inclusive, interactive, and sustainable spaces.

Placemaking involves engaging local communities, analyzing spatial needs, and incorporating cultural and social contexts. Key steps include conducting participatory workshops, mapping existing assets, and co-creating design solutions. These activities ensure that public spaces reflect community values and are adaptable to changing needs. Previous studies, such as Habibullah et al. (2021), emphasize the role of community input in enhancing public space functionality, while Alauddin and Pramitasari (2023) highlight the importance of integrating local culture into placemaking efforts.

Despite its proven benefits, gaps remain in applying placemaking principles to urban green spaces in Indonesia. Many spaces are underutilized due to a lack of maintenance, inadequate infrastructure, and limited community engagement. In the case of Merjosari Park, these challenges are compounded by social and ecological degradation, necessitating a targeted analysis using a placemaking approach. By identifying existing gaps and leveraging placemaking principles, this study aims to propose actionable recommendations to restore Merjosari Park as a vibrant and inclusive public space.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach to examine phenomena and issues related to environmental degradation impacting the quality of public spaces in Merjosari Park, Malang City. Subsequently, an evaluation was conducted using numerical data derived from community perceptions, which was then analyzed through descriptive interpretation. This assessment is based on various aspects of placemaking theory ie. Uses and activities, access and linkages, comfort and image and sociability. The findings serve as a foundation for evaluating and formulating recommendations for the future development of Merjosari Park.

The research site is Merjosari Park, covering an area of 10,766 m². The park is bordered by Merjosari Flower Park to the east, stalls to the north, a soccer field to the west, and Insan Karim Mosque along with residential settlements to the south.

Data Collection Methods

This research uses data collection methods with a focus on three age groups, namely adults aged 18–30 years, middle-aged 31–50 years, and elderly 51 years and over, including both women and men who live in Malang City. Each variable in this study involved 22 respondents obtained through a stratified random sampling technique. This technique is used to determine the number of samples

in a stratified population, in this case, based on age levels, as explained by Sugiyono (2013, p. 83).

Data Analysis Technique

Placemaking variables used as data analysis relied on two main data sources. First, primary data sources were obtained through direct observation, field observations, and distributing questionnaires to relevant respondents. Second, secondary data sources refer to the literature used to explore relevant elements, parameters, and variables in the context of placemaking and regional spatial policies (RTRW/RDTR) in Malang City. The research variables are in the table below:

Research variables

Elements of Placemaking	Variable	Parameters
Uses and Activities	<i>Fun</i>	availability of play areas
	<i>Active</i>	availability of exercise area engagement with user/community activities
	<i>Vital</i>	quality of accessibility ability to attract users usability that suits its function
	<i>Special</i>	availability of places to accommodate special activities availability of garden uniqueness
	<i>Real</i>	meet the conditions and quality as the park
	<i>Useful</i>	flexibility in use the ability to accommodate every circle
	<i>Indigenous</i>	availability of park uniqueness>> segmentation (facilitate zoning in activities)
	<i>Celebratory</i>	engagement with user/community activities
	<i>Sustainable</i>	ease of maintenance availability of waste management bins availability of drainage
Access and Linkages	<i>Continuity</i>	Connectedness and continuity of roads and walkways within the park There is a network of roads and walkways Consistent use of design to maintain visual continuity
	<i>Proximity</i>	Consideration of the distance between facilities and important areas within the city park for easy access by visitors Recreation areas and public facilities are placed in close proximity to each other Placement of directional signs and maps around the park to guide visitors
	<i>Connected</i>	Connectivity between the park and outside areas
	<i>Readable</i>	Ease of reading maps and markings in the park

	<i>Walkable</i>	There are signboards with clear information about locations and facilities	Sociability	<i>Diverse</i>	Varied types of activities, visitors and traders
		Safe and comfortable walking within the park, including level road surfaces and good sidewalks		<i>Stewardship</i>	Good garden management
		Unobstructed paths, including wheelchair-friendly paths		<i>Cooperative</i>	A sense of community to protect and manage the park
		Adequate lighting to provide a sense of security for nighttime users		<i>Neighborly</i>	Availability of space for interaction between individuals or a group
	<i>Convenient</i>	Availability of facilities such as seating, trash bins, and lighting		<i>Pride</i>	A recognizable image, characteristic, or identity
		Seating scattered along the walkway		<i>Friendly</i>	Friendliness between users or a group
	<i>Accessible</i>	Regularly available trash bins		<i>Interactive</i>	Communication between users, even if they don't know each other
		Accessibility for everyone, including people with special needs, through facilities such as barrier-free roads and access ramps		<i>Welcoming</i>	Openness to welcome all visitors from all walks of life, including those with disabilities
		Access ramps to allow access for visitors with special needs such as wheelchairs			
		Restrooms and other facilities designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities			
Comfort and Image	<i>Safe</i>	The placement and maintenance of vegetation are high and there are no negative spaces			
		Maximum visibility across the park			
		wider road corridors			
		safe park surface materials			
	<i>Clean</i>	limiting the number of entrances			
		there is a garden guardrail			
		procurement of garden lights that are evenly distributed			
		There is a pavement bench on the pedestrian side			
	<i>Green Walkable</i>	Guide block on the pedestrian			
		Ramp for wheelchair users			
		there are segregated trash bins			
		provision of separate male and female toilets			
	<i>Sittable</i>	good drainage channels			
		diverse vegetation types			
		wider road corridors with appropriate materials			
		arrangement of park facilities based on function			
	<i>Spiritual</i>	provide garden benches or shelters with standardized sizes			
		park benches that are in good repair			
		pavement benches at the side of the pedestrian walkway			
		provision of a mushola or built near a place of worship			
	<i>Charming Attractive</i>	Tribune			
		Themed garden landscaping			
		Gated and signed			
		There are landmarks			
	<i>Historic</i>	Sculpture			
		providing facilities with the aim of erasing the impression of the previous site or to maintain			

These variables are measured in perceptions of park visitors. Then the summation of the assessment of placemaking aspects divided into three score levels: high (3), medium (2), and low (1), the maximum score is 159 (53 variables x score 3), and the minimum score is 53 (53 variables x score 1). So that the value classification is obtained, namely high (125-159), medium (89-124), or low (53-88). With the interval formula as follows:

$$\text{Interval} : \frac{\text{Maximum score} - \text{Minimum score}}{\text{Number of tiers}} (1)$$

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Uses and Activities Score

The Uses and Activities assessment of Merjosari Park scored 34, indicating moderate functionality. While accessibility quality rated well (3), aspects such as play areas, exercise spaces, and user engagement scored 2, highlighting the need for improvements. The park provides flexibility (3) but lacks uniqueness and proper zoning (2). Spaces for special activities and community interactions also require enhancement (2). Sustainability elements, including maintenance, waste management, and drainage, scored 2, suggesting room for better management. Overall, while the park serves its purpose, further development is needed to enhance usability, accessibility, and community engagement as shown in figure below.

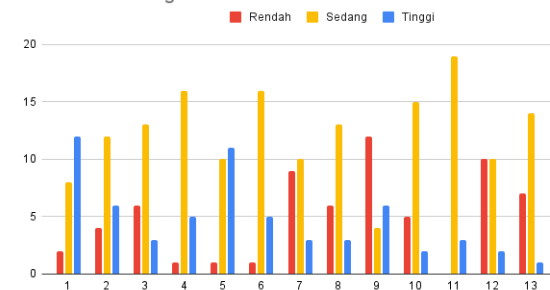


Variable	Parameters	Score
<i>Fun</i>	availability of play	2
<i>Active</i>	availability of exercise area	2
	engagement with user/ community activities	2
<i>Vital</i>	accessibility quality	3
	ability to attract users	2
	usability that is in line with its function	2
<i>Special</i>	availability of places to accommodate special activities	2
	availability of garden uniqueness	2
<i>Real</i>	meet the conditions and quality as the park	2
<i>Useful</i>	flexibility in use	3
	ability to accommodate every circle	2
<i>Indigenous</i>	availability of park uniqueness>> segmentation (facilitate zoning in activities)	2
<i>Celebratory</i>	engagement with user/community activities	2
<i>Sustainable</i>	ease of maintenance	2
	availability of waste management bins	2
	drainage availability	2
SCORE		34

B. Access and Linkages Score

The Access and Linkages assessment of Merjosari Park scored 26, indicating moderate connectivity and accessibility. The park has a functional network of pedestrian paths (2) but lacks strong visual continuity. Proximity between facilities and the availability of directional signage scored 2, suggesting the need for improved wayfinding. Connectivity with external areas, readability of signage, and overall walkability also scored 2, highlighting areas for enhancement, particularly in lighting and safety. Seating, trash bins, and accessibility features for individuals with disabilities were rated 2, indicating basic provisions but room for improvement. Overall, while the park is accessible, better connectivity, clearer signage, and enhanced walkability would improve user experience.

Access and Linkage



Variable	Parameters	Score
Continuity	Connectedness and continuity of roads and pedestrian paths within the park	2
	There is a network of roads and pedestrian paths	2
	Consistent use of design to maintain visual continuity	2
Proximity	Consideration of the distance between facilities and important areas in the city park for easy access by visitors	2
	Recreational area and public facilities are placed in close proximity to each other	2
	Placement of directional signs and maps around the park to guide visitors	2
Connected	Connectivity between the park and outside areas	2
Readable	Ease of reading maps and markings in the park	2
	There is signage with clear information about the location and facilities	2
Walkable	Safe and comfortable walking within the park, including a flat walking surface and good sidewalks	2
	Barrier-free roads, including wheelchair-friendly paths	2
	Adequate lighting to provide a sense of security for nighttime users	2
Convenient	Availability of facilities such as seating, trash bins, and lighting	2
	Scattered seating along the pedestrian walkway	2
	Regularly available trash bins	2
Accessible	Accessibility for everyone, including people with special needs, through facilities such as barrier-free roads and access ramps	2
	Access ramps to allow access for visitors with special needs such as wheelchair	2
	Toilets and other facilities designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities	2
SCORE		26

C. Comfort and Images

The Comfort and Image assessment of Merjosari Park scored 46, reflecting a moderate level of safety, cleanliness, and aesthetic appeal. Safety measures, including visibility, surface materials, and lighting, were rated 2-3, indicating that while some aspects are adequate, improvements are needed, particularly in pedestrian accessibility (1-2). Cleanliness scored 2, suggesting basic waste management and drainage systems are in place but could be enhanced. Vegetation diversity, walkability, and seating facilities were rated 2, showing the need for better arrangement and infrastructure maintenance. Spiritual and aesthetic

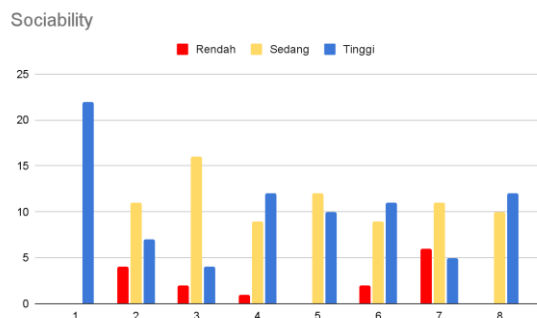
elements, including a mushola, tribune, themed landscaping, and sculptures, also scored 2, highlighting the park's potential for cultural enrichment. Overall, while the park provides essential comfort features, enhancements in security, seating, greenery, and accessibility would significantly improve user experience.

Variable	Parameters	Score
Safe	Laying and maintaining tall vegetation there is no negative space	2
	Maximum visibility across the entire park	2
	Wider road corridors	2
	Safe garden surface materials	2
	Restrictions on the number of access points	2
	There is a garden boundary fence	2
	Procurement of garden lights that are evenly distributed	3
	There are pavement benches on the pedestrian side	2
Clean	Guide block on pedestrian	1
	Ramp for wheelchair users	2
	There are segregated trash bins	2
	Provision of separate toilets for men and women	2
Green	Good drainage channels	2
	Diverse vegetation types	2
Walkable	Wider road corridors with appropriate materials	2
	Arrangement of park facilities based on function	2
Sittable	Provide park benches or shade with standardized sizes	2
	Usable garden bench	2
Spiritual	Bench pavement on the pedestrian side	2
	Provision of a mushola or built near a place of worship	2
Charming	Tribune	2
Attractive	Themed garden landscaping	2
	Gated and signed	2
	There are Landmarks	2
	There is a Sculpture	2
SCORE		46

D. Socialibility

The Sociability assessment of Merjosari Park scored 19, indicating a moderate level of social interaction and community engagement. The park supports diverse activities and attracts varied visitors (3), but garden management and community involvement in maintenance scored lower (2), suggesting room for better stewardship. The availability of spaces for social interaction was rated 3, highlighting its role in fostering connections. However, aspects such as park identity, friendliness, and user interactions scored 2, indicating a need for stronger engagement and social cohesion. The park was rated 3 for

inclusivity, showing openness to all visitors, including those with disabilities. Overall, enhancing community participation, park identity, and interactive features would strengthen the park's role as a vibrant public space



Variables	Parameters	Value
Diverse	Varied types of activities, visitors and traders	3
Stewardship	Good garden management	2
Cooperative	A sense of community to protect and manage the park	2
Neighborly	Availability of space for interaction between individuals or a group	3
Pride	A recognizable image, characteristic, or identity	2
Friendly	Friendliness between users or a group	2
Interactive	Communication between users, even if they don't know each other	2
Welcoming	Openness to welcome all visitors from all walks of life, including those with disabilities	3
SCORE		19

IV. CONCLUSION

Placemaking proved to be an effective strategy to improve the quality of public space in Merjosari Park. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for urban planners and policymakers who aim to develop sustainable and vibrant public spaces. Future research should continue to explore the long-term impacts of placemaking and identify best practices for its implementation.

Based on the quality assessment of Merjosari Park with a placemaking approach, there are several development suggestions that need to be made. First, it is necessary to improve facilities such as children's play areas, jogging trails, comfortable seating, and the use of environmentally friendly technology such as solar lights. Second, strengthening the park's identity with elements of local art and culture and creating special themes for different areas can attract more visitors. Community

participation is also important, through community service programs and educational activities about the environment, to increase the sense of ownership and awareness of protecting the park.

Further research on what visitors want can help with better development. Cooperation with government and non-profit organizations can provide the needed support. Regular evaluation and use of monitoring technology will ensure that the development has a positive impact. With these steps, it is hoped that Merjosari Park can become a better public space and become an example for other parks in Malang City.

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