Kauman in Yogyakarta is a unique settlement. As the residence of the Sultan’s abdi dalem pamethakan (palace servants), Kauman is located at the west of Masjid Gede (Big Mosque), at the center of the Javanese cultural environment that in the nineteenth century was the center of small batik industry. In this village a religious movement called Muhammadiyah was also born.

After Indonesian independence, Kauman developed into a residential area, supporting educational services and tourism growing in Yogyakarta. At the present time Kauman is facing two significant challenges. On the one hand, it is related with the quite rapid development of Islamic religious life and the use of its symbols. On the other hand, it is related with its location at the city center, which directly confronts with the problems of urbanization and the city’s progressive physical development.

That was the statement of Dra. Suastiwi Triatmodjo, M. Des., lecturer of ISI Yogyakarta Faculty of Arts, during the open doctoral promotion exam of UGM Architecture engineering science program, Tuesday (4/5). She presented her dissertation titled Space Agreement and Secularization of Kauman Residential Area in Yogyakarta, with the promoter, Prof. Ir. Achmad Djunaedi, M.U.R.P, Ph.D., and co-promoters, Ir. Sudaryono, M. Eng., Ph.D. and Ir. T. Yoyok Wahyu Subroto, M. Eng., Ph.D.

In her research, Suastiwi found the local spatial theories in the form of space agreement and secularization as a reflection of Islamic monotheism and devoutness in Kauman. Space agreement and secularization are the purport of space by the residents which is built naturally, born from the daily living activities that require agreement of space and secularized space to obey God’s commands and prohibitions as well as to do righteousness in accordance with their religious beliefs.

She said that the spatial phenomena that arise in purporting Kauman residential space in Yogyakarta was divided into three concepts, namely, space of unity of god, space of agreement, and space of pioneer secularization. Space of unity of god is described as a space that is built up by the
events based on the faith systems and Islamic value systems (tawhid) that become the guidance of life for people in Kauman.

Meanwhile, according to the wife of Prof. Dr. Marsudi Triatmodjo, S.H., L.L.M.’s, space agreement is a space built up by the act of agreement between two or more people, agreeing to manage and utilize the space or consent to use the space in a particular time. "The pioneer space secularization is an act to eliminate the sacred, magical or mythical nature of the space that had existed since the establishment of this residential area," explained the mother of two children in Grha Sabha Pramana UGM. Suastiwi graduated with honors and become UGM’s 1218th doctorate graduate.

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