



Mapping the Potential Economy in The Old Town of Semarang to Support Its Sustainability

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Abstract: The old town of Semarang is one of the most historical places in Semarang city, Indonesia, and in the 19th century, it was considered as a major business center. Currently, intending to revitalize this old town as the center for economy, the government has made it a central socio-cultural economic area for tourism development. This study aims to identify the potential economic spots in this old town to support its sustainability. The methodology used was cultural mapping with the geographic information system (ArcGIS) and direct observation in the old town. The results show that the core economic area is located on the main road. Meanwhile, the secondary economic area is situated behind the main roads. Both are selected because the original characteristic buildings which attract visitors. Therefore, adaptive reuse in an iconic building is one of the keys to economic sustainability in this old town.

Keywords: Old Town of Semarang; Potential Economic Spots; Sense of Place; Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

In urban planning, space is depicted in the form of maps because this is considered as a more efficient way to describe the location of socioeconomic activities [1]. Meanwhile, urban design research sometimes merely focuses on the quality of physical elements but falls short in understanding the psychological 'sense of place' [2]. Even though, [3] sense of place, or community attachment towards their environment, is a potential indicator of the meaning of the site, although somewhat neglected in sustainability indicator.

Relph in [1] argued that without thoroughly understanding a place, and its significance on humans, one would find it difficult to describe why it is unique, and would never know how to make repairs when needed. Furthermore, Relph described people's identity of place in terms of three components, and they are, first, the place's physical settings, second, its activities, situations and events, and third, the individual and group meanings created through people's experiences and intentions in regard of that place.

Understanding a sense of place could help policymakers appreciate the importance of an environment. Furthermore, Najavi in [4] stated that it plays a role in making people stay longer in a place. Consequently, it will enhance the identity of that environment, increase the rate of tourism and the time spent by tourists, and also the economic activity.

An area which needs an understanding of the sense of place, to maintain its sustainability is the Old Town of Semarang. This old town is one of the historical sites that has already made as a conservation area. In addition, according to ICOMOS (2007) in [5], it contributes to the life and memories of the one's metropolitan area, by strongly contributing to the identity and character of Semarang City. As a conservation area, policymakers need to understand its history, memories, and the overall sense of the place. Furthermore, efforts

need to be made to protect the site from the modern development of the city to prevent the loss of its historical identity.

In the 19th century, this old town was an important business center. However, as time went by, its business activities decreased rapidly due to the various problems. These problems include low environmental qualities, damaged buildings, and the like [6]. Therefore, to revitalize the area, it is included in the Semarang City's plan that this old town which is one of the social and cultural strategic regions of the city will be developed to become a primary tourism site [7]. Since 2017, various revitalization efforts have been performed with the support of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, such as the revitalization of 80% of the 116 conservation buildings. Furthermore, various economic activities in adaptive reuse of the buildings, such as offices, restaurants, café, and other tourism attractions, have also increased. It is clear that the old town has massive potential economic activities, and can continue to grow. Furthermore, more economic spots can appear, and it is essential to identify which of them has excellent economic potentials based on the sense of place.

Cultural heritage sites, such as the old town, have the potential contribution to sustainable development [8]. Moreover, this development is not only economical but also social, environmental, and cultural aspects. When a cultural heritage site is properly managed, it can play a role in increasing social inclusion, developing intercultural dialogue, shaping specific regional identities, improving environmental quality, providing social cohesion, stimulating tourism development, creating jobs, and also improving the investment climate [9]. Nevertheless, the development of tourism can pose threats, primarily when the development activities, as well as the investors, are only interested in creating benefits for themselves, at the expense of the community [10].

Although the cultural heritage and conservation activities of the area have long been considered as oppositions to economic development [11], recently, they are seen as essential and useful assets for tourism development, which ultimately affects the growth of economic activity in the region. Consequently, buildings in this city are now being utilized as a cafe, restaurants, offices, and art galleries to generate income as adaptive reuse buildings. At the same time, the principles of conservation are still being implemented to ensure that the area does not lose its original image.

Sense of Place

A place is never merely as an object, but part of a larger whole that is being felt through the experience of meaningful events [12]. Furthermore, it can define distinctive features, be they tangible or intangible [13], and according to [14] it is a personal connection with activities and functions which are geographically located. Also, Barker (1986) in [15] described it as bounded standing patterns of human and nonhuman activity. Therefore, it can be concluded that place means so much more than just the elements of a location or physical environments, as it includes both humans with their personal experience and meanings and their physical environments. With that being said, the place leads to a sense of place.

The composition of a sense of place is always different for every individual, but in every case, it is still composed of both space and forms (natural and man-made). Furthermore, mathematically, [16] defined it as a combination of a person (psychological factors) and setting (physical and social). Also, it is something that a living-in person or a new observer creates in mind sometimes. Sense of place is composed of a few components, and they include place attachment, identity and dependence.

Economic Resiliency

Current research on economic resilience tends to describe it in a broader sense, including the ability to anticipate, prepare, respond to change, and restore to an original state [17]. Furthermore, it can be defined as the ability to recover from or adjust to the negative impacts of external economic shocks [18]. The success of the resilience aspect in the old town can be seen from the local economic resilience present in the area, which includes property assets (historic buildings) that have been utilized for economic activities to support economic growth as adaptive reuse buildings [19].

One of the ways to achieve economic sustainability in the cultural heritage area is through revitalization. Moreover, this is an effort to revitalize (give new life) an area or part of a site that was once vital/alive but then suffered a setback/degradation. The success of this effort is measured when it can create an environment which is not only beautiful but also attractive. Furthermore, its activities need to have a positive impact and can improve dynamics and life [20].

Revitalization that begins with the process of rejuvenation needs to support the process of rehabilitating economic activities. Furthermore, in this context, a mixed function that can encourage both economic and social activities (new vitality), needs to be developed. Physical improvement of the region that is short-term is expected to accommodate informal and formal economic activities (local economic development) to provide added value to the area.

Based on several discussion above, this paper aims to identify the potential economic spots in the Old Town of Semarang to support its sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the Old Town of Semarang, which is administratively located in Tanjung Mas Sub District, North Semarang District and Purwodinatan Sub District, Central Semarang District. Furthermore, according to Semarang City Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2003, this town has an area of ± 40 ha. Meanwhile, based on the Semarang City Spatial Plan 2011-2031, it is one of the cultural heritage of the city and has a lot of both tangible and intangible potential.

The methodology used was a qualitative approach, which was based on mapping from direct observation with the help of geographic information system (ArcGIS) as the software tool. Then, the mapping was conducted to identify the potential economy spots in the town. Data showing locations have economic potentials obtained through direct observation. Furthermore, the literature reviews from previous researches were used to support the field findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Existing Condition of the Old Town of Semarang

The Old Town is divided into two areas: the core and the secondary area, and their distribution can be seen in **FIGURE 1**.



FIGURE 1. Division of Old Town Areas

In the core area, various buildings are performing different functions or adaptive reuse. Based on the findings in the field observation and literature reviews, the old buildings have several functions such as social and cultural purpose (such as Blenduk Church), offices, trade and services (such as restaurants, café), and also parking center. There are also pedestrian shopping streets there, with various food outlets. Meanwhile, in the secondary area, the buildings' functions are dominated by modern trade, education, and offices. Also, there are mass transportation modes, including Tawang Jaya Train Station and BRT Stops, along with flood control infrastructure in the form of a polder in this area.

Space Utilization and Segmentation

Based on the Building and Environmental Planning Plan stipulated in the Semarang City Regulation Number 8 of 2003, this old town is divided into five segments, based on land use. Furthermore, the map of the deviation could be seen in **FIGURE 2**, and they include:

- Segment I has the Culture theme. There are several old buildings such as the Blenduk Church and old buildings with functions as a cultural tourism center, museum, café, restaurants, cultural and art venues, bank, gallery, market facilities and trade.
- Segment II with Creative theme include traditional markets, services, settlements, social facilities, Tourism and Travel Bureau Office, children's recreation center, environment amenities, public open space and recreational pool.
- Segment III with the theme of Commercial and Office covers the old buildings with cultural tourism function, café and food court, office spaces, bank, retail, art stage, shops and services, lodging, high rise settlements, restaurants, public open space, parking, and riverbank recreation.
- Segment IV with the theme of Offices, Commercial and Traditional Trade encompasses historical buildings with cultural tourism role, bazaar activities, organized traditional markets, bank, restaurants, shops and lodging, souvenir shops, offices, and water recreation.
- Segment V with the theme Modern Commerce, Education and Offices.

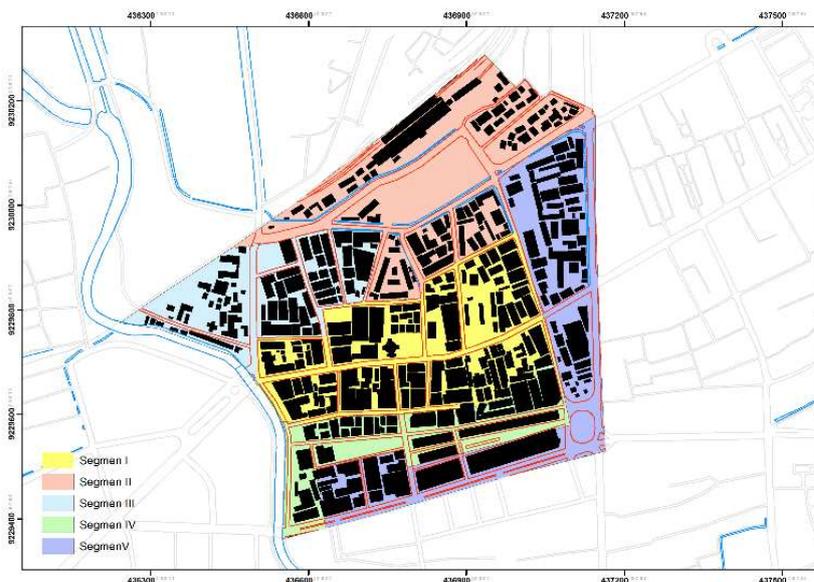


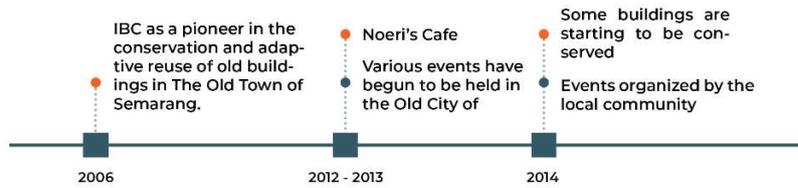
FIGURE 2. The Segments based on Land Use in Semarang's Old Town

Potential Economics Spots

Before discussing about potential economic spots in the Old Town of Semarang, the growth of economic activity in the old town significantly increased between 2015 - 2020. Furthermore, this growth was caused the establishment of the Old Town of Semarang as a cultural tourism area and also its inclusion in the tentative list of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

From **FIGURE 3**, the incidence of owners and entrepreneurs using old buildings for businesses began in 2006 with the establishment of the *Ikan Bakar Cianjur* Restaurant. Furthermore, growth began to increase significantly in 2015 because it was then the conservation, re-functioning, and adaptive reuse of buildings began. Finally, due to the building preservation and the area revitalization program, more and more people, communities, and government are coming into the town to hold events.

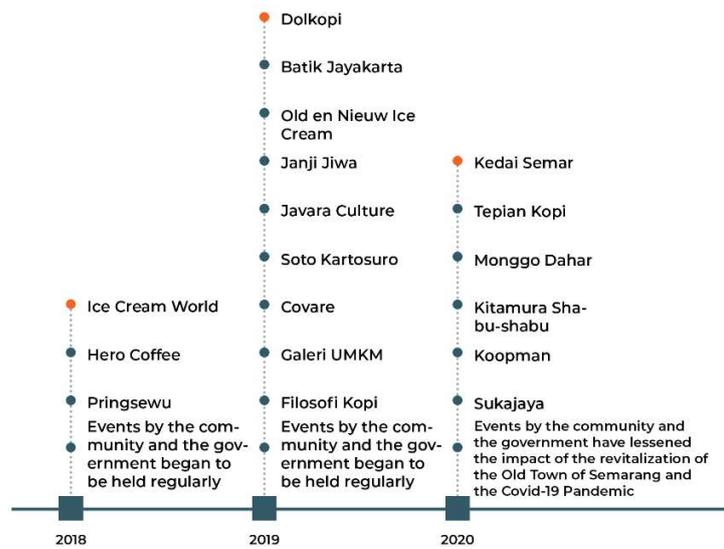
The potential spots in this old town are greatly influenced by the shape and circulation of the road network. Furthermore, the circulation of this area's road that rotates (loop) because of the implementation of one direction resulted in the increased intensity of the visit by the community/tourists to the area that is crossed by the main road. Based on the direct observation, the potential location of economic activities is set on Mpu Tantular Street- Cendrawasih Street- Letjen Suprpto Street, which are the main roads around the old town. Furthermore, these three corridors are high potential economic zone due to they are crossed by the main road and also marked by a large number of old buildings, which are preserved and re-functioned and adaptive reuse as places of trade and services. In these three corridors, economic activity time starts from 09.00am – 22.00 pm and mostly open daily. The peak times activities in these corridors are in the weekend, but in the weekdays the peak times every afternoon to evening. Some of the iconic buildings which are the locations of economic activities on these main corridors are stated in **TABLE 1**.



(a) Economic Activities Growth Phase 1 in The Old Town of Semarang



(b) Economic Activities Growth Phase 2 in The Old Town of Semarang



(c) Economic Activities Growth Phase 3 in The Old Town of Semarang

FIGURE 3. (a), (b), (c) Economic Activity Growth in Old Town of Semarang. Source : Asosiasi Masyarakat Mbangun Oudestadt (AMBO)

TABLE 1. Economic activities in the main road of the Old Town of Semarang

Corridor	Street's name	Economic activities' name in Iconic Buildings
I	Mpu Tantular Street	Bank Mandiri, Restoran Kitamura, Batik Jayakarta, Oud En Nieuw, and Café Sepur
II	Cendrawasih Street	Item Kopi, Dolkopi, Sate Subali, and UD Wijaya Mulia
III	Letjen Suprpto Street	Filosofi Kopi, Soto Seger, Tekodeko, Gelato Mateo, Spiegel, Indomaret, Javara Culture, Sukajaya Kopi, Covare, IBC, Monggo Dahar, Koopman, Keris Café, 3D Old City, and DMZ

Source: Direct Observation, 2020.



FIGURE 4. Highest Potential Spots (Red Area) and The Main Roads Circulation (Blue Line)

Meanwhile, the secondary road, which has potential economic activities, is on Kepodang and Gelatik Street. Although located behind the main corridor, both streets have easy access from various directions. They also have some iconic buildings which are also sites of economic activity (adaptive reuse buildings), as stated in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2. Economic activities in the secondary road of the Old Town of Semarang

Corridor	Street's name	Economic activities' name in Iconic Buildings
I	Kepodang Street	Tepian Kopi, Hero Coffee, Pringsewu Restaurant, and Bank Mandiri
II	Gelatik Street	Food stall, Kedai Phitoe Coffee and Bar

Source: Direct Observation, 2020

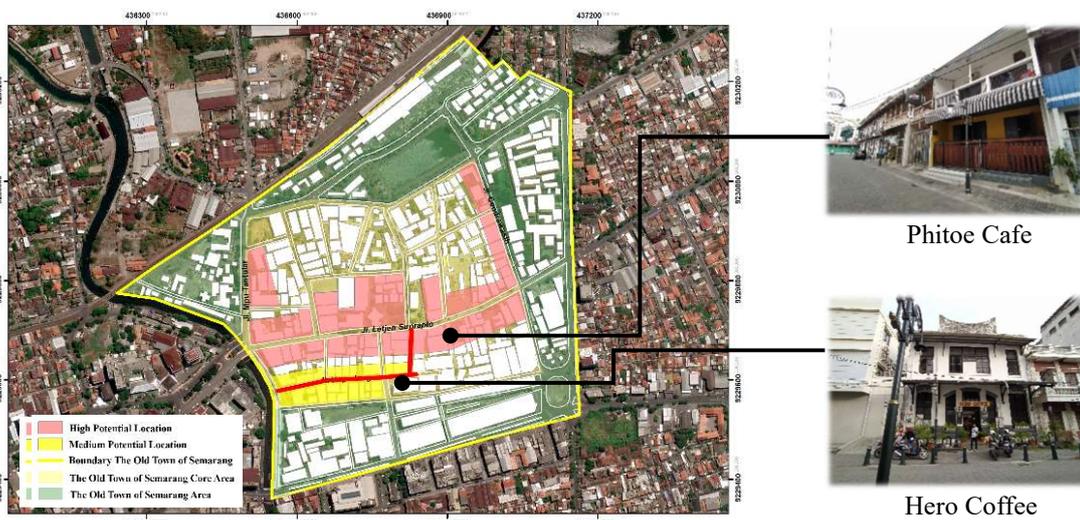


FIGURE 5. Secondary Potential Spots (Yellow Areas)

CONCLUSION

The results show that there are several economic activities taking place in the iconic buildings, both in the primary and secondary corridors in the Old Town of Semarang. The core area has the original old buildings characteristic and located on the main roads (Mpu Tantular Street, Cendrawasih Street, and Letjen Soeprapto Street). Therefore, it attracts visitors. The secondary site (Kepodang and Gelatik Street Area) is placed on the second layer with the ease of achievement. All economic activities are located in the iconic buildings which

have purpose adaptation. Therefore, it can be concluded that adaptive reuse of the old buildings into new functions is one of the keys to economic sustainability in this old town.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was financially supported by “Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat, Deputi Bidang Penguatan Riset dan Pengembangan, Kementerian Riset dan Teknologi/Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional”, through Penelitian Dasar Grant, 2020.

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