



## Revitalization of Chinatown Area on Semarang Street Based on The Distinctiveness Aspect

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**Abstract:** *The Chinatown area on Semarang street is one of the places inhabited by a typical Chinese ethnic community. This area has a fairly dense activity. The image of Chinatown on Jalan Semarang has faded due to changing social, legal, and economic factors as well as social trends. As an area that plays a role in the growth of the city, there are unique elements that can revitalize the area. As an area that has a role in the city's development, there are unique elements that can revitalize the area. Distinctiveness is a person's opinion of a place different from others. Aspects of distinctiveness can increase the attractiveness of a place. A place will be easily recognizable if it has certain characteristics/uniqueness. The method used is qualitative with direct observation of the research area. The potential that exists in the area can be optimized. The revitalization of this area uses the distinctiveness theory which emphasizes the uniqueness of the local area, Kevin Lynch's theory is used to determine the existing landmarks in the area. The results obtained from the revitalization of the region as a place of trade and services by taking into account the aspects of distinctiveness*

**Keywords:** *Revitalization, Distinctiveness, Uniqueness*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Urban identity is a crucial aspect of city development, reflecting its historical, cultural, and architectural uniqueness. According to Lynch (1960), the image of a city is shaped by its landmarks, paths, edges, nodes, and districts, contributing to the distinctiveness of its identity. Various studies have explored the significance of urban identity in different contexts, emphasizing its role in tourism, heritage conservation, and revitalization efforts (Sylvia & D. M. P. B, 2019; Marpaung & Tarigan, 2019; Hadinugroho & M. R. A. S, 2018).

The Chinatown area on Semarang Street is one of the most historically significant districts, reflecting a blend of cultural influences and unique architectural styles. Urban heritage areas, such as Chinatown districts, are often subject to revitalization programs aimed at preserving their cultural significance while enhancing their economic value (Dewantara et al., 2017; Hizmiakanza & Rahmawati, 2019; Purwantiasning et al., 2014). Revitalization efforts not only maintain historical landmarks but also reinforce the sense of place among local communities, influencing their attachment and perception of the area (Wang & Xu, 2015; Ginting & Wahid, 2016).

The uniqueness of environmental and architectural aspects plays a significant role in distinguishing one urban heritage site from another. Studies highlight the importance of

integrating sustainable tourism strategies to balance preservation and economic growth (Ginting & Michaela, 2020; Phetsuriya & Heath, 2021). Furthermore, the role of place identity in planning heritage tourism has been emphasized as a key factor in attracting visitors while maintaining historical authenticity (Ginting, Rahman, & Wahid, 2018; Ginting, Rahman, & Nasution, 2020).

This study aims to explore the relationship between place identity and urban revitalization in the context of Semarang Street's Chinatown area. It will analyze how revitalization efforts contribute to the preservation and enhancement of urban heritage sites. By examining various case studies and theoretical perspectives, this research seeks to provide insights into the best practices for maintaining urban identity while promoting sustainable development.

Each city area has its uniqueness or characteristics between the physical environment of the city and its people which makes someone want to visit the place [1]. A strong characteristic will reinforce the identity of the city area so that it can become an attraction for the area [2]. The Chinatown area on Semarang street is one of the places where there is a typical Chinese ethnic community. This area is an area that has its history, uniqueness, and characteristics [2]. The image of the Chinatown area on Semarang street has faded due to social, legal, and economic factors as well as changing trends in society. As an area that is unique and plays a role in the development of the city, the Chinatown area on Semarang street has the potential to revitalize the area. Revitalization must be able to recognize and utilize the potential of the area such as its history, meaning, uniqueness of the place, and image of the area [3]. The distinctiveness aspect is one aspect that can increase the attractiveness of a place. A place will be easily recognizable if it has certain characteristics/uniqueness [4]. Distinctiveness is a person's opinion of a place that is different from other places [5]. There have been many studies examining the distinctiveness aspect as a basis for increasing the attractiveness of a place [5]–[7]. Other studies also explain that the distinctiveness aspect supports the cultural area management strategy [8]. Chinatown on Semarang Street shows a decline in the vitality of the area starting with the visual changes of the building due to government policies that gave the shape of the building on Semarang Street a new look, Traditional buildings are not maintained, and shoulder service leads to frequent traffic jams and parking, no visibility of area landmarks, the uneven layout of food venues and role use Street.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Revitalization**

Revitalization is an effort to revive an area that was once vital but experienced a decline/degradation [3]. The process of revitalizing an area will cover economic, social, and physical aspects. The revitalization process must be able to recognize and utilize the potential of the area such as its history, meaning, uniqueness of the place, and image of the area [3]

Revitalization has meaning as the return of the area by incorporating new functions or activities in a modern way. Besides that, it can also stimulate new activities so that the area becomes more active [9]. According to [10] revitalization is an effort to revive areas/places that tend to die, by increasing the strategic and significant vitality values of those areas that have potential or control areas that tend to be chaotic.

Regional revitalization can be achieved through several physical and non-physical aspects. The physical aspect is the form of the building itself, while the immaterial aspects include the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the people living in the area [11].

### **Distinctiveness**

Distinctiveness is a person's opinion or perception of a place different from others. Differentiating one place from another place can be distinguished through landmarks [12]. According to Breakwell (1986, 1992, 1993) in [5], [6] there are 4 principles in the formation of the identity of a place/region, namely: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. A place will be easily recognized if it has a certain character and uniqueness [4]. There are four aspects of the uniqueness of a place [5], namely: Landmarks, Uniqueness, and Certain Characters.

The uniqueness of a place is an important aspect of maintaining the image of a place. The uniqueness of a place is an aspect inherent in the concept of distinctiveness. The uniqueness can be seen in the visual appearance of the building, social values, and regional culture [13]. A place that has a certain uniqueness will make the place easy to recognize [4] and can make other people like the place [6].

This uniqueness refers to the activities and habits found in a place. A unique place can provide a different experience for everyone who visits it [6]. Diverse cultural activities, local products, traditional buildings, and local vehicles are aspects that make up the uniqueness of a place [14].

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study used the descriptive qualitative method. According to [15] qualitative research methods are the search for meaning, understanding, and understanding of a phenomenon, event or human life by being directly and/or indirectly involved in the setting being researched, contextual, and comprehensive.

The data analysis method used during this research in the form of the data obtained in this study will be analyzed qualitatively, namely, the research method using research data regarding the interpretation of the data found in the field and then compared with the existing theory in the literature review.

In determining the approach to the problem, the researcher first conducted field observations and reviewed the potential of the Chinatown area on Jalan Semarang. This approach was taken as the basis for identifying problems in research.

### **4. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

As an area known for its vehicle service and night culinary services, the Chinatown area on Semarang street certainly has the characteristics of local products that are characteristic of this area. Regional local products can strengthen the character of the region as an area, this is by the statement that local products can show the characteristics of the places visited [14]

Community activities will be supported using transportation used to help move places. People use transportation that is in that place. In the research area, local transportation used is tricycles, motorbikes, and cars. Because the area is the center of vehicle parts, the dominant vehicles in that place are motorbikes and cars. However, rickshaws are one of the transportation modes still used in the area.



**Figure 1** *Traditional Building, Local Transportation, Local Products*

A traditional building is a building whose structure, production method, form, and function, as well as various decorative styles, have distinctive features representing certain tribes/regions that are passed down from generation to generation. and is used to perform operations. population. Traditional buildings often undergo changes/renovations aimed at maintaining the sustainability of the building. Some traditional buildings were left alone.

Originally, the buildings on Semarang Street still had the typical shape and decoration of Chinese architecture. However, after the late 19th century and early 20th century, there was a change in the construction and decoration system mixed with European architecture. The old building is still in the form of Chinese architecture which has lost its decorativeness and distinctive construction characteristics, but the building still has the characteristics of a typical Chinese shophouse formation, namely a saddle-shaped roof called a ngang shan roof. The material in the building is still made of wood and not the typical Chinese-shaped window.

The image of the area which is a Chinatown area inhabited by the majority of the Chinese population makes this area has its characteristics starting from local products that only exist in the friend, local transportation, and traditional buildings that still exist even though they are not maintained.



**Figure 2**

The traditional buildings that still exist will be revitalized in their visual form to further strengthen the character of the area as a Chinatown area that has a distinctive Chinese character. The Chinatown area in Singapore is a reference area that maintains typical Chinese buildings as an attraction for visitors and the public.

Chinese architectural style will be raised without destroying the function of the area as a service and trade center. Parking arrangements will be made to regulate vehicle accessibility and local transportation in the area. The characteristics of the shop house will remain by the function of the area.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The uniqueness found in the Chinatown area on Semarang street is the traditional buildings that still exist in unkempt conditions, the local products found in the research area are typical Chinese food sold at night and also materials and vehicle service tools that have become the hallmark of the research area.

From the distinctiveness aspect above, it can be concluded that the revitalization process can be carried out through a distinctiveness approach that will strengthen the image of the region and also improve the area in terms of physical, economic, and cultural aspects because the distinctiveness aspect emphasizes the local potential that exists in the region.

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