

Adaptive Reuse and Community Participation in Urban Cultural Heritage: Comparative Study of Hetero Space in Semarang, Solo, and Banyumas

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ABSTRACT

Urban cultural heritage in Indonesia faces significant challenges, ranging from limited reuse models to the low of local community participation in sustaining cultural practices. Urban cultural heritage encompasses both tangible heritage (historic buildings, heritage site) and intangible heritage (crafts, performing arts) are at risk of marginalization under rapid urbanization. This process not only threatens local identity, but also collective memory and historical significance embodied in those assets. Current conservation practices remain predominantly on physical aspects, often neglecting the integration of cultural communication strategies and public participation. As a result, many heritage buildings are becoming passive artifacts rather than vibrant, productive spaces.

This study explores community-based adaptive reuse as an alternative approach to preserving and reactivating cultural heritage assets. Adaptive reuse is understood not merely as a functional repurpose of heritage buildings but also as a medium of cultural communication: a process that transforms spaces into living arenas where creative practices, economic activities, and cultural narratives interact. By embedding community participation, particularly those of younger generations, adaptive reuse is expected to foster a sense of belonging, ensure sustainability, and revitalize intangible heritage through contemporary practices such as exhibitions, performances, and collaborative work.

Using a qualitative methodology involving literature review, field observation, and semi-structured interviews, this research conducts a comparative analysis of three Hetero Space in Semarang, Solo, and Banyumas. These sites, developed by the Provincial Government of Central Java in collaboration with Impala Network, represent example of activation of heritage buildings as creative spaces. Each site reflects the potential and characteristics of its local ecosystem: Hetero Space Banyumas is rooted in grassroots community movements with diverse artistic activities; Hetero Space Solo thrives alongside the academic ecosystem of the art institute in Solo, marked by numerous contemporary art performances and the presence of a makerspace, while Hetero Space Semarang emphasizes technological innovation alongside contemporary cultural adaptation.

Preliminary results indicate that adaptive reuse in these three sites is effective in four interrelated dimensions: (1) sustaining both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, (2) strengthens the participation of local communities, (3) generating creative economic opportunities, and (4) reinforcing local identity through cultural narration. These results underline that adaptive reuse, when framed as a participatory and communicative process, can transform heritage buildings from passive relics into living cultural networks. Beyond preservation, this approach offers a human-centered strategy for cultural resilience and positions Indonesia's heritage as an active contributor in global cultural interconnectivity.

Keywords: *Cultural Heritage; Adaptive Reuse; Creative Economy; Community Participation*

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