

Social, Economic, and Spatial Transformation of the Prawirotaman Urban *Kampung* in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

Background: Prawirotaman, a historically significant urban kampung in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, has undergone profound transformation driven by the rapid growth of tourism. Originally inhabited by descendants of Prawirotomo palace soldiers and renowned as a batik production center, the area has evolved into a vibrant tourist destination.

Objectives: This study examines the social, economic, and spatial dimensions of this transformation in Prawirotaman.

Method: A qualitative descriptive approach was employed through a systematic literature review of books, peer-reviewed journals, and relevant academic articles.

Result: Findings reveal that tourism growth has triggered significant occupational shifts, the emergence of new social strata, and a transition from community-based social relations to commercially oriented interactions. Economically, the area has shifted from batik production to tourism services, accompanied by rising land prices, increasing investment by outside capital, and processes of commercialization and tourism-led gentrification. Spatially, the proliferation of hotels, cafes, and commercial centers has diminished public spaces and reduced pedestrian accessibility along the main corridor.

Conclusion: The overall transformation of Prawirotaman reflects broader urban dynamics in Yogyakarta, pointing to the urgent need for inclusive spatial policies, local economic empowerment, and the preservation of the kampung's distinct cultural identity

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INTRODUCTION

Yogyakarta is one of Indonesia's most culturally significant cities, officially established in 1755 alongside the founding of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta

Hadiningrat. Deeply embedded in Javanese civilization, the city has long served as a repository of traditional arts, architecture, and social customs. As a designated Special Region (Daerah Istimewa), Yogyakarta holds a distinctive administrative and cultural status within the Indonesian Republic, and its heritage continues to attract millions of domestic and international visitors each year. However, rapid urbanization and the commercialization of culture have placed enormous pressure on the city's traditional urban fabric, particularly in its historic kampungs—residential neighborhoods that retain a distinct social identity and architectural character (Ardhiansyah et al., 2019).

Among these kampungs, Prawirotaman stands out as a particularly compelling case study of urban transformation. Located in the Brontokusuman sub-district, Mergangsan District, Prawirotaman was originally settled by the descendants of Prawirotomo soldiers—an elite cavalry unit of the Yogyakarta Sultanate. The kampung's name itself derives from this military heritage, as residents were historically affiliated with the Prawirotomo regiment (Sugiarto, 2021). For much of the twentieth century, the area was synonymous with batik production: the descendants of these soldiers became skilled textile artisans, establishing family workshops that produced high-quality hand-stamped and hand-drawn batik cloth distributed not only across Indonesia but also exported to international markets. This economic identity gave the kampung a strong sense of collective pride and social cohesion.

The decline of the batik industry in the early 1970s, triggered by the government's withdrawal of raw material subsidies and accelerated by shifts in consumer fashion and the emergence of cheaper factory-produced textiles and imported Chinese cloth, forced Prawirotaman's residents to seek alternative livelihoods (Selvia et al., 2025; Prasajo et al., 2020). The adaptability of the community proved remarkable: former batik entrepreneurs converted their spacious, solidly built workshops and residences into guest houses and homestays, capitalizing on the growing stream of international backpackers and budget tourists arriving in Yogyakarta. By the 1980s, Prawirotaman had acquired a new reputation as a kampung turis (tourist kampung), offering affordable accommodation, local cuisine, and a relaxed, culturally authentic atmosphere that distinguished it from the more formal hotel districts of the city (Fahik et al., 2025).

Since the 2000s, the pace of change has accelerated significantly. The introduction of boutique hotels, internationally branded cafes, creative industries, and digital tourism platforms has transformed Prawirotaman from a modest backpacker haven into a sophisticated urban tourism destination. This transformation, while economically significant, has been accompanied by complex

and sometimes contradictory social, economic, and spatial consequences. Rising land values, the influx of outside investment capital, processes of gentrification, and the erosion of pedestrian-friendly public space all point to tensions between development and preservation, between the interests of global tourism markets and those of the local community (Nihayati & Aryadi, 2023; Riadi, 2018).

Despite its cultural and historical importance, scholarly attention to the multidimensional transformation of Prawirotaman remains fragmented. Most existing studies focus on either architectural change or economic impacts in isolation. This article seeks to provide an integrated analysis of the social, economic, and spatial dimensions of Prawirotaman's transformation, drawing on a systematic review of relevant academic literature. The central research questions are: (1) How has tourism development reshaped social structures and community relations in Prawirotaman? (2) What economic changes have occurred, and how have they affected local welfare and equity? (3) In what ways has the physical and spatial environment of Prawirotaman been altered, and what implications do these changes carry for public life and cultural preservation? By addressing these questions, the article aims to contribute to broader scholarly and policy discussions about sustainable heritage tourism management in Indonesian urban contexts.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research approach. As explained by Fiantika et al. (2022), qualitative research is designed to facilitate an in-depth understanding of specific phenomena as they occur in their natural social context. Rather than quantifying variables, qualitative methodology seeks to capture the richness and complexity of human experience, social behavior, and cultural meaning through narrative description and interpretive analysis. This approach is appropriate for the present study, which aims to understand a multi-layered process of urban transformation that cannot be reduced to numerical indicators alone.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature review. This method involves the identification, selection, and critical analysis of published scholarly materials relevant to the research topic (Sugiyono, 2016). Primary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic theses, conference proceedings, and book chapters focusing on Prawirotaman and related topics such as tourism-led urban change, gentrification, social transformation, and spatial planning in Indonesian cities. Sources were identified through database searches (Google Scholar, Garuda Portal, and SINTA) using relevant keywords in both Indonesian and English. Inclusion criteria required that sources be published between 2000 and

2025 and directly address social, economic, or spatial dynamics in Prawirotaman or closely analogous urban tourism contexts.

Analytical procedures followed the thematic synthesis approach recommended for qualitative literature reviews. Key themes were identified inductively from the literature and organized into three principal analytical domains: (1) social transformation, encompassing occupational change, social stratification, and evolving community relations; (2) economic transformation, including shifts in sectoral composition, patterns of investment, land commodification, and issues of economic equity; and (3) spatial transformation, addressing changes in land use, built environment, public space, and pedestrian accessibility. Each theme was analyzed by comparing and contrasting findings across multiple sources to identify areas of consensus, divergence, and scholarly debate.

The qualitative nature of this study means that findings are interpretive rather than statistically generalizable. However, the systematic and transparent approach to source selection and analysis ensures a high degree of credibility and analytical rigor. The study draws on a total of fifteen primary academic sources, all of which are cited in the reference list.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Transformation in Prawirotaman

The most immediately visible dimension of Prawirotaman's transformation concerns changes in occupational structure and, by extension, social stratification. Prior to the 1970s, the vast majority of kampung residents derived their livelihoods from the batik industry, whether as master artisans (*juragan batik*), skilled workers, or traders. The social hierarchy of the kampung reflected this productive identity, with status accruing to those who commanded the largest workshops and controlled the most prestigious batik designs. The decline of batik production fundamentally disrupted this social order, compelling residents to reinvent their economic roles (Selvia et al., 2025).

As tourism grew through the 1980s and 1990s, new occupational categories emerged: guesthouse operators, tour guides, hotel staff, drivers, restaurant owners, and a range of ancillary service providers. Sugiarto (2021) has documented how this shift in occupational structure generated a new social stratification, distinguishing between those who owned substantial property and were therefore able to convert residential space into commercial tourism infrastructure, and those who lacked such assets and were confined to low-wage service employment. The former group, often comprising the original Prawirotomo descendants who retained

large inherited properties, benefited disproportionately from tourism growth, while the latter—many of them recent in-migrants—occupied a more precarious economic position.

Tourism development has also profoundly affected patterns of social interaction and community cohesion. Ahimsa-Putra and Raharjana (2001) have described a 'demonstration effect' in tourist-receiving communities whereby local residents gradually adopt the lifestyle preferences of visiting tourists, including styles of dress, consumption habits, and attitudes toward gender roles and interpersonal relationships. In Prawirotaman, this effect has been particularly pronounced given the high proportion of international tourists, whose cultural practices and social norms differ markedly from those of the local Javanese community. The increase in mixed marriages between local residents and foreign visitors is one concrete manifestation of this intercultural contact, representing both an openness to global influence and a source of social tension for those who perceive such unions as a dilution of local cultural values (Sugiarto, 2021).

At a deeper structural level, tourism has eroded the traditional foundations of community life in Prawirotaman. Historically, social relations in Javanese urban *kampungs* were governed by norms of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and a dense web of reciprocal obligations rooted in kinship, neighborhood solidarity, and shared religious practice. The commercialization of daily life in Prawirotaman has gradually replaced these community-oriented values with market-oriented ones: interactions between residents and visitors, and increasingly between residents themselves, are mediated by economic transactions rather than social obligation. As Sugiarto (2021) observes, this transformation represents not merely a change in livelihood strategy but a fundamental reorientation of social values and community identity.

The influx of migrants drawn by employment opportunities in the tourism sector has further complicated the social fabric of Prawirotaman. Nihayati and Aryadi (2023) note that migrant workers have intensified competition for jobs in the hospitality and food service industries, sometimes displacing local workers who lack the formal training or language skills demanded by upscale establishments catering to international visitors. The presence of a large and mobile migrant workforce has reduced the social density and spatial stability that once characterized *kampung* life, contributing to a sense among long-established residents that their community has become a transient space rather than a home.

Despite these centrifugal pressures, Prawirotaman has not entirely lost its capacity for collective social action. Local community organizations continue to organize cultural events, neighborhood clean-up initiatives, and artisanal craft

markets that serve both to attract tourists and to reinforce a sense of shared identity among residents. These grassroots efforts to maintain cultural continuity in the face of rapid commercialization represent an important dimension of Prawirotaman's social resilience, even as they operate under conditions of increasing economic constraint.

Economic Transformation in Prawirotaman

The economic history of Prawirotaman is one of repeated structural adjustment in response to changing external conditions. The batik industry that flourished in the kampung from the early twentieth century until the 1970s represented a form of artisanal capitalism embedded in kinship networks and family-based enterprises. The collapse of this industry, caused by a combination of policy changes, market shifts, and intensified competition, forced residents to seek new economic strategies. The transition to tourism services required a fundamentally different set of skills, relationships, and orientations, and it opened Prawirotaman to new forms of capital and new patterns of economic dependency (Prasojo et al., 2020).

The early phase of tourism development in the 1980s and 1990s was characterized by small-scale, locally owned enterprises: family-run guest houses, warungs (small food stalls), and informal tour guiding services. This period, while economically modest, preserved a relatively equitable distribution of tourism benefits within the local community. The major shift came in the 2000s, when Yogyakarta's growing profile as an international tourist destination attracted significant outside investment. The granting of permits for star-rated hotels in Prawirotaman from approximately 2014 onwards marked a qualitative change in the area's economic landscape. Establishments such as Gallery Prawirotaman Hotel and Greenhost Boutique Hotel introduced a level of capital intensity and brand sophistication that fundamentally altered competitive dynamics in the local accommodation market (Nihayati & Aryadi, 2023).

The arrival of large-scale hotel investment has had mixed consequences for the local economy. On one hand, it has created jobs, stimulated demand for local food and handicraft products, and enhanced Prawirotaman's visibility on digital travel platforms, thereby increasing overall tourist arrivals. On the other hand, it has intensified competition for small-scale, locally owned lodgings, which typically cannot match the price-quality ratio offered by boutique hotels or the booking convenience provided by international online travel agencies. Nihayati and Aryadi (2023) document declining occupancy rates in melati (budget) hotels owned by local residents as a direct consequence of competition from star-rated

establishments, with some proprietors being forced to either sell their properties or shift to lower-value commercial uses.

Land commodification represents perhaps the most structurally significant economic transformation in Prawirotaman. Rising tourism demand has driven dramatic increases in land and property values, creating strong incentives for original landowners to sell their holdings. Riadi (2018) describes large-scale land sales by local residents to outside investors as a defining feature of Prawirotaman's recent economic history, one that has fundamentally altered the structure of property ownership in the kampung. Once transferred to outside capital, these properties are typically developed into high-end commercial establishments catering to tourist rather than local consumption, further accelerating the area's commercial transformation and reducing the stock of residential space available to long-term community members.

This process aligns closely with the concept of 'tourism-led gentrification' as theorized by Phillips (2018), which describes how tourism investment drives property value increases and commercial transformation in previously low-income or artisanal urban areas, displacing original residents and small enterprises in favor of capital-intensive tourism infrastructure. In the Prawirotaman case, gentrification has been facilitated by the absence of strong regulatory mechanisms to protect local landowners from speculative pressure and to ensure that tourism development benefits are equitably distributed across the community.

In response to these structural pressures, a segment of Prawirotaman's entrepreneurial community has sought to develop alternative economic strategies grounded in local cultural distinctiveness. Creative economy initiatives—including thematic coffee shops, batik-based souvenir shops, community-managed homestays, and bicycle rental services—represent attempts to carve out competitive niches within the tourism market that are not directly threatened by large hotel investment. The strategic use of digital platforms such as Traveloka, Airbnb, and Instagram for marketing and booking has enabled some small operators to reach international markets and maintain viable occupancy rates despite competition from larger establishments (Selvia et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, Sugiarto (2021) cautions that without deliberate policy intervention to promote inclusive tourism development, the economic benefits of Prawirotaman's transformation will continue to be captured disproportionately by outside capital and a small elite of property-owning local residents, leaving the majority of the community in a structurally precarious position. Inclusive economic development in Prawirotaman requires policies that combine land tenure protection,

small enterprise support, skills development, and transparent regulatory governance.

Spatial Transformation in Prawirotaman

The physical transformation of Prawirotaman provides a material record of the social and economic changes described above. The kampung's built environment has been reshaped over several decades through a combination of organic adaptation by local residents, targeted investment by outside capital, and incremental changes in land use driven by tourism demand. Understanding the spatial dimension of this transformation is essential not only for historical documentation but also for informing future planning and heritage management decisions.

In the batik era, Prawirotaman's spatial structure reflected the logic of artisanal production: large, deep-setback houses with spacious interior courtyards served simultaneously as domestic residences, batik workshops, and storage facilities. The generous scale of these structures, built by prosperous batik entrepreneurs with durable materials, created an architectural character quite distinct from that of ordinary urban kampungs. When batik production declined and residents converted these buildings into guest houses, the existing spatial structure proved highly adaptable: wide corridors became hotel lobbies, interior courtyards became garden terraces, and storage rooms became guest bedrooms. This reuse of heritage fabric was economically efficient and initially preserved much of the kampung's traditional architectural character (Prasojo et al., 2020).

As tourism demand intensified and land values rose, however, the pace and scale of physical transformation accelerated beyond what incremental adaptation could accommodate. New construction increasingly replaced or overshadowed the original heritage fabric, as investors maximized floor space ratios to capture revenue from a growing market. Ardiansyah et al. (2019) document significant changes in land use patterns in Prawirotaman, with residential land progressively converted to commercial uses including hotels, restaurants, cafes, convenience stores, and money changers. The proliferation of these commercial uses along the main corridor of Jalan Prawirotaman has fundamentally altered the visual character of the street, replacing the quiet residential streetscape of the batik era with a dense, commercially activated but architecturally heterogeneous environment.

The spatial transformation of Prawirotaman has also had significant consequences for public space and pedestrian mobility. Tania et al. (2018) analyze the street corridor of Jalan Prawirotaman as a case study in the challenges facing tourism-oriented urban corridors in Indonesian cities. Their research identifies a structural tension between the commercial logic of individual building operators—

who tend to orient their establishments inward, toward private interior spaces that offer greater comfort and privacy—and the need for vibrant, inclusive public life on the street itself. Because restaurants, cafes, and hotels in Prawirotaman typically draw customers into enclosed, air-conditioned interiors rather than engaging with the public realm, the street corridor functions primarily as a vehicular thoroughfare rather than a pedestrian-friendly public space.

This problem is compounded by inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. Footpaths along Jalan Prawirotaman are narrow, discontinuous, and frequently obstructed by parked vehicles, commercial signage, and street furniture that serves vehicular rather than pedestrian needs. The absence of adequate transition spaces between buildings and the public street—zones that in well-designed urban environments provide seating, shade, and opportunities for informal social interaction—further discourages outdoor activity. Pedestrian movement in the area is consequently limited to functional trips between specific destinations, such as from accommodation to restaurant or from hotel to transport service, rather than the spontaneous, exploratory activity that characterizes healthy urban public life (Tania et al., 2018).

Tania et al. (2018) propose a set of urban design interventions to address these deficiencies. First, they recommend the strengthening of pedestrian access through the widening and regularization of footpaths, the installation of street furniture at appropriate intervals, and the creation of shaded rest areas that invite lingering and social interaction. Second, they advocate for a fundamental reorientation of the corridor's functional logic, transforming Jalan Prawirotaman from a street organized around vehicular movement into a pedestrian-priority zone in which foot traffic is explicitly privileged over motor vehicles. Such a reorientation would require coordinated action between the municipal government, transport authorities, and the local business community, but would substantially enhance the quality of public life and the attractiveness of the area as a pedestrian tourism destination.

Beyond pedestrian infrastructure, the spatial transformation of Prawirotaman raises broader questions about heritage conservation and identity preservation. The original architectural fabric of the kampung—the large batik-era houses with their characteristic Javanese-colonial hybrid style—represents a tangible record of the community's history and a source of distinctive tourism value. As pressures to maximize commercial floor space intensify, this heritage fabric is increasingly at risk of demolition or insensitive alteration. Fitria and Dana (2019) document processes of spatial adaptation in which traditional buildings are modified to accommodate contemporary commercial uses, sometimes in ways that

compromise their architectural integrity. A more robust heritage protection framework, combined with incentives for sensitive adaptive reuse, is needed to ensure that Prowirotaman retains the cultural distinctiveness that underlies its appeal as a tourism destination.

The issue of social mixing and spatial segregation also warrants attention. As upscale commercial establishments have proliferated in the core tourism zone of Prowirotaman, lower-income residents and small enterprises have been progressively pushed to the periphery or displaced entirely. The spatial concentration of high-end tourism infrastructure in the main corridor creates an implicit form of social exclusion, as the spaces and amenities of the tourism district become oriented toward visiting consumers rather than local residents. Planning interventions that ensure the retention of affordable housing, community facilities, and small-scale local enterprises within the tourism zone are essential to prevent Prowirotaman from becoming a purely commercial enclave detached from the social fabric of the wider community.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Prowirotaman over the past half-century constitutes a rich and instructive case of tourism-driven urban change in an Indonesian heritage context. Beginning as a kampung defined by its identity as a batik-producing community, Prowirotaman has passed through successive phases of economic restructuring, social realignment, and spatial reconfiguration, arriving at its present condition as a dynamic but contested urban tourism destination. The three dimensions examined in this study—social, economic, and spatial—are deeply interrelated and must be understood holistically if effective policy responses are to be developed. Socially, the growth of tourism has dissolved the occupational and relational foundations of the traditional kampung community, replacing the norms of gotong royong with commercially mediated interactions and generating new forms of social stratification that largely reflect differential access to property ownership. The demonstration effect of sustained contact with international tourism has accelerated cultural change, contributing to evolving attitudes toward gender, consumption, and community belonging. At the same time, the persistence of community organizations and cultural practices suggests that social resilience remains a significant asset. Economically, Prowirotaman exemplifies the structural vulnerabilities of a community whose economic fate has become increasingly dependent on a tourism market shaped by global capital flows and digital intermediaries. Tourism-led gentrification, driven by rising land values and the influx of outside investment, has concentrated economic gains among property-

owning elites and outside investors while leaving the majority of local residents in precarious service-sector employment. The creative economy initiatives developed by local entrepreneurs represent a promising but fragile counterforce to these tendencies. Spatially, the commercialization of the built environment has eroded the distinctive architectural character of the kampung, diminished public space, and created a pedestrian environment that fails to support vibrant outdoor community life. The dominance of inward-oriented commercial establishments along the main corridor has reduced the street to a vehicular corridor, undermining both the quality of the tourist experience and the day-to-day well-being of local residents.

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