

Reconstructing Urban Identity: Place Attachment and City Image After the Eviction of the Chinatown Area in Old Kendari City

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ABSTRACT

The Old Town of Kendari has experienced image degradation due to modernization that does not take into account the preservation of historical and cultural elements. Elements of the city's image, such as nodes, landmarks, districts, edges, and paths, have undergone significant transformations, reducing the legibility of the area and weakening the community's emotional attachment to historical spaces. This study aims to identify the physical elements that shape the image of Old Kendari City and the meaning of space using the place attachment theory approach. This study employs a mixed-method approach with a descriptive methodology. Data collection techniques include questionnaires (108 respondents), interviews (10 informants), and field observations. The results indicate that the Kendari Bay Bridge is the most imageable element, functioning as a node, landmark, and edge. Furthermore, Pasar Kota Lama acts as a district, and Jalan Konggoasa as a path. This study offers a new integration of spatial meaning, both emotional and symbolic, into Lynch's classic urban image framework, which has so far emphasized the physical visual dimension. Thus, the image of Old Town does not have to be maintained statically, but can be reconstructed through new elements that have strong ties to the community to adaptively preserve the identity of the area in response to the dynamics of development.

Keywords: City Image, Spatial meaning, Kendari Old Town.

ABSTRAK

Kota Lama Kendari mengalami degradasi citra akibat modernisasi yang tidak memperhatikan pelestarian elemen sejarah dan budaya. Elemen-elemen citra kota seperti *node*, *landmark*, *district*, *edge*, dan *path* mengalami transformasi signifikan, sehingga mengurangi keterbacaan kawasan dan melemahkan keterikatan emosional masyarakat terhadap ruang bersejarah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi elemen fisik pembentuk citra Kota Lama Kendari dan makna ruang menggunakan pendekatan teori *place attachment*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *mixed method* dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi kuesioner (108 responden), wawancara (10 informan), dan observasi lapangan. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Jembatan Teluk Kendari merupakan elemen paling imageable, berfungsi sebagai node, landmark, dan edge. Selanjutnya Pasar Kota Lama berperan sebagai district, dan Jalan Konggoasa sebagai path. Studi ini menawarkan integrasi baru makna spasial baik emosional maupun simbolis ke dalam kerangka citra perkotaan Lynch klasik yang selama ini lebih menekankan pada dimensi fisik visual. Dengan demikian, citra Kota Lama tidak harus dipertahankan secara statis, tetapi dapat direkonstruksi melalui elemen-elemen baru yang memiliki keterikatan kuat dengan masyarakat untuk menjaga identitas kawasan secara adaptif terhadap dinamika pembangunan.

Kata kunci: Citra Kota, Pemaknaan Ruang, Kota Lama Kendari

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of cities in Indonesia today often faces a dilemma between the demands of rapid modernization and efforts to preserve historical heritage. This also creates tension that affects the clarity of a city's visual readability and meaning. One relevant theoretical approach to examining the readability of a city is the theory of city image developed by Lynch, (1960) in his book *The Image of the City*. Lynch's research in the cities of Boston, New Jersey, and Los Angeles identified five main physical elements that shape the image of a city, namely: (1) nodes, (2) landmarks, (3) districts, (4) edges, and (5) paths. These elements of the city's image function to create the city's visual and spatial legibility so that it can be recognized, remembered, and interpreted by the community.

However, recent studies show that the legibility of a city is not only formed by physical elements. Non-physical aspects such as personal experiences, cultural activities, collective perceptions, and the emotional attachment of the community also play an important role in shaping the image of a city. Scannell & Gifford, (2014) emphasizes the importance of place attachment in understanding the emotional and social relationships between humans and places. Lefebvre, (1991) even states that space is not only produced through physical design, but also through everyday social practices. As emphasized by Altman, (1992) The meaning of space is not only shaped by physical conditions but also results from the continuous interaction between humans and their environment. In the context of Kota Lama Kendari, this area has experienced intense modernization, yet it still retains significant historical and cultural value. Previous research by Nurjannah, (2017) highlighting before the eviction the dominance of the Chinatown area as the main visual marker in the image of the Old Town. Meanwhile Sope, (2023) emphasizes the preservation of colonial architecture as the main strategy for revitalizing the area. Neither study has explored in depth the affective and symbolic dimensions of people's perceptions of the spaces inherent in old urban areas. Yet it is these elements that often form the basis of people's attachment to and acceptance of an area. Therefore, it is important to explore the meaning of space from the users' perspective in order to understand how the image of a city is formed not only visually but also through the experiences and emotional connections of the community.

This situation necessitates research to identify the physical elements that shape the image of the city, both those that remain unchanged and those that have undergone transformation in Kota Lama Kendari. Furthermore, it is also important to explore the meaning that the community attaches to these elements through a place attachment approach, so that planning and zoning can be carried out in a contextual manner and rooted in the spatial experiences of

the local community. Although Lynch, (1960) emphasizing visual and physical recognition of urban elements, this study shows that contemporary spatial identity is increasingly shaped by affective and symbolic meanings, confirming the claim Scannell & Gifford, (2014) about the importance of emotional-geographical bonds. Thus, this study not only adopts Lynch's city image framework but also expands it through the integration of the place attachment approach as a basis for a more contextual understanding of space. The objective of this research is to identify the elements that shape the image of Old Kendari City based on Kevin Lynch's theory, as well as to examine the meaning of space and the community's attachment to these elements in order to formulate development strategies for the area that align with local identity and current needs.

2. METHOD

The methodology used in this study is a mixed method methodology with an explanatory sequential design, which begins with quantitative data collection to identify the physical elements that shape the city's image, followed by qualitative exploration to understand the meaning of attachment to these physical elements of the city's image. Mixed method research is a research design that is constructed on philosophical assumptions as well as inquiry methods (Sugiyono, 2013). In addition, this study will involve a philosophical assumption that guides the direction of data collection and analysis, as well as processing qualitative and quantitative research approaches in many phases of the research process. (Samsu, 2017). This study will use variables based on Kevin Lynch's theory of city image, which consists of nodes, landmarks, districts, edges, and paths. After that, the meanings of the physical elements that form the city image will be identified. This study will employ data collection techniques such as questionnaire completion via Google Forms, interviews, and field observations to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research location. The research location is Old Town Kendari, Kendari District, Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi.



Figure 1. Map of Old Kendari City Delineation
Source: Research Results, 2025

Based on the delineation map above, the Old Town of Kendari covers an area of 194 ha, with the average function of the area being a center for trade and services. In this study, the respondents were residents of Kendari who had long-term activities in the research location. In addition, respondents were expected to understand the issues and be directly involved in the research. The criteria for respondents in completing the questionnaire are as follows: (1) aged over 17 years to have a mature perception of the image of Old Town Kendari; (2) having a minimum education level of high school/vocational school to ensure adequate conceptual understanding; and (3) reside, work, or engage in activities in the Kendari City area, particularly the Old City area, to ensure direct involvement with the spatial context being studied. The sample size for the questionnaire was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% error rate via Google Forms. Data collection was conducted using three main methods: (a) questionnaires to identify elements of the city image quantitatively; (b) in-depth interviews to explore the meaning of space based on respondents' experiences; and (c) field observations to record the physical conditions of the area and social activities. Primary data includes questionnaire results, interviews, and observations, while secondary data includes area maps, RTRW, and previous research. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 27 to identify the most imageable elements of the city's image, while qualitative data were analyzed narratively using NVivo software to extract the spatial meaning of the physical elements that shape the image of Old Kendari City. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of techniques between methods.

Validity Test

Empirical validity was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation on 30 test respondents ($df = 28$). With a table r of 0.361 at $\alpha = 0.05$, all items had a calculated $r >$ table r .

For example, item P1 obtained a calculated r of 0.745. These results indicate that all questionnaire items are valid and capable of accurately measuring the research construct.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess internal consistency among items within a construct. The results showed an Alpha value of 0.889, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.60 recommended for exploratory studies. Thus, the instrument was deemed reliable and suitable for use as a data collection tool.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Identification of Physical Elements Shaping the Image of Old Kendari City

Identify Nodes elements

The following are the distribution points of nodes in Old Kendari City, where the nodes themselves are considered activity hubs based on theory (Lynch, 1960): (a). Pelabuhan Nusantara; (b). Titik Nol Kota Lama; (c). Jembatan Teluk Kendari; (d). Pasar Kota Lama; (e). Pelabuhan Kapal Malam.



Figure 2. Node Distribution Points

Source: Research Results, 2025

The following are the results of the questionnaire based on data on the distribution of nodes (activity nodes) in Kota Lama Kendar:

Table 1. Results of the Node Distribution Questionnaire

Node Distribution Points	<i>Frequency</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pelabuhan Nusantara	26	24,1	24,1
Titik Nol Kota Lama Kendar	3	2,8	26,9
Jembatan Teluk Kendari	67	62,0	88,9
Pasar Kota Lama	7	6,5	95,4
Pelabuhan Wanci	5	4,6	100,0
Total	108	100,0	

Source: Research Results, 2025

Based on the results in Table 1, which explains the identification of the most imageable elements forming the activity node, the Kendari Bay Bridge is the element most easily recognized by respondents, with the highest percentage of 62%.

Landmark Elements

The following are the locations of landmarks in Old Kendari City, where landmarks are defined as elements that serve as visual markers or easily recognizable icons and symbols of the area's identity (Lynch, 1960): (a). Gerbang Wisata Toronipa (b). Masjid Dan Gereja Kota Lama; (c). Jembatan Teluk Kendari; (d). Masjid Agung Kota Lama



Figure 3. Landmark Distribution Points

Source: Research Results, 2025

The following table shows the results of the questionnaire identifying the physical elements that shape the image of the city based on Lynch, (1960) which consists of several physical element distribution data, as follows:

Table 2. Results of the Landmark Distribution Questionnaire

Titik Persebaran Landmark	<i>Frequency</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
bang Wisata Toronipa	19	17,6	17,6
Masjid Dan Gereja Kota Lama	17	15,7	33,3
Jembatan Teluk Kendari	61	56,5	89,8
Masjid Raya Kota Lama	11	10,2	100,0
Total	108	100,0	

Source: Research Results, 2025

Based on the results in Table 2, which shows that the percentage of the most imageable landmark indicates that the Kendari Bay Bridge is the element most easily recognized by respondents with the highest percentage of 56.5 percent.

District Elements

The following are the distribution points of districts in Kota Lama Kendari, where districts are considered areas with homogeneous or similar visual characteristics and activities.(Lynch, 1960): (a). Kawasan Pecinan; (b). Kompleks TNI; (c). Pasar Kota Lama.



Figure 4. Distribution Points of Districh

Source: Research Results, 2025

The following is a table of results from a questionnaire identifying the physical elements that shape the image of a city based on Lynch, (1960) which consists of several physical element distribution data, as follows:

Table 3. Results of the District Distribution Questionnaire

Distribution Point Districh	<i>Frequency</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Kawasan Pecinan	8	7,4	7,4
Kompleks Tentara	33	30,6	38,0
Pasar Kota Lama	67	62,0	100
Total	108	100,0	

Source: Research Results, 2025

Based on Table 3, which explains the percentage of identification of the elements that form the image of Pasar Kota Lama Kendari (district) that are most imageable, Pasar Kota Lama Kendari is shown to be the physical element that forms the most imageable city based on distribution data and research findings, with a percentage of 62%.

Edge Elements

The following are the distribution points of edges in Old Kendari City, where edges serve as separating elements between Old Kendari City and other areas.(Lynch, 1960): (a). Tepi Laut Kota Lama; (b). Jembatan Teluk Kendari; (c). Gerbang Wisata Toronipa



Figure 5. Edge distribution points

Source: Research Results, 2025

The following table shows the results of a questionnaire identifying the physical elements that shape the image of a city (edge), consisting of several data points on the distribution of physical elements, as follows:

Table 4. Results of the Edge Distribution Questionnaire

Distribution Point Edge	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tepi Laut Kota Lama	7	6,5	6,5
Jembatan Teluk Kendari	81	75,0	81,5
Gerbang Wisata Toronipa	20	18,5	100,0
Total	108	100,0	

Source: Research Results, 2025

Table 4 shows the percentage of identification of the elements that form the image of Kota Lama Kendari (edge) that are most imageable, with a percentage of 75%.

Elemen *Path*

The following are the distribution points of Path in Old Kendari City, where Path has characteristics as a path element that is frequently used by the community. (Lynch, 1960): (a). Jalan Konggoasa; (b). Jalan Wr Supratman; (c). Jalan Gajah Mada; (d). Jalan Tinumbu; (e). Jalan Sukowati; (f). Jalan Soekarno.



Figure 6. Titik-titik Persebaran Path

Source: Research Results, 2025

The following is a table of the results of a questionnaire identifying the physical elements that shape the image of a city (path) based on Lynch's theory (1960), which consists of several data on the distribution of physical elements, as follows:

Table 5. Results of the Path Distribution Questionnaire

Distribution Point <i>Path</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Jalan Konggoasa	47	43,5	43,5
Jalan WR Supratman	31	28,7	72,2
Jalan Gadjah Mada	21	19,4	91,7
Jalan Tinumbu	2	1,9	93,5
Jalan Sukowati	4	3,7	97,2
Jalan Ir Soekarno	3	2,8	100,0
Total	108	100,0	

Source: Research Results, 2025

Table 5 shows that the percentage of identification of the elements that form the image of Kendari's Old Town (path) that are most imageable is Jalan Konggoasa with a percentage of 43.5%.



Figure 7. Image of Old Kendari City

Source: Research Results, 2025

Although the Kendari Bay Bridge is a new infrastructure in Kota Lama, it has become the most influential element in shaping the city's image, which consists of nodes, landmarks, and edges. Therefore, it can be concluded that the image of Old Town has undergone a transformation, where the new physical element—the newly inaugurated Kendari Bay Bridge has become the most imaginable element in shaping the image of Old Town. This finding indicates that changes in the image of Old Town do not necessarily signify the loss of identity but can also be reconstructed through new elements that shape the image of Kendari's Old Town.

B. The Meaning of Space in Relation to the Physical Elements that Shape the Image of Old Kendari City

Theme 1: The Significance of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a Node Emotional Meaning

The following are excerpts from interview transcripts regarding the emotional meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge from the community's perspective:

"I feel a sense of calm because the bridge offers a very beautiful view. It serves as a place to relax the mind or reflect" (Subject 4).

"From the beginning, when the bridge was being constructed, I already thought that this would become an enjoyable place. It really brings a sense of nostalgia for island life" (Subject 6).

"The atmosphere is cool and peaceful, so sometimes we use it as a place to relax, especially in the afternoon. When you are on the Kendari Bay Bridge, you feel a kind of comfort while looking at the scenery of the bay" (Subject 7).

The three quotes above represent the views of 10 respondents who expressed similar sentiments, from which it can be concluded that the Kendari Bay Bridge is emotionally perceived as a space that provides tranquility, reflection, and healing. This indicates an emotional attachment between the community and the space, in line with the theory of place attachment by Scannell & Gifford, (2014) which explains the affective, cognitive, and behavioral connections to a place. Public open spaces can meet the community's needs for health, recreation, and a high-quality urban environment. (Nasution & Zahrah, 2014). This bridge is perceived as a unique and calming space, mainly because of the view of Kendari Bay, which provides a sense of comfort.

Functional Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge, which is interpreted emotionally based on the perspective of the community:

"So, the presence of the Kendari Bay Bridge makes it easier and faster to get to work." (Subject 1)

"It facilitates community activities, as this infrastructure supports people's accessibility." (Subject 2)

"A long cable-stayed bridge, because it connects Kendari District and Abeli District." (Subject 3)

Based on the results of the interviews in the above excerpts, as expressed by three respondents, it can be concluded that the Kendari Bay Bridge also has a functional meaning. Based on the interview results, it was stated that before the Kendari Bay Bridge was built, the community needed a considerable amount of time to access both sides of the bay. Additionally, the community used boats to access both sides of the bay. However, after the Kendari Bay Bridge was built, access to both sides of the bay became easier. The quality of public open space can be seen from two aspects: function and physical features. Nasution & Zahrah, (2014)

states that the quality of public open spaces can be seen from two aspects, namely their function and physical features, where function is related to the background of people and their activities in public open spaces.

Social Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the social significance of the Kendari Bay Bridge from the perspective of the community:

"Now young people hang out there (on the Kendari Bay Bridge)." (Subject 1)

"That place is used, for example, when we are heading to Abeli (the bay side), we always make it a gathering spot. Sometimes we use it as a meeting point." (Subject 2)

"We often tell our friends to meet up at the bridge." (Subject 3)

Based on the results of the interviews quoted above, as expressed by three respondents, it can be concluded that the Kendari Bay Bridge also has social significance for the community. The interviews show that the Kendari Bay Bridge has now become a place for gathering and social interaction in Kota Lama. Based on William H. White, (1980) A successful public space is one that encourages people to sit and interact. In addition, there is a theory that Gohar & Kondolf, (2020) states that the structure of bridges, as seen in the bridge over the Nile River in Cairo, has undergone adaptive functions as public spaces that allow people to enjoy city views and participate in social activities, despite being located in the midst of urban congestion and traffic jams.

Symbolic Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the symbolic meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge based on the community's perspective:

"Because the Kendari Bay Bridge is indeed one of the new icons of Kendari City." (Subject 1)

Based on the interview results in the above excerpt, one respondent revealed that the Kendari Bay Bridge is also interpreted symbolically as a hub of activity. The interview results show that the Kendari Bay Bridge is perceived as the longest bridge and a striking visual landmark in the Old Town. Due to its grandeur, this bridge has become a symbol of the city's identity. Based on Lynch, (1960) Easily recognizable objects that are a source of shared pride will shape the city's image as a landmark. In addition, according to Najafi, (2012) states that physical characteristics also strengthen attachment and satisfaction with a place, including the Kendari Bay Bridge, which is symbolically meaningful to the community.

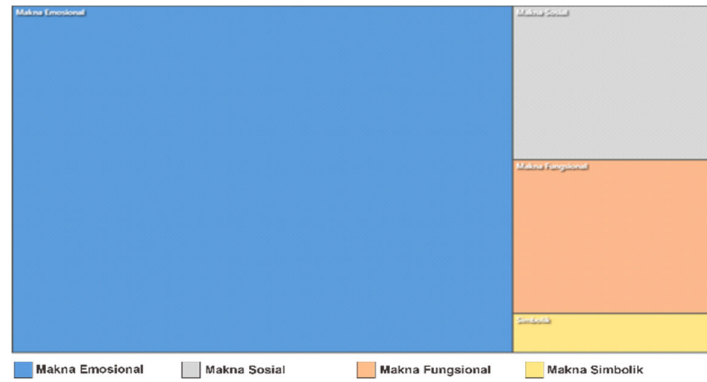


Figure 8 Visualization of Kendari Bay Bridge as a Node

Source: N.Vivo, 2025

The illustration above shows that the majority of respondents emotionally perceive the Kendari Bay Bridge as a place to unwind and reflect. This bridge not only serves a physical function, but also acts as a gathering place and venue for emotional activities for the community, demonstrating its dual role as infrastructure and a psychologically meaningful public space.

Theme 2: The Significance of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a Landmark

Based on the results of data analysis from interviews with subjects discussing the meaning of physical elements that shape the image of the city, conducted by researchers, including:

Symbolic Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a visual marker that is interpreted symbolically based on the perspective of the community:

“The most noticeable feeling when I see it—when we look at the Kendari Bay Bridge from a distance it’s like ‘wow’ (amazed). It really has the potential to become one of the icons of Southeast Sulawesi.” (Subject 2)

“Seeing the bridge, of course, it becomes an icon, and it feels as though Kendari Bay has become attached to it and now represents a new identity of Kendari City.” (Subject 5)

“The bridge has already become the icon of Kendari City; it can no longer be separated. When people think of Kendari, it has become a symbol of the city.” (Subject 6)

The three quotes above represent nine respondents who expressed similar views that the Kendari Bay Bridge is interpreted symbolically as a visual landmark. This interpretation is one of the main principles of human geography and is most often described as ‘meaningful space’ (Cresswell, 2015). The Kendari Bay Bridge not only serves as a connector, but is also seen as an icon of Southeast Sulawesi and a symbol of the Old Town's identity. This is in line with the

theory that Lynch, (1960) which states that this bridge is a landmark because it is easily recognizable and serves as a visual orientation point. Thus, the bridge transcends its physical function and acts as a visual representation of the area.

Functional Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a visual marker that is interpreted functionally based on the perspective of the community:

"It really helps residents. Previously, crossing took quite a long time, but now with the bridge, you can reach the other side of the bay in a much shorter time." (Subject 1)

"From Bungkutoko Island to the old city used to take more than half an hour, but now it can be reduced to 10 minutes because the Kendari Bay Bridge connects the two major ports of Kendari and Bungkutoko." (Subject 3)

"The bridge connects two districts that are separated by the bay itself. That's why, with the presence of the bridge, mobility for the people of Kendari City has become more efficient faster and easier. Especially since Lapulu has the Jayanti Port." (Subject 5)

The three quotes above represent the views of six respondents who expressed similar opinions that the Kendari Bay Bridge is interpreted functionally as a visual landmark. Based on the interview results above, it is clear that the bridge is significant in facilitating community accessibility. Based on Mahmoud, (2022) A good public space must meet four criteria: accessibility, activity, comfort, and socialization. Accessibility is closely related to the Kendari Bay Bridge, as it improves accessibility between two areas separated by Kendari Bay.

Economic Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a visual marker that is interpreted economically from the perspective of the community:

"Jembatan yang menjadi penghubung secara ekonomi" (subjek 1)

"Nah jadi disitu pertukaran uang itu jadi meningkat dengan adanya aktivitas jembatan Teluk Kendari" (subjek 2)

Based on the interview results in the above excerpt, two respondents revealed that the Kendari Bay Bridge is interpreted as an economic landmark. The Kendari Bay Bridge encourages the growth of MSMEs and connects economic hubs such as markets, ports, and residential areas. This creates a vibrant social space, in line with the view that Jacobs, (1961) The role of informal activities is part of the dynamics of a city. Place attachment is also a complex psychological phenomenon that depends on many elements, ranging from history, values, and human experiences to the economic context of a place, including the Kendari Bay Bridge (Seamon, 2015).

Social Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a visual marker that is socially interpreted based on the perspective of the community:

“Dijadikan sebagai tempat wisata terutama sore hari bahkan malam hari sampai sekarang masih ada” (subjek 1)

Based on the interview results in the above excerpt, one respondent stated that the Kendari Bay Bridge serves as a visual marker of the area that is interpreted socially. The Kendari Bay Bridge now functions as a social space that encourages informal interaction in public spaces. This is in line with the opinion of Gehl, (2010) that public spaces should be designed to support social gatherings and activities in order to strengthen community identity. In addition, according to Seamon, (2015) Place attachment is a complex psychological phenomenon that depends on many elements, ranging from history, values, and human experiences to the social context of a place. Thus, this bridge not only functions as accessibility infrastructure, but also as a vessel for community togetherness and social connection in Kendari City.

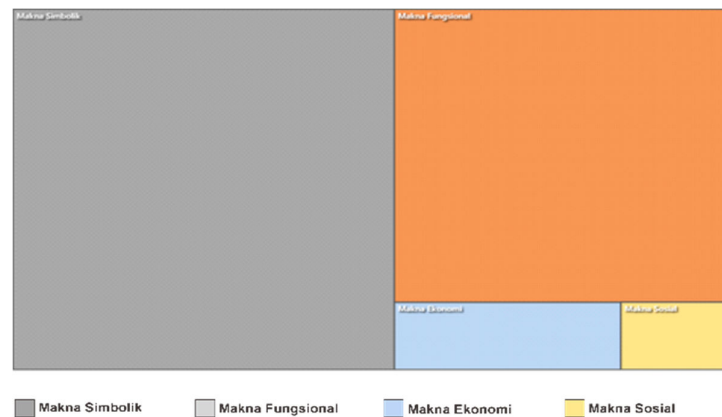


Figure 9. Visualization of Bridge Lighting as a Landmark

Source: N.Vivo, 2025

The image above illustrates the results of the interviews, in which the majority of respondents considered the Kendari Bay Bridge to be a visual marker with symbolic meaning.

Theme 3: The Significance of the Old Town Market as a District

Based on the results of data analysis from interviews with subjects discussing the meaning of physical elements that shape the image of the Old Town, conducted by researchers with the Old Town Market as the object, among others:

Historical Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of Pasar Kota Lama as a homogeneous area based on the perspective of the community:

“Saya suka dengan suasananya karena kan kalau kita lihat dari nilai sejarah nya atau historisnya pasar Kota Lama ini merupakan pasar pertama yang ada di Kota Kendari sini” (subjek 1)

“So, the old city market, I would say, represents a kind of historical romanticism because I used to go there often.” (Subject 3)

“It can be said that the market in the old city is the first market, and it feels like being in the pre-2010 era. The atmosphere still strongly carries a ‘Tempo Doeloe’ (old times) vibe.” (Subject 6)

The three quotes above represent six respondents who expressed similar views about Pasar Kota Lama, describing it as a space that accommodates activities rich in historical value. The interviews revealed that Pasar Kota Lama is one of the oldest markets in Kendari City. In line with this, there is a theory that explains the elements of a district from Lynch, (1960) which states that the elements that shape the image of a city with a strong and recognizable identity are not only functional activities but also historical values with homogeneous activities that are emotionally and visually attached to a space.

Functional Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the functional meaning of the Old Town market based on the community's perspective:

“I think it is quite affordable; the shopping center there offers basic necessities at reasonably good prices.” (Subject 2)

“Also, because it is close to the port, fish is especially very cheap at the old city market.” (Subject 3)

“The Old City Market has good accessibility because it is located in the middle of the road. So, whether coming from the Old City direction or from the bypass, it makes it very convenient for people to carry out buying and selling activities at the market.” (Subject 4)

The three quotes above represent the views of six respondents who expressed similar opinions. The Old Town Market is perceived as a functional spatial space. The interview results indicate that the Old Town Market is closely associated with buying and selling activities, so the market is perceived as having a functional meaning. Based on Lynch, (1960) There are district elements as components that shape the image of a city, where areas with uniform activities such as trade form an image that is easily recognizable by the community. Nasution & Zahrah, (2014) states that the quality of public open spaces can be seen from two aspects, namely their function and physical features that support activities in public open spaces, including the Old Town Market in Kendari, whose quality is supported by the function of the area.

Cultural Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the cultural significance of Kota Lama based on the perspective of the community:

"There are many traditional foods like gogos (a type of traditional food) and various others. Pokeya-pokeya (another type of traditional food) is also very abundant there." (Subject 1)

"The foods sold there are rarely found in other places, where food is usually more ready-to-serve. Over there, the food is still very traditional, like sago-based dishes, and the taste is quite different from other places. Perhaps because the community still preserves their culinary traditions, you can still find Muna specialties such as kambuse and kabuto being maintained there." (Subject 3)

"The Old City Market is essentially a traditional market. In the Old City area, there are various ethnic groups, such as the Muna who are quite dominant there as well as the Tolaki and Bugis. So, if you are looking for regional specialty foods, there are plenty available in the Old City." (Subject 4)

The three quotes above represent the views of five respondents who expressed similar sentiments. The Old Town Market is perceived as a cultural space. The interview results indicate that the Old Town Market is perceived as a cultural space because it offers traditional cuisine unique to Southeast Sulawesi, which fosters interaction between ethnic groups. This is in line with the concept of spirit of place from Norberg-Schulz, (1979) which emphasizes the importance of the connection between space, people, and the local context. According to Low, (1992) (dalam Gianyar, 2018) place attachment can contribute to the formation, maintenance, and preservation of the identity and self-esteem of individuals, groups, or cultures. In addition, according to Manzo & Wright, (2013) states that values of identity and cultural heritage, such as local traditions and beliefs, contribute to forming a deep emotional attachment to a place, including the Old Town Market in Kendari.

Emotional Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the emotional meaning of Pasar Kota Lama among others:

"We used to ride public transport (PT-PT) to go around Kendari City, and one of the places we visited was the Old City Market. Back then, it just felt nice and enjoyable to go there." (Subject 1)

"I have many memories and experiences there, so every time I pass by, I am reminded of my childhood." (Subject 2)

Based on the interview results in the above excerpt, two respondents revealed that Pasar Kota Lama has emotional significance in terms of spatiality. Attachment to a place can function as an affective bond that satisfies individual needs and fulfills the need for a safe and comfortable place. (Counted & Watts, 2017 dalam Gianyar, 2018). According to Manzo &

Wright, (2020) states that the values and experiences associated with a location can be understood through the concept of place attachment, which is generally defined as the cognitive and emotional relationship that develops between individuals and a particular place. Thus, the Old Town Market is not only a functional space, but also the emotional identity of the people of Old Town Kendari.

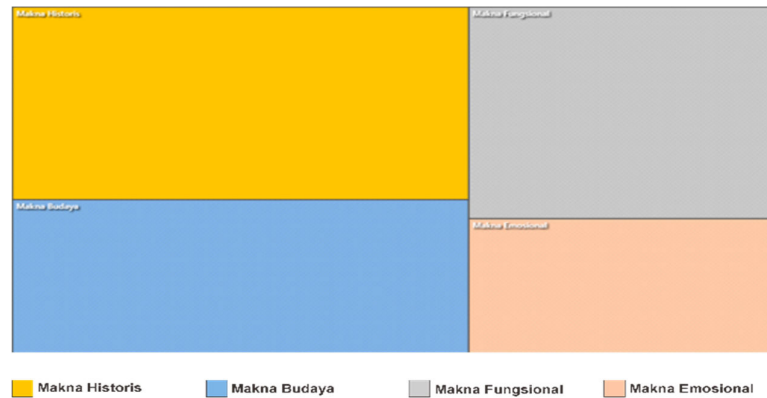


Figure 15 Visualization of the Old Town Market as a District

Source: N.Vivo, 2025

The illustration above shows that the majority of respondents perceive Pasar Kota Lama as historically significant because it is the oldest market in Kendari City and has been a witness to trading activities for a long time.

Theme 4: The Significance of the Kendari Bay Bridge as an Edge

Based on the results of data analysis from interviews with subjects discussing the meaning of physical elements that shape the image of the Old Town, conducted by researchers with the Kendari Bay Bridge as the boundary of the area:

Social Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a socially defined boundary based on the perspective of the community:

“When we pass over the Kendari Bay Bridge, there is a certain stigma. When we hear ‘Old City,’ what comes to mind is something scary—things like violence and so on. It’s shaped by the social environment there, so it just feels intimidating.” (Subject 1)

“I also feel there is a significant difference between the atmosphere of the Old City and Lapulu. In the Old City, activities are still dense because of the port, whereas in Lapulu, the activities are relatively less crowded.” (Subject 3)

“There is a different atmosphere now. In Lapulu, it brings a new vibe previously there were no vendors and it was quiet, but now it is lively. Meanwhile, on the other side, which used to be busy, it can become rather quiet when no ships are docking at the port.” (Subject 5)

The three quotes above represent six respondents who expressed similar views. The Kendari Bay Bridge, which separates the Old Town from other areas, is interpreted as a socially

significant space. The interviews revealed differences in lifestyle between the Old Town of Kendari and other areas, accompanied by stigma that forms a non-physical boundary as a transition zone. This is in line with the edge theory of Lynch, (1960) which states that city boundaries are not only physical but can also be transitional experiences between areas. Place attachment is a complex psychological phenomenon that depends on many elements, ranging from history, values, and human experiences to social context. (Cresswell, 2015). In this context, the Kendari Bay Bridge serves as both a social boundary and the Old Town of Kendari.

Functional Meaning

The following are the results of interviews in transcript statements regarding the meaning of the Kendari Bay Bridge as a boundary between the old city and other areas based on the perspective of the community.

“In the past, in Tipulu, before the bridge existed, access was very difficult we either had to take a boat or go around the bay. With the Kendari Bay Bridge, it really helps all of our activities to cross to the other side of the bay (the Old City), especially when we want to shop there.” (Subject 1)

“It serves as a connector that speeds up access to the bay side whether going to the Old City or surrounding areas, it is quite effective. Access is easier, faster, the distance feels shorter, and there is no traffic congestion because the road is very helpful.” (Subject 2)

Based on the interview results in the above excerpt, two respondents revealed that the Kendari Bay Bridge is interpreted as having a functional meaning. Based on Lynch, (1960) states that an edge is a functional space that spatially defines the physical and non-physical boundaries of an area, serving as a dividing element between one area and another. The Kendari Bay Bridge, which connects the two sides of the bay that were previously separated, can be interpreted as a functional boundary.



Figure 15 Visualization of Kendari Bay Bridge as Edge

Source: N.Vivo, 2025

The illustration above shows that the majority of respondents perceive the Kendari Bay Bridge as a social boundary separating the Old Town from other areas.

Theme 5: The Meaning of Konggoasa Road as a Path

Based on the results of data analysis from interviews with subjects discussing the meaning of physical elements that shape the image of the old city, conducted by researchers with the Kendari Bay Bridge as the boundary of the area:

Functional Meaning

The following are the findings of researchers in the transcript of interviews regarding the meaning of Jalan Konggoasa as a frequently used route based on the perspective of the community:

“That road has good access and makes it easier for us to reach public facilities such as the port. It also helps people who want to go to tourist destinations like Toronipa Beach, as they no longer need to take a long detour we can go there directly thanks to this road.” (Subject 1)

“What I think about is the efficiency of this road. I often pass through it because it is used to connect two ports and public facilities, including night ships and fast boats.” (Subject 3)

“Konggoasa Road now feels much busier than before because it has become a main route whether going to Nusantara Port, the Old City Market, or from the Mata area heading upward. It is very accessible and connects in all directions, which makes it important. That’s why it has become crowded now, unlike in the past when there were many alternative routes. Now people tend to focus on passing through this road.” (Subject 7)

The three quotes above represent eight respondents who expressed similar views that Jalan Konggoasa is interpreted functionally. Usually, interpreting a space forms a principle and is often described as a meaningful location (Cresswell, 2015). The interview results stated that the road was efficient and passed through several public facilities in Kota Lama Kendari. Based on Lynch, (1960) states that there is a path element that is one of the five elements that form the image of a city, where roads can guide the movement and spatial experience of their users. This also confirms that Jalan Konggoasa fulfills its function well, so that respondents perceive the road as functional.

Historis Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the interview transcript regarding Jalan Konggoasa as a frequently used route based on the community's perspective:

“It has a distinctive uniqueness, for instance due to the presence of old-era buildings. As a street, it still contains many old shop-houses and traditional homes, creating an atmosphere similar to that of an old town.” (Subject 1)

“Yes, I find the old buildings unique. They are clearly different from those on other streets, offering what I would describe as an antique visual experience.” (Subject 4)

“The atmosphere resembles that of Chinatown areas, making it pleasant and cool to pass through. It is also part of the old city, so it evokes a 1990s ambiance—bringing back the sense of Kendari’s past.” (Subject 6)

The three quotes above represent the views of seven respondents who expressed similar sentiments. Konggoasa Street is historically significant. The interviews revealed that the distinctive Chinese buildings along Konggoasa Street create a strong sense of the past, which appeals to the emotions and culture of the community. The street not only serves as a transportation route, but also strengthens the community's attachment to the space. In accordance with teori Stedman (2003) dalam Gianyar, (2018) claim that physical characteristics also strengthen attachment and satisfaction with a place. Meanwhile, *imageability* Lynch, (1960) The recognizable elements of the city are formed from function, historical value, and visual appeal. Thus, Jalan Konggoasa is an imageable path that plays an important role in preserving the collective memory and historical identity of Old Kendari.

Emotional Meaning

The following are the results of the researcher's findings in the transcript of the interview regarding Jalan Konggoasa, which is interpreted emotionally, among other things:

“There are many ships to see, so the atmosphere there is quite pleasant. You also pass through that road if you are heading to the fish auction.” (Subject 1)

“It feels enjoyable when passing through that road. The Old City of Kendari really has a ‘tempo doeloe’ (old-times) vibe.” (Subject 2)

Based on the results of the interviews in the above excerpt, two respondents revealed that Jalan Konggoasa is interpreted emotionally in terms of its spatiality. Attachment to a place acts as an emotional connection that is able to fulfill individual needs, while also providing a sense of security and comfort in carrying out activities (Counted & Watts, 2017). Scannell & Gifford, (2014) which explains emotional attachment to space through affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes toward spatial and social aspects. Place attachment is a form of affective or emotional bond between an individual and a particular place (Tuan, 1977 dalam Devine-Wright, 2020). This emotional meaning reinforces the role of Jalan Konggoasa as a path in the theory Lynch, (1960) where city streets are not merely a means of navigation, but also a space that shapes the community's emotional experience and perception of Old Kendari.

Social Meaning

The following are the results of the interview transcript regarding the meaning of Jalan Konggoasa as interpreted socially from the perspective of the community:

“However, the stigma is still there—it feels a bit scary, especially at night when it gets dark. Personally, I’m afraid to go there at night because of the risk of muggings.” (Subject 1)

“It’s actually quite unfortunate. Especially at night, the area has become quiet because there are no longer many activities. There used to be shop-houses and large stores there, and it was lively. Now, when we pass through at night, it feels deserted.” (Subject 2)

Based on the results of interviews, two respondents stated that Jalan Konggoasa is socially significant because it has a negative stigma due to the lack of lighting at night, which adds to its eerie atmosphere. Public open spaces are created to meet people's needs for social interaction (hamsuddin & Ujang, (2008) dalam Devine-Wright, (2020). Place attachment is a complex psychological phenomenon that depends on many elements, ranging from history, values, and human experiences to social context (Seamon, 2015).

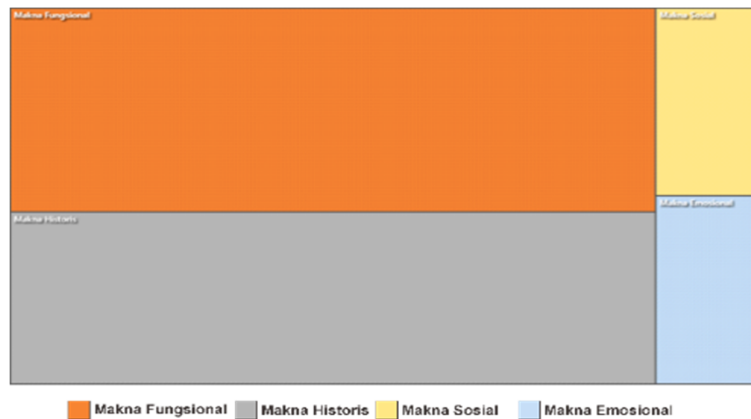


Figure 15. Visualization of the Meaning of Konggoasa Road as a Path
 Source: N.Vivo, 2025

The illustration above shows that the majority of respondents interpret Jalan Konggoasa as a road with functional and historical significance. Discussing the historical significance of Jalan Konggoasa is one of the evidences of the existence of past life, where remnants of the historical heritage of Old Kendari City, such as Chinese-style housing, can still be easily found to this day. On the functional side, the area remains a space that has persisted to this day, as the road plays a vital role due to its connection to several public facilities in Old Kendari City.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the image of Kendari Old Town is shaped by five main elements of Kevin Lynch's theory, with the Kendari Bay Bridge as the most imageable element that acts as a node, landmark, and edge. This bridge has emotional, visual, and social significance, and serves as a boundary for the area. The Old Town Market functions as a district reflecting historical, cultural, and ethnic interaction values. Konggoasa Street, as the main path, connects public facilities and preserves the collective memory of the community. These five elements collectively create a visual image of the area that is also emotionally, socially, and symbolically meaningful, affirming that the identity of Old Town Kendari is dynamic and strongly tied to

the experiences of its community. Theoretically, this research contributes to the expansion of understanding of urban image theory by emphasizing the importance of emotional and symbolic dimensions in shaping public perceptions of urban space. Practically, these findings provide a basis for more adaptive and participatory heritage area planning strategies that take into account residents' perceptions, collective memories, and attachments to urban elements.

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