

# Gender in the Transformation of Vernacular Settlements: Lessons From Brayut Rural Tourism, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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## Abstract

Many regions have lost their peculiarities of vernacular architecture due to the effects of global changes. But Brayut Village in Yogyakarta still has many vernacular houses with various types although the village has been transformed through the process of commercialization into a tourist village. One of the factors affecting the resilience of the village is gender. This study aims to explore the role of gender in the process of transforming the vernacular settlements in the Brayut tourist village. A qualitative empirical research study was conducted during the commercialization process. In-depth interviews with women who play a role in the transformation process were conducted in three stages by interviewing all owners or residents of the vernacular houses to obtain basic data of the transformation process. Results were classified based on the gender in relations to the possibility of sustainability of the vernacular settlement. The results explore gender roles in maintaining vernacular architecture..

**Keywords:** gender, vernacular, commercialization, rural tourism

## Introduction

Yogyakarta has many vernacular settlements with the peculiarities of the nature of the locality that each region has. Hourigan (2015) defines vernacular as that which is not designed by the architects and not built for import or to impress a cultural elite. It is an ordinary need of the owner and utilized for the particular needs whether they are aesthetic or functional. The nature of localization could be local techniques and materials that are strongly influenced by the social, cultural and economic aspects of local communities. Because of its nature, the local architecture could be transformed in accordance with the response of each region. Many regions have lost their peculiarities due to the effects of global changes taking place around them, but the case of Yogyakarta has a different phenomena.

Brayut, one example of a village in Yogyakarta settlements still has many vernacular houses with various types, although the village has been transformed through the process of commercialization into a tourist village. One of the factors affecting the resilience of Brayut village as a vernacular settlement is gender. This study aims to explore the role of gender in the process of transforming the vernacular settlement by learning from the experience of the Brayut tourist village.

In the World Economic Forum (WEF,2017) focusing on Global Gender Gap Report 2017, the Global Gender Gap Index measured gender equality in the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. Many countries have made considerable progress, understanding that talent is a critical factor for growth. But there are several issue on gender (Iversen, 2017), they are

- (1) The pay gap between men and women (WEF, 2017),
- (2) Abortion rights (Denbow, 2005),
- (3) Educating against child marriage (Sekine & Hodgkin, 2014),
- (4) Gender equality (McCleary-Sills, Hanmer, Parsons, & Klugman 2015),
- (5) Woman's ability to control her own body and fertility,
- (6) Inequality work-life balance,
- (7) Problems with parental leave.

The roles that women play are different in any given society, and their situation (Utama & Purwanto, 2017) is determined by the legislation, religious norms, economic status or class, cultural values, ethnicity and types of productive activity of their country, community and household. Women are usually responsible for domestic work; the care of children, family, health, cooking and providing food and other household services. In most societies, they also play a major role in the productive activities of the family; in farming, paid domestic labor services, industries and income generating activities. In some societies they also have clear community roles.

In each of these areas, the development process has often adversely affected – reproduction, production and community – women (Jabeen, 2014). There is a wide gap between women's high, yet unrecognized, economic participation and their low political and social power, and development strategies have usually taken the needs of the most vocal and politically active as their starting point. To understand gender, the activities of men and women need to be addressed separately. The reproductive, productive and social or community roles women are playing must be looked at as well as the roles played economically and socially by men. By examining men's and women's roles, a greater understanding of their needs and involvement in power and decision-making around specific tasks and issues will be reached.

Gender in the architectural and urban context has not been much discussed in the literature (Beebeejaun, 2016), but from a number of papers that have a gender point of view more often it seen as a figures who control a particular space in a city or house. For example, the granary as a female space domain in the Juruan Laok Madura Barat village community (Febrianto, Wulandari & Santosa, 2017). But in Bali the female domain is seen in the vernacular architecture which is more concerned with women's activities as a basis for housing construction (Winarta & Dharmadiatmika, 2018). Jabeen (2014) says that in the production of houses women are underrepresented in decision-making (Jabeen, 2014). This paper also explores gender roles in vernacular buildings, especially in the settlement transformation process with the case study of Brayut tourism village.

### **Scope and Methodology of the Study**

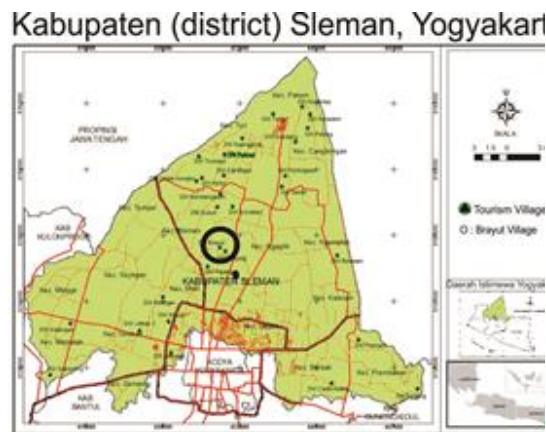
A qualitative empirical research study was conducted to the transformation of vernacular settlements by the locals before and after commercialization process. In-depth interviews with women who play a role in the transformation process were conducted in three stages. The first stage, was interviewing all owners or residents of the vernacular houses to explore the basic data of the transformation process. Second was the in-depth interview with the owner or the

female inhabitants about their involvement in the process. The third analyzed gender relations to the possibility of vernacular settlement sustainability. By synthesizing these relationships future gender roles in maintaining vernacular architecture can be ascertained.

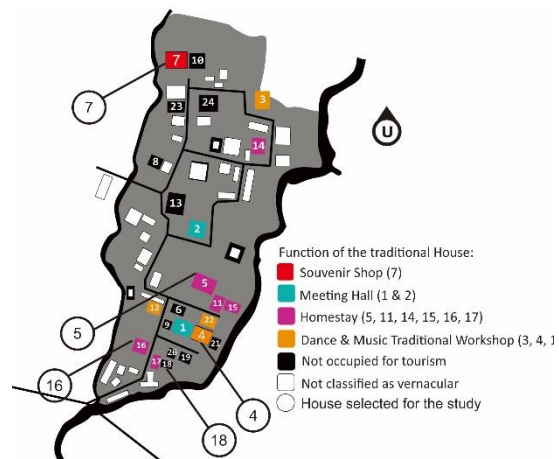
The qualitative analysis of five representative rural vernacular houses were selected from the 24 vernacular houses that can be currently found in Brayut. This study is mostly based on the first year research report of Rudwiarti, Pudianti & Hadi (2017), which contains a full history of the houses, such as the year of construction and ownership, and detailed measured drawings. To verify the findings, field surveys and interviews with residents were conducted to explore the gender issue in it. The paper discusses the gender issue in the process of transformation based on the case study of Brayut Tourism Villages. Four case studies were taken to depict the role of the gender. Each of the case has its character on how women preserved their vernacular house (Table 1).

### Background of Brayut Rural Tourism

Brayut is the agrarian village in Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta which had transformed in rural tourism (Figure 1). It is located in north of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta













**Fig 1:** Location of Brayut Village  
Source: Rudwiarti, Pudianti & Hadi, 2017



**Fig 2:** Map of Brayut Village  
Source: Rudwiarti, Pudianti & Hadi, 2017

Brayut Village is surrounded by fertile rice fields, so that the natural scenery in this site is in the form of a landscape dominated by agricultural land that feels very rural. Not only the fertile land that Brayut has, Brayut is also known for its vernacular buildings which consist of four traditional building typologies, namely Joglo, Sinom, Limasan, and kampung. And one of the three Joglo's have received the Decree as a cultural heritage building. That potential then made this traditional village transform into a tourist village. The level of citizen participation, especially those with traditional houses, is quite high. From the twenty four (24) traditional houses, only ten (10) houses are not used as one of the tourist support facilities (Figure 2). There are houses that function as souvenir shops, homestays, meeting points or mass meeting rooms, workshops for traditional music and traditional dance. Figure 2 also shows the location of the four case studies and their profile as showed in table 1.

**Table 1.** Profile of Selected Houses

	House no 4	House no 5	House no 7	House no 16	House no 18
Owner	Mr Sujatman	Mr Mugiwiarto	Mr Sastro	Mr. Pawirodarsono	Mr. Mujiharjo
Occupied by	Owners wife	Owners wife	Owner & son	Owner, wife and daughter	Owner
Inherited to	Owner's wife	Owner's wife	Son	N.A.	Daughter
Fasade Figure					
Basic form					
Building Typology	Limasan	Joglo	Sinom	Limasan Pacul Gowang	Limasan Pacul Gowang
Year of Build	N.A.	1973	1950	1960	1946
Present condition	Occupied & Rented	Occupied & Rented	Occupied	Occupied & Rented	Occupied
Present Function	Traditional Dance Workshop, Meeting Hall & Owner house	Homestay & owner house	Souvenir shop & owner House	Homestay & owner house	Owner House

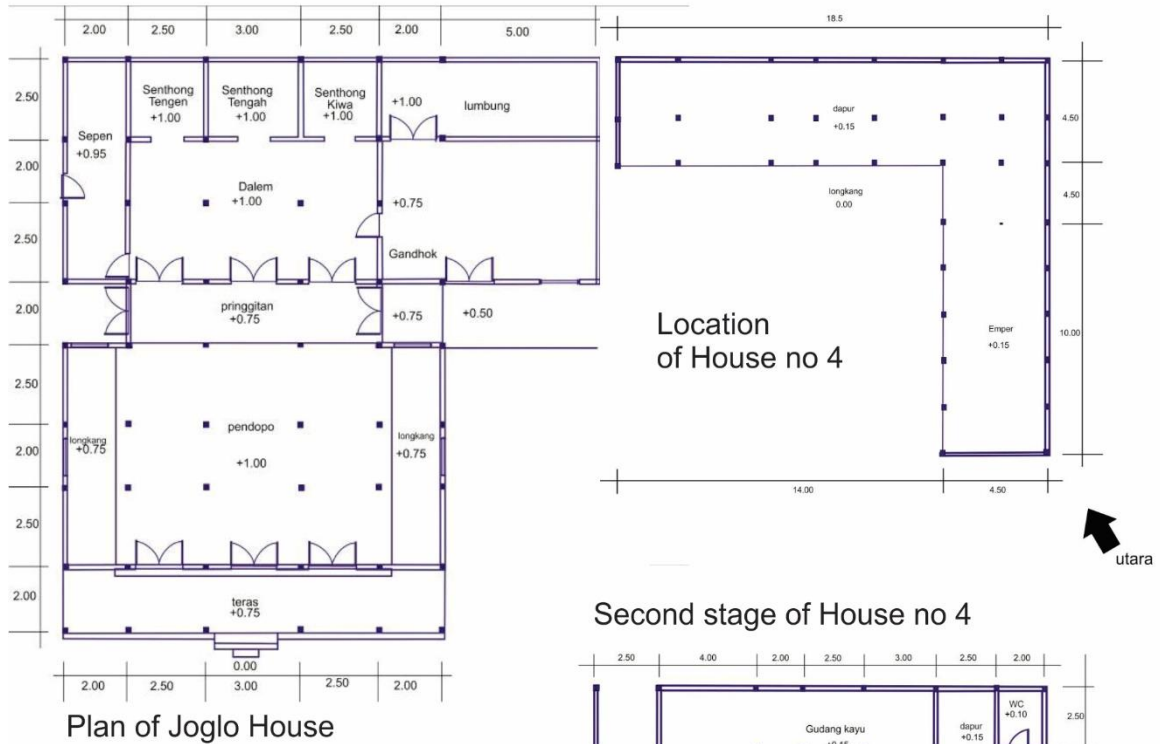
Source: Rudwiarti, Pudianti &amp; Hadi, 2017

## Case Analysis

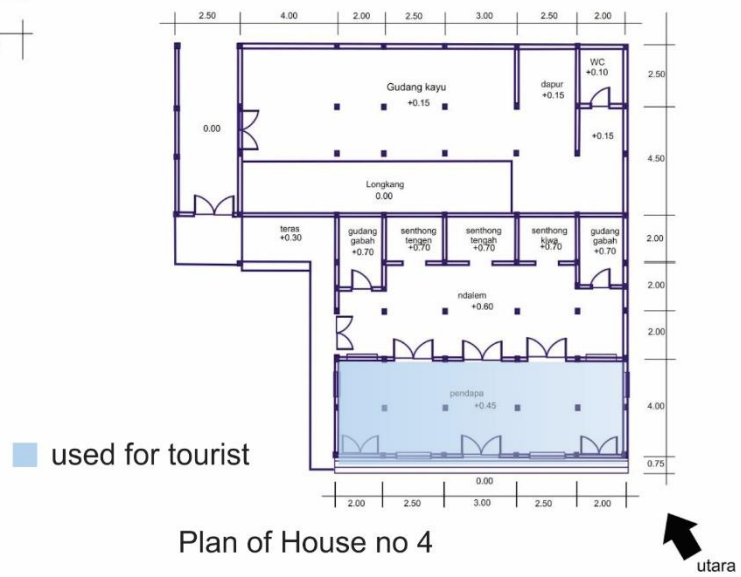
### House no 4

In this case, the location of the house was originally part of a Joglo house located in the east of the house. The original function was as an '*emper*' of the Joglo house which served as a kitchen area and a grain drying place. But then it was inherited to the son of the Joglo owner. And considering the position of the heir is the son of the Joglo owner, the form of the house cannot use the same shape of the core house (Joglo). Then the basic form of house number 4 is *limasan* which is a simpler form of house than Joglo (Figure 3).

First stage of House



Second stage of House no 4



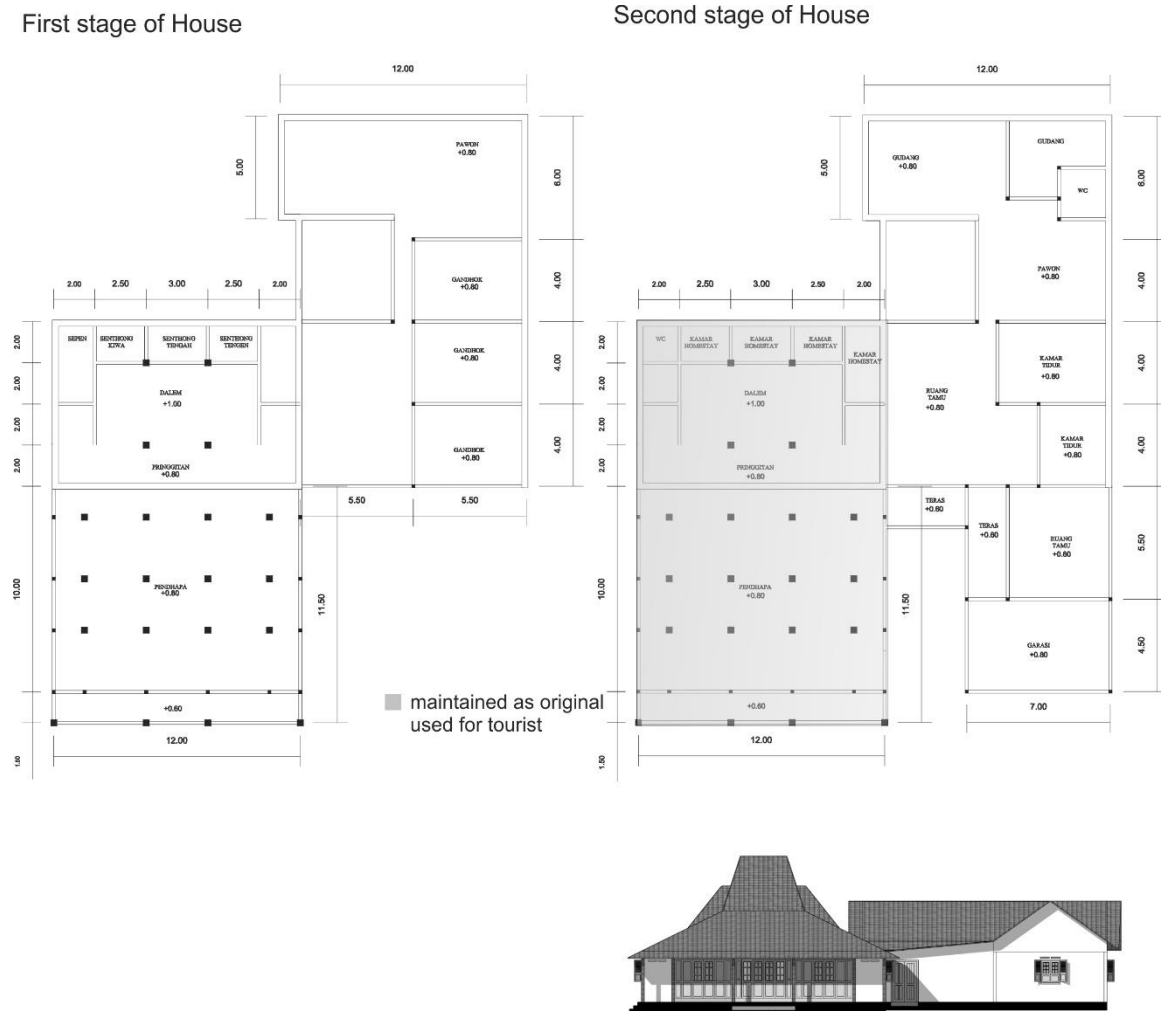
**Fig 3:** Transformation of House no. 4.  
Source: Rudwiarti, Pudianti & Vitasurya, 2016

After the heir of the house dies, the house is inherited by his wife. At this time, the role of the wife in maintaining vernacular buildings began to appear. The wife's motivation begins with her desire to maintain the original form of the house as a memory of her husband and to

respect the husband's legacy. And when Brayut village became a tourist village, she decided to participate in the tourist village by providing the front room of her house to be used as a meeting room or dance practice room. Under these conditions, the house is well maintained and remains like the original condition as it was built. The principle of preserving this husband's inheritance house is also transmitted to his children in the hope that they can also maintain the condition of the house later.

### House no 5

The case is almost the same as the house case no. 4, the current homeowner is the wife of the first heir. She lives with his grandson on the back side of the house. The shape of this house is a form of Joglo. The shape of the Joglo is used considering that when the house was built, the first owner was a '*lurah*' (village official), and so the form of the house used the highest hierarchy of the Javanese house. The high position in the community motivates the heir of the house with his family members to maintain the family's pride. The main house is maintained as before to be used for tourist purposes (meeting and homestay rooms). The side house (*gandok*) is changed as the residence of the current heir (Figure 4).



**Fig 4:** Transformation of House no. 5.  
Source: Rudwiarti, Pudianti & Vitasurya, 2016

### House No 7.

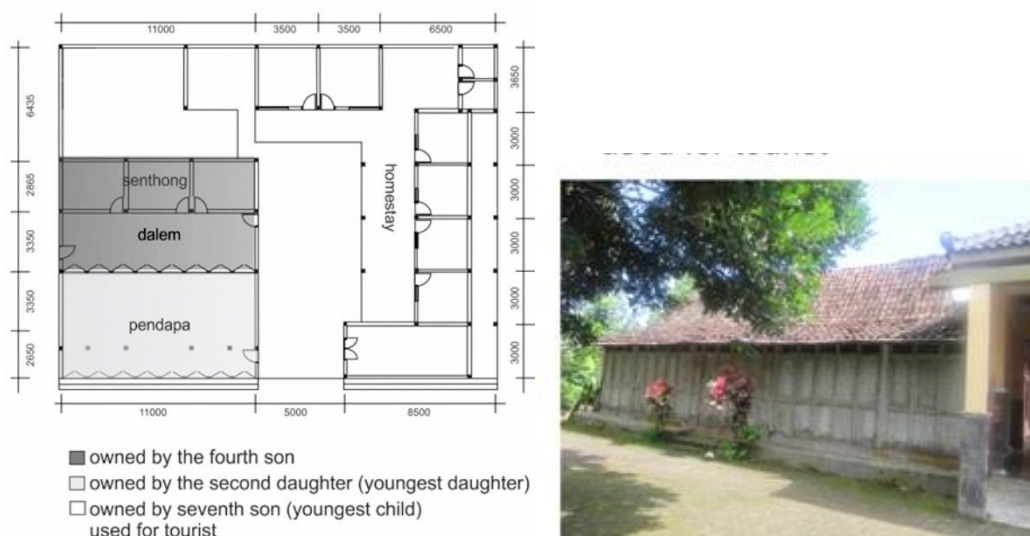
This house is a forerunner of transforming Brayut village into a tourist village. The typology of this house is *sinom* which is still very well maintained. This house is also inhabited by the wife of the heir along with her son who works as an English teacher. He often invites foreign guests to come and see closely the Brayut rural atmosphere which is still very traditional. In the next development he was the one who initiated Brayut village into a tourist village. However, his mother did not want her house to become a homestay, she only gave permission for a part of her house to be a souvenir shop. This woman takes great care of her privacy and does not want any interference with the arrival of tourists in her house, except in the shop. Even so, she and her children still keep the vernacular house that is owned as the original condition and very well maintained (Figure 5).



**Fig 5:** Transformation of House no. 7.  
Source: Survey, 2017

### House No 16

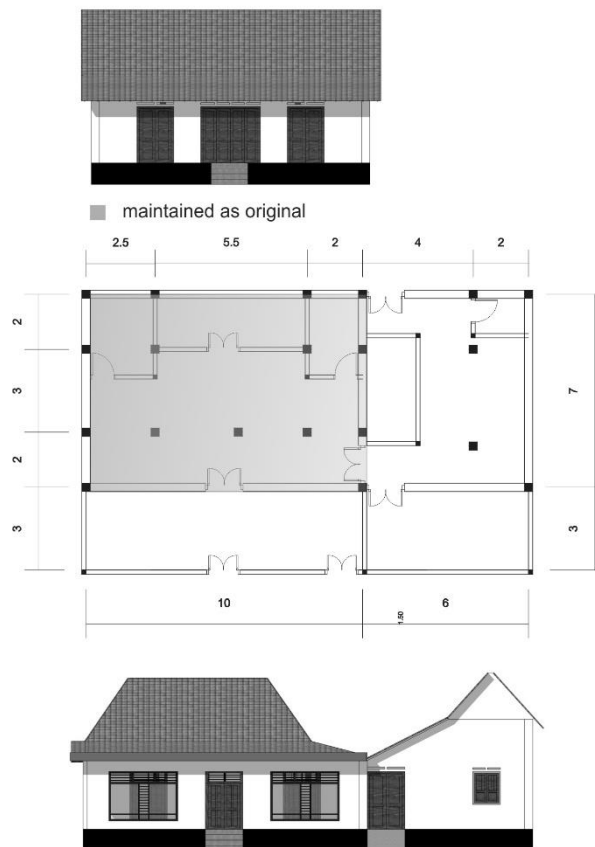
This case is very different from the three previous cases. The typology of this house is '*limasan pacul gowang*'. In this case, the second generation heirs still live here with his wife, but considering with their age, the house is treated by dividing the responsibility of maintaining the house among the three children. The '*pendapa*' is inherited to the youngest daughter, the '*dalem*' part for the fourth boy still living in Brayut, and the third part is the inheritance of the youngest boy (Figure 6). At a glance this way triggers the occurrence of conflict, but in fact it does not happen considering the Javanese have the nature of avoiding conflict (Mulder, 1996). The Javanese people is tends to care for the needs of others and the existence of women is one of the important role to balance the potential conflict.



**Fig 6:** Transformation of House no. 16.  
Source: Survey, 2017

**House No. 18**

This house is a '*limasan house of Pacul Gowang*' which is currently developed (Figure 7). The owner of this house and his wife, because of their age, currently lives with the number two daughter in the house. Their daughter is the one who has the desire to preserve the original house. She is a retired teacher who is very concerned about cultural preservation. This house is not used as a homestay because of the limitation of the space and rooms for residents. Even so she is one of the manager of the tourism village. She also encouraged the villagers to maintain their houses if it classified as vernacular houses.



**Fig 7:** Transformation of House no. 18.  
Source: Survey, 2017

**Gender Role in Transformation Vernacular Settlement**

Learning from the Brayut case, the role of women in maintaining vernacular buildings is quite powerful, and the roles are characterized by different motivations as in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The Gender Role in Vernacular Transformation

Women Role in Vernacular House	Motivation
As a wife's owners	Caring for a partner's inheritance
As a wife's owners	Maintain the pride of ancestors who have high positions in the community
As a wife's owners	Encourage children to maintain ancestral heritage
As daughter of the owner with sharing responsible of house maintenance	Become a balancing in potential conflicts
As daughter of the owner and take care of the owner (parent)	Take care of indigenous culture and family heritage

Source: Author analysis, 2018.



In contrast to what Jabeen (2014) said that the imbalance of decision making between men and women in the adaptation of houses in Dhaka, the role of women in vernacular settlements in Brayut is clearly visible. Brayut woman's role as decision makers actually aim to strengthen the position of men both as spouses or ancestors. Empowerment women are not interpreted as reducing the power of men, but instead as a complement or balancer in upholding the honour and pride of the nobility. Women act as housewives who provide educational values of life including cultural values that need to be preserved. Therefore, the knowledge of the importance of preserving vernacular buildings needs to be understood, especially by the women, so that they can be transmitted through the activities of informal education in the family.

## Conclusion

Settlements are always transformed time after times. And with the globalization of information, vernacular settlements have the potential to experience changes in accordance with the economic and social demands of the community. However, vernacular settlements have the potential to be preserved as cultural heritage that deserves to be processed into cultural tourism attractions.

The role of gender in conservation efforts in the process of transforming vernacular settlements in Brayut is in fact very important. Women as educators in the family can have a role in spreading the preservation of cultural values. But naturally Javanese women in Brayut have the motivation to maintain an ancestral heritage that can be a family pride, as well as pride as a Javanese who has distinctive values embodied in a vernacular house.

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