

Assessing the Identity of a Riparian Traditional Market through the Dimensions of Riparian Culture: The Case of 10 Ulu Market, Palembang

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Abstrak_ Pasar tradisional tepi sungai merepresentasikan budaya riparian dalam kota berbasis sungai. Namun, modernisasi berorientasi darat telah melemahkan relasi fungsional pasar–sungai sebagai sistem sosio-spasial terintegrasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan menilai identitas pasar tradisional riparian melalui dimensi budaya riparian pada kasus Pasar 10 Ulu, Palembang. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi kasus tunggal diterapkan pada kawasan pasar dan lingkungan riparian di tepian Sungai Aur yang terhubung dengan Sungai Musi. Kerangka analisis meliputi tiga dimensi: memori kolektif, identitas fisik, dan aktivitas sosial. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi temporal (pagi, siang, sore; hari kerja dan akhir pekan; pasang–surut), pemetaan spasial, wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap 12 informan, serta dokumentasi visual. Sebanyak 60 unit perdagangan aktif dipetakan untuk menganalisis distribusi dan orientasi aktivitas ekonomi. Analisis tematik-deduktif mengklasifikasikan temuan ke dalam spektrum kontinuitas, transformasi, atau disrupsi, dengan validasi triangulasi metode, sumber, dan waktu. Hasil menunjukkan fragmentasi pada ketiga dimensi. Memori kolektif masih bertahan dalam narasi pedagang lama, tetapi tidak lagi berproduksi secara spasial. Secara morfologi, pasar bergeser dari konfigurasi linear berorientasi dermaga menjadi tata ruang berorientasi darat yang memutus relasi dermaga, los dan ruang publik dan sirkulasi tepi sungai. Ketahanan identitas pasar riparian memerlukan rekonstruksi relasi fungsional pasar dan sungai, bukan sekadar revitalisasi fisik.

Kata kunci : Budaya Riparian; Pasar Tradisional 10 Ulu; Arsitektur Riparian

Abstract_ Traditional riparian markets are key expressions of riparian culture in river-based cities. However, land-oriented modernization has weakened the functional relationship between markets and rivers as integrated socio-spatial systems. This study examines the identity of a traditional riparian market through three dimensions: collective memory, physical identity, and social activity, using Pasar 10 Ulu in Palembang as a case study. A qualitative single-case approach was applied to the market and its riparian environment along the Aur River, connected to the Musi River. Data were collected through temporal observations, spatial mapping, semi-structured interviews with 12 informants, and visual documentation. Sixty active trading units were mapped to analyze spatial distribution and economic orientation. Thematic-deductive analysis classified findings into continuity, transformation, or disruption, validated via triangulation of methods, sources, and time. Results reveal fragmentation across all dimensions. Collective memory persists in long-standing traders' narratives but is no longer spatially expressed. Morphologically, the market has shifted from a dock-oriented linear layout to a land-oriented configuration, disrupting dock stall public space relations and riverside circulation. Strengthening riparian market identity requires reconstructing the functional market river relationship rather than relying solely on physical revitalization.

Keywords: Riparian Culture; 10 Ulu Riparian Market; Riparian Architecture

INTRODUCTION

Rivers function as generators of water-based urban architectural configurations, as the collective interaction between communities and fluvial ecosystems shapes a sustained social construction of space (Kumar, 2025). Within this context, riparian culture develops as a socio-spatial system that regulates spatial relationships, building orientation, and structural adaptation to tidal dynamics (Wicaksono, 2019). Such configurations represent processes of cultural reproduction that produce urban morphology through the articulation of water-based spatial meanings (Daniel et al., 2012; Alley, 2012).

However, modern urban transformation has progressively shifted spatial orientation from fluvial systems toward land-based infrastructure, resulting in the disruption of river-oriented spatial logic. This shift has triggered morphological reconfiguration and fragmentation of architectural identity in waterfront areas. The tension between riparian systems and land-based urbanization has therefore become a central conceptual issue in contemporary river-city architectural studies.

Palembang represents a river city in Southeast Asia whose architectural configuration has historically been constructed through evolving spatial relationships between settlements and the Musi River (Agumsari et al., 2020). Adaptation to tidal dynamics produced typologies such as stilt houses, floating houses, docking structures, and floating trade facilities as symbolic representations of riparian culture (Oktarini, 2018). These architectural forms are rooted in river-based spatial logic, which shapes the city's morphological identity (Hein et al., 2024).

The typology of riparian markets in Palembang evolved through the transformation of water-based trading activities into semi-permanent spatial structures (Melisa, 2012). Collective interaction within floating trade systems generated economic nodes that were subsequently articulated as river-oriented market configurations (Anggarini et al., 2020; Ngo, 2021). In 10 Ulu Market, the spatial relationship among kiosks, loading circulation routes, and the water body historically formed an architectural identity representing the reproduction of riparian culture.

Since the colonial period, the development of land-based infrastructure has shifted the spatial orientation of trade from river networks to road systems (Lubis et al., 2017). This infrastructure gradually replaced water access as the primary distribution structure, disrupting the spatial relationship between markets and the fluvial system. Consequently, the architectural identity previously articulated through river orientation became fragmented (Wicaksono et al., 2022).

The recent revitalization of 10 Ulu Market has focused primarily on physical upgrading and building standardization without integrating riparian spatial logic as the basis for architectural transformation. This approach reproduces a conventional land-based market model while overlooking the river-based social construction of space. Such conditions reveal a gap between contemporary design practice and the socio-spatial system that historically shaped the market's identity.

In architectural scholarship, studies of traditional markets often emphasize functional and economic aspects, while research on riparian culture is frequently limited to descriptive anthropological accounts. This separation constrains the integration of cultural meaning into architectural and morphological parameters. Consequently, there remains a lack of analytical approaches that assess riparian traditional market identity as a socio-spatial system one that can be examined through observable dimensions of riparian culture and linked to architectural transformation processes (Lira & Moura, 2024).

This study addresses this gap by assessing the identity of a riparian traditional market through the dimensions of riparian culture, using 10 Ulu Market in Palembang as a single-case study.

The analytical framework adopts Adler and Guerci's concept of riverine architecture, which conceptualizes riparian identity through three interrelated dimensions: collective memory, physical identity, and social activities. Through this framework, riparian culture is positioned not merely as a background context, but as a spatial production system that shapes market orientation, circulation structures, and the functional relationship between market and river.

The contribution of this research lies in developing an analytical model that links riparian cultural transformation to changes in market typological configuration and identity conditions. By demonstrating how the disconnection of collective memory, physical identity, and social activities produces fragmented riparian identity, this study extends the discourse on market revitalization beyond physical intervention toward the reconstruction of fluvial socio-spatial logic. More broadly, the proposed approach offers an assessment model that may be applied to other river cities in Southeast Asia and comparable riparian urban contexts globally.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single case study strategy focused on 10 Ulu Market, located in 10 Ulu Subdistrict, Seberang Ulu I District, Palembang. The study area is limited to the market complex and its riparian environment along the Aur River, a tributary connected to the Musi River system. The delineated area includes the main market building, open stalls, river access points, distribution routes, and transitional spaces connecting the market to adjacent residential areas.

The analytical framework is based on the concept of riverine architecture proposed by Adler and Guerci (2016), which conceptualizes riparian identity as the result of the interaction among three principal dimensions: collective memory, physical identity, and social activities. To ensure analytical consistency and avoid normative interpretation, these dimensions were operationalized into specific parameters and observable indicators that guided the development of observation instruments, semi-structured interview protocols, and field documentation procedures (Table 1).

Data were collected through direct observation, spatial mapping, interviews, and visual documentation. Observations were conducted at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, and evening), on both weekdays and weekends, and during tidal variations to capture the dynamic nature of market activities. The observation focused on building orientation toward the river and road network, spatial configuration of trading areas, distribution routes (water-based and land-based), intensity of social interaction, and the spatial connectivity between the market and the river.

A comprehensive spatial mapping was carried out to document all active trading units within the study area, identifying 60 traders as the observation population. This dataset was used to analyze spatial distribution patterns, building orientation tendencies, and prevailing economic distribution systems.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 purposively selected informants, including long-term traders (more than 15 years of operation), second-generation traders, the market manager, and nearby residents. The interviews explored the historical formation of the market, lived experiences of river interaction, and perceptions of shifts in market orientation.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic-deductive approach by classifying findings according to the three analytical dimensions. Interpretation was performed comparatively to

examine the degree of continuity or change in the market–river relationship. Research validity was ensured through triangulation of methods, data sources, and temporal variation in observations.

Table 1. Operationalization of Riparian Identity Dimensions

Analytical Dimension	Parameter	Operational Indicators	Data Source
Collective Memory	Reproduction of riparian practices	Continuity of water-based distribution; traders' direct experience; intergenerational transmission	Interviews
	Spatial support for practice	Presence of docking facilities; direct access to the river	Observation & Documentation
Physical Identity	Spatial orientation	Building orientation toward river/road; percentage of river-oriented structures	Spatial Mapping
	River-edge configuration	Degree of riverbank openness; presence of transitional spaces	Observation
Social Activities	Intensity of river-related activities	Frequency of water-based economic activities	Observation
	Social interaction patterns	Community activities in river-edge spaces	Observation & Interviews

Sumber : Author (2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Located in the *Ulu* area along the Musi River, the 10 Ulu Market is situated within the 9–10 Ulu neighborhood. It is positioned on KH. Azhari Street in the 10 Ulu district, directly across from the 16 Ilir Market, is recognized as the oldest trading center in Palembang City.



Figure 1. Market Location
Source: Google Earth (2025)

The 10 Ulu Market remains one of the preferred markets for the people of Palembang, particularly for residents of the 9/10 Ulu area, to fulfill their daily needs. The market occupies a land area of approximately 6,332 square meters. Like most traditional markets, it features open stalls (*los*) and permanent kiosks, offering a wide range of goods such as staple foods, household items, vegetables, meat, and other daily necessities.



Figure 2. Market Activities at 10 Ulu Market
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

The market is located within a multiethnic neighborhood, surrounded by Chinese, Arab, and local settlements that have remained active and culturally vibrant to this day.



Figure 3. Multiethnic Buildings Surrounding the Market Area
Source: Author Documentation (2025)

The identity of 10 Ulu Market as a traditional riparian market has historically been shaped by its direct adjacency to the Aur River, a tributary of the Musi River. In its early phase, the river functioned as the primary distribution corridor and social interaction space, embedding riparian characteristics within the market's spatial configuration and economic system. However, current empirical findings indicate a substantial transformation in this relationship. Spatial analysis shows that 0% of market buildings are oriented toward the river, while 100% of the river edge is physically enclosed, eliminating transitional spaces between trading areas and the waterfront. Furthermore, river-based distribution and trading activities are no longer regularly practiced.

These conditions suggest that the riparian identity of 10 Ulu Market can no longer be understood as an actively reproduced spatial system. Instead, it exists in a transformed condition in which historical references to the river persist, while operational and spatial connections have significantly weakened. To examine this transformation systematically, the following discussion analyzes the market's riparian identity through three interrelated dimensions: collective memory, physical identity, and social activities.



Figure 4. The Eastern Side of the Market Directly Borders the Aur River
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

Beyond functioning as a traditional waterway for the transport of goods and people, the Aur River has significantly influenced the spatial organization and architectural orientation of the market. This close interaction between commerce and the aquatic environment reinforces 10 Ulu Market's identity as a river-based socio-economic node distinguishing it from conventional land-based markets.



Figure 5. Boat Activities on the Aur River
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

Collective memory, within the riverine architecture framework, riparian identity is determined by the continuity of spatial practices and sustained operational relations with the river. Interviews with 12 informants indicate that, during its early phase, the river functioned as both the primary distribution corridor and a space of social interaction. Four long-term traders (>15 years) confirmed this role; three reported direct experience with water-based loading and unloading activities, while one acquired such knowledge through intergenerational transmission. Second-generation traders, nearby residents, and the market manager largely reconstruct the river's former role through historical narratives and accounts of the subsequent shift toward land-based distribution systems.



Figure 6. Boats Used By The Local Community During High Tide
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

Field observations and spatial documentation indicate that the physical mechanisms supporting this function are no longer present. No permanent docking facilities were identified, nor is there direct access from the trading areas to the river. Market activities are now predominantly oriented toward the land-based road network.



Figure 7. The Wall on the Side of the Market Facing the River
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

These findings indicate a shift from an identity reproduced through recurrent spatial practices to one maintained symbolically. The river remains a collective reference point in terms of meaning and origin, yet it no longer operates as an active medium within the market's economic system.

Table 2. Results of the Collective Memory Analysis

Analytical Parameter	Key Empirical Findings	Implications for Riparian Identity
Market formation history	In its early phase, the river functioned as the primary distribution corridor and social space, as confirmed by long-term traders and intergenerational narratives	Early identity was reproduced through direct spatial practices
Traders' collective memory	The senior generation possesses direct experiential knowledge, whereas subsequent generations rely on narrative transmission	The mechanism of memory reproduction has shifted from practice-based to narrative-based forms
Symbolic meaning of space	Infrastructure such as docking facilities and river-oriented spatial configurations are no longer present; activities are oriented toward land-based networks	Riparian identity persists symbolically rather than operationally

Source : Author (2026)

Physical Identity, referring to Adler and Guerri (2016), physical identity is understood as a spatial and architectural expression formed through functional and symbolic relationships between communities and the riparian environment. In Pasar 10 Ulu, the historical physical identity evolved from the orientation of buildings toward the river, the presence of stilt houses and floating structures, and circulation systems that relied on waterways as the primary spatial framework. Field findings indicate that this physical identity has undergone structural disruption due to the dominance of land-based development.



Figure 8. The Market Fence That Separates the River From the Market Area
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

Quantitatively, spatial mapping reveals that 0% of market stalls and kiosks are oriented toward the Aur River, while 100% of the river edge is enclosed by fences and boundary walls. This condition eliminates visual legibility and physical access between the market and the river, effectively transforming the river into an isolated backside space. Furthermore, approximately 85% of existing buildings surrounding the market are now oriented toward the roadway, reinforcing a morphological shift from a riparian spatial system to a linear, land-based configuration.



Figure 9. The Promenade Area is Poorly Maintained and Dirty
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

Riparian physical identity has also deteriorated through the loss of transitional spaces. Observations show that more than 70% of intermediary spatial elements such as terraces, small docks, and semi-public waterfront spaces have disappeared or no longer function. These spaces have been replaced by a linear promenade that theoretically holds social potential, yet remains largely inactive in practice due to the absence of basic supporting facilities. Only about 20% of promenade segments are used incidentally by residents, primarily during morning and late afternoon hours.



Figure 10. Houses that Still Face the River
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

These findings suggest that the physical identity of 10 Ulu Markets is fragmented. Although the market remains geographically embedded within a riparian setting, it no longer expresses riparian spatial logic in its current configuration. This condition is consistent with studies of riparian markets in Southeast Asia—such as those in Bangkok and Phnom Penh where the disconnection of building orientation from the river has diminished the river’s role as a primary spatial structure (Sriwichien et al., 2014). However, the degree of physical disconnection observed in 10 Ulu Market appears more severe, due to the combined effects of continuous fencing, land-facing building orientation, and the absence of vertical access to the water.

Based on this analysis, the market’s physical riparian identity can be categorized into three conditions: a lost historical identity, a dominant disconnected identity, and a residual identity reflected in remaining spatial traces and the latent potential of waterfront spaces that have yet to be reactivated.

Table 3. Categorization of the Physical Identity of Pasar 10 Ulu

Physical Identity Element	Percentage / Condition	Spatial Orientation	Current Status	Identity Category
River-oriented stalls/kiosks	0%	River	Non-existent	Lost identity
Road-oriented buildings	±85%	Land-based	Dominant	Disconnected identity
Open river edge without fencing	0%	River	Non-existent	Lost identity
Fenced/walled river edge	100%	River (blocked)	Dominant	Spatial fragmentation
Riparian transitional spaces (terraces, small docks)	<30% remaining	Semi-public	Non-functional	Residual identity
Actively used promenade segments	±20% of segments	Riverine	Sporadic	Adaptive potential

Source: Author (2026)

Social Activities, within the framework proposed by Adler and Guerri (2016), social activities are understood as socio-cultural practices that reproduce spatial meaning through routine interactions between communities and the riparian environment. In the context of Pasar 10 Ulu, field findings reveal a clear shift in the orientation of everyday activities from a river-based system toward a land-based system. Based on spatial mapping of 60 active trading units, no traders were found to use boats as their primary mode of distribution. A total of 42 out of 60 units (70%) are oriented toward roadside corridors, indicating the dominance of a land-access configuration that prioritizes road-based accessibility.



Figure 11. The Community Prefers to Conduct Trading Activities Along the Roadside.
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

Interview findings from 12 purposively selected informants including long-established traders, second-generation traders, market management representatives, and nearby residents further reinforce this pattern. Only three informants (3 of 12) reported maintaining regular interaction with the river, primarily during high-tide conditions. This proportion is not intended as statistical generalization, but rather as an indication of the limited degree of direct engagement between key social actors and the river space in everyday practice.

River-based trading activities which historically defined riparian marketplaces are now virtually absent as an active distribution system. The river no longer functions as a primary economic interface, but instead occupies a marginal position within the market's activity structure. Nevertheless, residual practices remain observable. Field observations indicate that some nearby residents sporadically use the river edge for non-economic activities such as washing, swimming, or passive recreation during morning and late afternoon hours. However, low spatial quality—marked by the absence of seating, stepped water access, and basic sanitation facilities restricts the capacity of the riverfront to function as a sustainable arena for social interaction.



Figure 12. Community Activities Along the Promenade and The Use of Boats During High Tide
Source: Author Documentation (2022)

These conditions suggest that river-based social activities have not entirely disappeared, but instead persist in a fragile adaptive phase due to limited spatial support. The transformation observed, therefore, represents not merely an economic reorientation, but a deeper shift in the socio-spatial relationship between the market and its riparian landscape.

Table 4. Categorization of Riparian Social Activities in Pasar 10 Ulu

Type of Social Activity	Empirical Basis	Spatial Orientation	Activity Condition	Social Status
River-based trading activities	Not identified in 60 mapped units	River	Inactive	Lost activity
Road-/market-oriented trading	42 of 60 mapped units	Land-based	Dominant	Shifted activity
Tide-dependent river interaction (bathing, washing, small boats)	Reported by 3 of 12 informants; sporadic observation	River	Occasional	Residual activity
Use of promenade for passive recreation	Observed among nearby residents	Riverine	Low intensity	Adaptive activity
Collective social gatherings	Rarely reported; not structurally accommodated	Riverine	Nearly absent	Disconnected activity

Source : Author (2026)

The analysis indicates that the Ulu's riparian identity of Pasar 10 has weakened due to the disconnection of structural relationships among collective memory, physical identity, and social activities. Although memories of the market's relationship with the river persist among senior traders, these memories are no longer spatially reproduced, as the market's orientation has predominantly shifted toward a land-based system. The enclosure of the river edge and the disappearance of transitional spaces between the market and the water body function as spatial barriers that interrupt functional interactions between market activities and the river, resulting in water-based practices surviving only in sporadic and limited forms.

Empirically, this condition is characterized by several key indicators: (1) the absence of river-based trading as an active distribution system; (2) the dominance of spatial configurations oriented toward roadside corridors; (3) limited public access and physical connectivity to the riverfront; and (4) the persistence of collective memory of the river without corresponding spatial structures or relevant economic activities to sustain it. These indicators reflect a residual configuration of riparian identity, defined as a condition in which memory, space, and activity no longer operate as an integrated and mutually reinforcing system.

Accordingly, efforts to strengthen the identity of traditional riparian markets cannot rely solely on aesthetic improvements to the waterfront area. Instead, strategic interventions must focus on restoring the functional and spatial linkages between the market structure and the river as an integrated socio-ecological system.

Table 5. Planning Strategies Based on Key Findings

Key Findings Aspect	Structural Issues	Planning Strategies
Collective Memory	Intergenerational discontinuity in memory reproduction	Reactivation of river spaces as everyday activity areas (small docks, light loading/unloading zones, storytelling spaces and local history nodes)
Physical Identity	Market orientation fully shifted toward land-based systems	Partial reorientation of selected stalls toward the river; restoration of visual openness and physical access at strategic segments
Transitional Spaces	Loss of intermediary spaces between the market and the river	Reconstruction of riparian terraces, water staircases, and flexible semi-public platforms
Social Activities	River-based activities reduced to residual and sporadic practices	Activation of small-scale water-based socio-economic functions (local boats, temporary floating food stalls, daily river-related activities)
Activity System	Single dominance of land-based circulation and activities	Integration of land-water circulation systems (dual-access market points, micro-scale water routes)

Key Findings Aspect	Structural Issues	Planning Strategies
Riparian Ecology	River functioning as a degraded backside space	Riparian edge restoration through vegetation-based treatments, natural filtration systems, and socially integrated use

Source : Author (2026)

CONCLUSION

This study addresses the question of how the riparian socio-spatial system shapes the architectural typology of a riparian market and how its transformation affects the identity riparian of Pasar 10 Ulu. The findings demonstrate that riparian identity is not determined by mere geographical proximity to the river, but by the continuity of operational and spatial relationships among collective memory, physical configuration, and social practices. When land-oriented modernization disrupts these relationships, identity does not entirely disappear; rather, it shifts from a system reproduced through spatial practices into a symbolic and narrative condition.

Conceptually, this study refines the framework of riparian architecture by positioning identity riparian as a spectrum of transformation dependent on the capacity of space to reproduce river-based practices. In this regard, functional relationships with the river emerge as the primary indicator for evaluating the sustainability of riparian architecture, rather than the mere presence of physical elements or waterfront imagery.

Architecturally, the findings suggest that the revitalization of riparian markets must extend beyond physical upgrading. Design strategies should reconstruct fluvial logic by restoring spatial and functional connectivity with the river, thereby enabling the continued reproduction of riparian socio-economic practices. The study contributes a refined analytical model that positions riparian culture as both a generator of architectural typology and a mechanism of identity riparian, offering theoretical relevance for river cities in Southeast Asia and broader global waterfront contexts.

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