

# Ideological Criticism of the Realization of the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia: Rethinking the Importance of Preserving Ancient Manuscripts

Ilham Ibnul Hakim<sup>1\*</sup>, and Nur Fauzan Ahmad<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang 50274, Indonesia

**Abstract.** Ontologically, interpreting a limited heritage city as a natural object is not appropriate. It is also an adaptive and ideational system structure in reality as a cultural entity. The results of previous studies provide an implicit explanation for the erroneous paradox about heritage cities from stakeholders. The realization of the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia reveals policies that fall too deeply on positivistic epistemology, in addition to the lack of accommodating interpretive epistemology, as was the case in Lasem. As a result, the orientation of the program is too concerned with things of a technical nature and becomes inclined to rigid towards the effort of understanding (*verstehen*) social phenomena, looking for concepts by grounded, and categorizing. The uniqueness or *einmalig* of the importance of preserving ancient manuscripts fails to be captured carefully. The paradigm—viewed from a philological perspective—that saving the physicality of the manuscript means also saving the invaluable wealth of civilization contained in the text needs to be rethought. With the principle of emancipatory and participatory, in order to increase critical awareness for the freedom of society, this research was compiled as a ideological critique of Jurgen Habermas-style with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. The results of the research are expected to encourage the formation of new awareness behind the making of related policies in the future.

## 1 Introduction

Some humanities academics in Indonesia place philology with great prestige as *l'étalage de savoir* or science exhibition. This seems coherent with the definition embedded on it as mentioned by Fathurahman [1] that “Philology is about reading manuscripts”. So, how to understand the connection between reading manuscripts and science exhibitions, in a sense, what can actually be read from—or contained in—ancient manuscripts? At first we can understand that ancient manuscripts in the present context have been transformed into so-called “rare manuscripts”, which are entities that UNESCO in the *Culture for Development Indicators* confirmed as cultural property. It is a valuable asset in which is stored an

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\* Corresponding author: [ilhamalhakim179h@gmail.com](mailto:ilhamalhakim179h@gmail.com)

abundance of wealth of the values of past civilizations that have the potential to be developed for the welfare of mankind in the present and future. But unfortunately, the existence of ancient manuscripts and the intensive attention to them are only able to be realized by a few circles such as philologists and librarians. This kind of situation is not ideal given that the text written in ancient manuscripts containing various information, thoughts, knowledge, history, customs, as well as the behavior of the past society needs to be revealed as soon as possible before it disappears along with the disappearance of the physical elements of the manuscript due to age. Even more unfortunate, this issue is not very much understood essentially by stakeholders in Indonesia in realizing cultural heritage-based development.

The realization of the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia, which was first initiated in 2012, has made a number of meaningful critical notes from several circles. Despite the image of a great contribution to the preservation of certain sectors of the object of cultural heritage, a kind of conceptual-basic defect was found within the ideological structure of its policy according to certain cases. A number of strategic agendas that should have been launched to build an ecosystem of heritage cities that are responsive to cultural issues have failed to be included in the implementation roadmap. Preservation of ancient manuscripts is one of the agendas that is interpreted as "failing". The author had the opportunity to conduct a field study at one of the P3KP target locations, namely Lasem in Central Java. Along with the work on the project of digitizing ancient manuscripts in the collection of the Baiturrahman *Jami'* Mosque Library, Lasem—one of the sub-locations targeted by P3KP—by several researchers affiliated with Diponegoro University, the author tried to dig up information and then found data that the parties involved in the program were not sufficiently aware that the preservation of ancient manuscripts was urgent to be implemented. Seeing that the arrangement and preservation of the ancient manuscript sector was not paid much attention in addition to the very intensification of this program in the historical building sector, the author was interested in elaborating these findings in order to obtain new findings to develop data. Elaboration through literature studies revealed the findings that what happened in the Lasem case—as mentioned above—also happened in a number of other P3KP target locations in various parts of Indonesia. Based on the data obtained, by utilizing the theory of ideological criticism of Jurgen Habermas, it can be mapped in more detail and then scientifically criticized the problem of 'rethinking the importance of preserving ancient manuscripts in the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia'.

Habermas' theory of Ideological Criticism departs from the view that science is not value-free and aims at emancipation, liberating, and empowering. Knowledge is not merely a reflection on the static world "out there". Thus, Ideological Criticism takes a position opposite to Positivism which says that science must explain the natural laws of society. Adherents of the Habermas understanding believe that society is characterized by historicity (constantly undergoing change). Thus, the main criticism launched with the epistemology of this theory is generally almost similar to the Interpretive paradigm. Social reality is seen as the result of a complex, never neutral, and subjective construction of (ideological) interests. Therefore, the scientist must take sides and not just allow himself to be confined by the comfort zone. For the perpetrators of his criticism, this kind of view is not a scientific view, but an ideology. Deepening is carried out on a problem as an effort to understand society. The society of the future can be created by intensive social and political action. The role of Ideological Criticism is political, since this theory participates in driving change. The results of the deepening are then compiled to facilitate problem mapping, not to explain (verify) or understand (*verstehen*) [2].

## 2 Methodology

The primary method used in this study is Participacy Action Research (PAR). The issue of 'reconsidering the importance of preserving ancient manuscripts in the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia' mapped and scientifically criticized, will be compiled into two sub-chapters results and discussions. In this case, the research data is accumulated from various findings obtained through several procedures. First, a field study in one of the P3KP target locations, namely Lasem in Central Java through (1) limited communication with one of the stakeholders, namely Mr. Abdullah Hamid as the manager of cultural heritage objects at the Baiturrahman *Jami'* Mosque; and (2) the interpretation of researchers with deep thinking efforts according to the sense of realities towards the progress of P3KP realization. Second, literature studies through scientific articles to (1) develop data; and (2) corroborate findings from field studies. With the results of typical meaning, the ancient manuscripts in this study are reviewed according to the perspective of philology and its urgency as a cultural property that UNESCO confirmed in the *Culture for Development Indicators*.

## 3 Result and discussion

### 3.1 Mapping of the Rethinking the Importance of Preserving Ancient Manuscripts in the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia

In 2012, the Directorate General of Spatial Planning, under the auspices of the Ministry of Agrarian affairs and Spatial Planning, which was previously part of the Ministry of Public Works took the initiative to foster the preservation of cultural heritage cities by establishing a Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program or P3KP. The program is to facilitate capacity building of local governments in managing their heritage assets. During the course of the course, cities are facilitated to identify their heritage assets and are accommodated in planning as a Heritage City Action Plan (RAKP) [3].

There are at least four legal instruments that underlie the implementation of P3KP, namely RI Law No. 28 of 2002 concerning Buildings, RI Law No. 27 of 2007 concerning Spatial Planning, RI Law No. 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management, and RI Law No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage. However, even though it has an adequate foundation, the framework for structuring and preserving cultural heritage cities in Indonesia has not actually been explicitly and systematically regulated. That's what's reflected in what happened in Lasem. In their research on the evaluation of conservation policies, Anggraenie and Setyono [4] drew an important conclusion that the realization of P3KP in Lasem was not supported by mature policies. The research, involving respondents across all walks of life, including academics and some stakeholders from district- and provincial-level institutions, presented the finding that the conservation policies that played the most of a role—though not to call them perfect—were those applicable at the national level. Meanwhile, at the district level, there has been no intensive role from the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office regarding technical handling, as low as the zero attention from the Regional Government regarding city conservation regulations, both for Lasem in particular and Rembang Regency in general. On the other hand, it is very unfortunate that until the time the research was made there was no contributive policy substance at the Central Java Province level regarding urban conservation. The starting point of the problem that the relevant researchers then considered the main determining factor was

the lack of coordination and understanding among stakeholders across villages, sub-districts, districts, provinces, and centers.

To see the relevance of Anggraenie and Setyono's [4] research to this study, it is worth questioning, why ideologically there is a tendency of a kind of primordialization of—which at the same time narrows the perspective on—the historical building sector in highlighting the inadmissibility of conservation policies in Lasem? Not intending to appeal to the assumption that “it is the one that does not really need to be considered”, why is the exploration of other cultural heritage sectors—which are important to be placed in a balanced manner in the formulation of the ideal policy concept—not done? In fact, The Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage has implicitly mandated that we need to see the cultural heritage sectors as a whole, including Cultural Heritage Objects, Cultural Heritage Buildings, Cultural Heritage Structures, Cultural Heritage Sites, and Cultural Heritage Areas. If examined, it turns out that this situation is parallel to the formulation of the heritage city framework in the P3KP concept in Indonesia, as elaborated by Hariyawan [3], namely the need to protect and maintain parts of the city in which there are cultural reserves, including areas and / or buildings that have cultural heritage value for the city. But what needs to be underlined in this issue is the proposition of ideological emphasis with the intermediary of the diction of ‘areas and/or buildings’.

It is important to ascertain whether we have adequately understood the concept of cultural heritage, for example by looking back at Article 23 of the *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies* (1982): “The cultural heritage of a people includes the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It includes both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries.” On that basis, and in order to carry out the mandate of the constitution, all forms of cultural heritage-based development in Indonesia should prioritize equality in the fulfillment of the right to structuring and preservation of each cultural heritage sector, and not one-sidedly prioritize certain sectors only.

It is worth realizing that the arrangement and preservation of cultural heritage is not just a matter of rebuilding old buildings that collapsed, restoring, or even just making them look beautiful to the eye. It is undeniable that aesthetics are important, especially those related to economic benefits if you look at it from the perspective of Sustainable Development (SDGs). However, as said by Anaya (No Year Caption) in his interpretation of the points of the *Mexico City Declaration*, development (necessary) is understood as something more than just incorporating economic property. So in this context, agendas such as the preservation of ancient manuscripts, are also significantly considered, so that the essential objectives of P3KP in building a progressive and relevant cultural heritage ecosystem in answering cultural issues can be truly achieved.

While working on the project of digitizing the ancient manuscripts of the Baiturrahman *Jami* Mosque Library collection, the author was concerned, not only because he saw the condition of the manuscripts that had been damaged and abandoned, but also to pay attention to the preservation efforts that were never enshrined in the P3KP roadmap.

**Table 1.** List of ancient manuscripts of the Baiturrahman *Jami'* Mosque Library collection

No.	Title or types of ancient manuscripts	Number of collections
1	<i>Tafsīr al-Jalālain</i>	2
2	<i>Faiḍ al-Rahmān</i>	1
3	<i>Muṣḥaf al-Qurān</i>	2
4	Ancient santri records	1
5	The book of sufism	2
6	<i>Al-Burdah</i>	1
7	A collection of mystical verses and prayers	1
8	<i>Faṭḥ al-Mu'īn</i>	1
9	<i>Faṭḥ al-Wahhāb</i>	1
10	The book of Islamic jurisprudence	1
11	Unidentified	1
<b>Total number of collection</b>		14

Actually, fourteen collections of ancient manuscripts have been stored in a building that will later stand as The Islam Nusantara Museum. However, according to information obtained from limited communication with Mr. Abdullah Hamid as the manager of cultural heritage objects in the region, there is no guarantee from any party that proper preservation of the standard will be carried out. This situation feels increasingly unpleasant because the primordialism of the historic building sector in the P3KP in Lasem—as alluded to in advance—has indirectly created an uncondusive situation in the heritage ecosystem.



**Fig. 1.** Researchers are identifying manuscripts

What happened in Lasem, it turned out, also happened to other P3KP target locations in various parts of Indonesia. Here is the data:

**Table 2.** List of P3KP target locations in various parts of Indonesia with analysis of their policies

No.	Sources	Target Location	Policy Analysis
1	Surur (2013)	Palopo, South Sulawesi	Did not enforce the preservation of ancient manuscripts
2	Purwantiasning and Kemas Ridwan Kurniawan (2017)	Parakan, Central Java	Did not enforce the preservation of ancient manuscripts
3	Pratama and Nia Suryani (2020)	Sawahlunto, West Sumatra	Did not enforce the preservation of ancient manuscripts
4	Yanti, et al. (2018)	Gampong Pande, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam	Did not enforce the preservation of ancient manuscripts
5	Krisnugrahanto (2019)	Surakarta, Central Java	Did not enforce the preservation of ancient manuscripts

### 3.2 Critics of the Rethinking the Importance of Preserving Ancient Manuscripts in the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia

There are two possibilities that occur when the ideological structure of the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) policy in Indonesia becomes considered conceptually flawed. First, the Heritage Impact Assessment instrument used to decide whether a Heritage Area Design Process can continue or not, failed to be carefully compiled. Secondly, the realization is forced to take place immediately even though the conceptual framework is not yet mature. The factors that determine the occurrence of one of the two can be numerous. However, the author will limit the “prime mover” to cultural discourse.

At first, we can understand first, who are the stakeholders who play the most role in the realization of P3KP in Indonesia (to understand the problem from its base)? In the context of Lasem, it is clear that the conservation policies that play the most role in the program are those that apply at the national level. Regardless of the fact that provincial, district, sub-district, and village governments are tieredly involved and/or—in their capacity—involve others, it is the central government that remains the central actor holding the strategic policy power, in a sense, they are the ones who are most responsible. In line, Hariyawan [3] in his writing also legitimized that P3KP is a program initiated and fostered directly by the central government. Thus, we begin to be able to measurably criticize the problem of the failure of the preservation of ancient manuscripts by looking at the context of the ‘national’ space.

One of the paradigms that develops in the realization of P3KP is that the historical building sector is very important as an object of arrangement and preservation. This has at once put other sectors such as ancient manuscripts into “the non-potential” and even “not understood”. Then why did it happen? Subjectively, this can happen if stakeholders in formulating policies have taken a certain position to interpret the epistemology of ‘heritage cities’. To see the step of taking that position, we can place the subject's behavior pattern as a “sign system”—in the capacity of cultural behavior—in order to identify the prevailing customs and the way of life held by them. In this case, there is a tendency that it reads that heritage cities are ideationally interpreted as entities of natural objects. That is why, the orientation of the program seems to be very concerned with things that are technical in nature and becomes inclined to be rigid towards efforts to understand (*verstehen*) social phenomena, look for concepts by being grounded, and categorizing. The idea that was realized and later became prominent as the core of this program was how to improve the shape, restore function, and beautify the visual elements of cultural heritage objects such as mosques, highways, ancient buildings, parks, squares, shopping centers, and batik industrial areas. This

kind of rigid, quantitative, and passive pattern of behavior certainly characterizes the customs and way of life of the Positivist.



**Fig. 2.** The building of The Islam Nusantara Museum which stores ancient manuscripts that are damaged and not well preserved

In the context of the ancient manuscript sector, we can see that the Heritage Impact Assessment does not seem to be carefully compiled to answer cultural issues regarding the importance of preserving the relevant sector in cultural heritage-based development. Essentially, stakeholders have been unable to capture the interpretive context that the preservation of the ancient manuscript was a strategic move to save the invaluable wealth of civilization contained in the text. This fact has marked their edification in taking a position opposite to the Interpretives.

Ward Goodenough [5] argues that the culture of a society consists of everything that a person must know or believe in order for him to behave in a way that is acceptable to the members of that society. To analogize stakeholders as ‘a person’, Positivists as ‘society’, and positivist viewpoints as ‘behavior’, the ideal standard in P3KP that needs to apply in order for them to be accepted by “members of society”—to the extent of their own understanding—is the continuity of structuring and preserving the historical building sector.

Stakeholder-made policies based on positivist ways of thinking—in the context of a critical theory paradigm—can be regarded as domination, exploitation, and oppression. As the party occupying the highest position in the “chain” of decision-making, the positivist thinking of stakeholders who have indirectly bound the policy direction is a mechanism of a structural pattern of dominance. P3KP with the primordialization of the historic building sector is a false consciousness that must be torn down under the pretext that other sectors such as ancient manuscripts are also no less important to pay attention to in order to build a progressive and relevant cultural heritage ecosystem to answer cultural issues. Society needs to be aware that ‘culture’ as offered by Goodenough [5] is not a material phenomenon: it is not made up of objects, people, behaviors or emotions. Culture is more of an organization of those things. Culture is the forms of things that exist in the human mind, the models that man has to accept, relate, and then interpret the above material phenomena.

In the end, cultural heritage is not just about what the eyes can see, palpable by both hands, heard through the ears, tasted with the tongue, and smelled. Cultural heritage must be understood with a wider context. Ancient manuscripts may be included in the classification

of ‘objects’, but we also don't be too ignorant and need to rush to realize that the text in them is a very valuable ‘intangible cultural heritage’. Preserving ancient manuscripts also means preserving the abundance of the rich values of past civilizations. Those “very sparkling” values are loaded with the potential to be developed for the welfare of humanity in the present and future.

## 4 Conclusion

Agendas such as the preservation of ancient manuscripts need to be rethought to be realized, so that the essential objectives of the Heritage City Structuring and Preservation Program (P3KP) in Indonesia in building a progressive and relevant cultural heritage ecosystem answering cultural issues can be truly achieved. Based on the results of the P3KP policy analysis from several target locations in various parts of Indonesia including Lasem, Central Java; Palopo, South Sulawesi; Parakan, Central Java; Sawahlunto, West Sumatra; Gampong Pande, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam; and Surakarta, Central Java, the preservation of ancient manuscripts was not enforced as part of the roadmap for organizing. One of the paradigms that develops in the realization of P3KP is that the historical building sector is very important as an object of arrangement and preservation. This has at once put other sectors such as ancient manuscripts into “the non-potential” and even “not understood”. Essentially, stakeholders have been unable to capture the interpretive context that the preservation of the ancient manuscript was a strategic move to save the invaluable wealth of civilization contained in the text. This fact has marked their edification in taking a position opposite to the Interpretives as Positivists.

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