

# Revealing the Paradox of a Heritage City

*Through Community Perception Approach: A Case Study of Parakan, Temanggung, Central Java, Indonesia*

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## Abstract

Parakan is a small city in Central Java, Indonesia. As a part of a region in Temanggung District, it has been designated a heritage city since December 2015 by the Central Government. It has a uniqueness, with both a tangible and intangible heritage. There is an extensive cultural heritage within the city, which represents its history. The research reveals the paradox of Parakan as a heritage city, which relates to delivering the process of conservation and preservation, which still faces many issues regarding community needs. The research method was quantitative, with use of a statistical approach to show the data from the perception of the community. The questionnaires for 300 respondents have been distributed by using Google Forms and have been collected 270 feedbacks from respondents. The paper obtains results using a descriptive narrative approach to describe the statistical data. In conclusion, we recommend that to reduce opposition, the local government of Parakan should deliver an initiative such as workshops or forum group discussions to encourage the local community to enhance their knowledge of cultural heritage, conservation and their willingness to conserve and preserve. Also, local government needs to involve local community in any activities in relate to conservation and preservation.

**Keywords:** *Community Perception, Heritage City, Oral Tradition, Paradox, Parakan, Indonesia*

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## Introduction

The first known use of the word “paradox” was in the renaissance era; it derives from the Latin “paradoxum” or “paradoxo.” Both terms could be delivered as two words, “para” and “doxa,” where “para” means “the way of” or “according to” and “doxa” means “what is accepted.” To simplify the meaning of paradox, the word is usually employed to refer to a contradictory condition of an issue.

Tschumi (1994) stated that a theory of space is not space itself. This is to describe and explain a paradox in architecture. It could therefore be defined that space is not just a real space which has been formed from boundaries, but also something which is covered itself. Lefebvre (1991) also supported this argument by representing the definition of space which is collaborated from activities within it.

Kehoe (2008) clearly discussed the paradox in conservation, particularly architectural conservation. He explained that this paradox could be compared between two historical buildings from the colonial era. The architectural conservation of such buildings could face a paradox between two issues, between conserving and preserving historical buildings which represent the old colonial era and conserving and preserving such buildings in an effort to preserve history for future generations. Although in general the effort to preserve and conserve architectural heritage is also related to the choice of a historical moment which has a significant meaning, in practice the activities of architectural conservation and preservation always face paradoxes related to contradictory issues.

Kehoe’s (2008) arguments are supported by the research of Muresanu (2015), who explained that there exists a paradox between the conservation of architectural heritage and the effort to improve tourism activity within a historical site. The local community has been encouraged to support the enhancement of tourism, because it will improve their quality of life and the environment itself. But on the other hand, tourism activity could also be a challenge for the local community; negative impacts could become a threat to historical sites, and particularly the historical values and norms in the community. Both issues are very familiar to the local government and community, which have been encouraged to make possible the activity of architectural conservation. One group has very thoughtful ideas in addressing the concept of architectural conservation within a historical site, but another believes that such activity, while improving tourism, could also threaten historical values. This paradox facing conservation has been revealed in this research, which defines the level of understanding of cultural heritage of the local community and the level of willingness to conserve and preserve. Historic and Nebojsa (2020) has underlined that strategies of conservation and development basing on a clear perception of the existing potential and their rich use in the future. The active protection of the urban unit and dynamic rehabilitation involves integrating heritage into contemporary trends of life by emphasizing the identity of space. Thus, the activity of conservation and preservation need to be conducted as significant as it is, depend on the understanding of cultural heritage as well as the willingness to conserve and preserve by the community.

A case study was conducted for the research, with Parakan chosen as the subject. Parakan was designated as a heritage city in December 2015 by the Central

Government of Indonesia. One of the areas with the dominant figure in Parakan is Kauman Area. Parakan with KH Subuki or well known as KH Bambu Runcing, became a well-known place to create Bambu Runcing. Parakan became a famous place around Indonesian soldier. Many Indonesian soldiers from other cities have come to meet KH Subuki, asking for blessing and creating Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon (Purwantiasning, Kurniawan and Suniarti, 2019).

As mentioned by Purwantiasning et al. (2020), as a heritage area in Indonesia, Parakan has many aspects which have a significant character, either physical or non-physical, as well as tangible and intangible ones. Its heritage buildings are Parakan Rail Station, the Chinese Temple Klenteng Hok Tek Tong, Pasar Legi, Pecinan Area, Kauman Area, Kali Galeh Bridge, Kawedanan, the House of KH Subuki, the Cemetery of KH Subuki, Langgar Wali, Kauman Area, the Cemetery of Kyai Parak, and the Mosque Al Baroqah Bambu Runcing. The uniqueness of Parakan is also shown by the existence of heritage ethnic Chinese houses within Pecinan Area, which have a specific architectural character. Parakan is also very well known as the city of Bambu Runcing, a sharpened traditional weapon made from bamboo. KH Subuki established this traditional weapon in the colonial era when he was known as a Muslim leader with a strong character.

Based on the above explanation, we have chosen Parakan for the case study. Using oral tradition and local community's perception approaches, the aim of the research will be revealed. Oral tradition was a significant approach, because we believed that to uncover the history of Parakan and to identify the needs of the local community, it was necessary to conduct interviews with the generation of KH Subuki. Respondents from the third, fourth and fifth generations of KH Subuki were chosen, and a result also has been defined. As stated by Vansina (2006), oral tradition can be defined as verbal testimony transmitted from one generation to the next or later one, which is more precise. He claimed that oral tradition is an approach taken by historians to shed light on historical events through the local community. According to this, we believe that the oral tradition approach is appropriate to reveal the cultural heritage of Parakan and to define the paradox which relates to this issue.

To support the oral tradition approach, we also have employed a local community perception approach, distributing, and circulating questionnaires within the Pecinan and Kauman areas. This approach was intended to ascertain the understanding of the local community about cultural heritage, and its willingness to conserve and preserve it. All the questionnaires were distributed to the local community apart from the generations of KH Subuki; this aimed to avoid double respondents and overlaid results. The perception approach was employed in the research because it intended to reveal the paradox of cultural heritage issues. Luthans, cited in Mulyadi (2014), stated that in perception an individual will bring the intentions of selection activity, organizing activity and interpretation activity. Individuals' perception could be completed by their collecting information, feeling it, and understanding it through their senses. This notion is supported by the statement of Rapoport (1977), who explained that the activities of individual perception can be completed through an individual's experiences.

## Research Methods

The research is a quantitative, based on the collecting and analyzing of data statistically, together with descriptive qualitative research with a narrative, descriptive approach to describe and analyze the case study from both physical and non-physical aspects. Since the research is quantitative, we analyzed the data collected using a statistical graphic form to show the results. We have conducted the data collection by distributing 300 questionnaires in order to identify the paradox of heritage cities, particularly Parakan, through oral tradition supported by community perception. There are 270 questionnaires that have been collected as feedback from respondents.

## Location and Research Period

The research was undertaken in Parakan, one of the Kecamatan in Kabupaten Temanggung, Central Java, which has been regarded as a Heritage City since December 2015 by the Central Government of Indonesia. We chose the areas of Kauman and Pecinan in Parakan as particular locations for the research (see Figure 1).

Although there are 12 identified cultural heritage sites (see Figure 2) within Parakan, we have studied six of these. Three are colonial heritage sites (Parakan Rail Station, Galeh Bridge and Pasar Legi), one is a Chinese heritage site (Klenteng Hok Tek Tong), and two are colonial heritage sites very closely related to the activity of Bambu Runcing making (the House of KH Subuki and the Mosque of Al Baroqah Bambu Runcing). We have chosen those six sites because they all represent the most significant cultural heritage within Parakan.

The research was conducted for about two years between 2019 and 2021, while the statistical data collection took around three months, from July to September 2020. The data collection has been continued to complete the research; we have distributed additional data collection for another three months from July 2021 to September 2021.

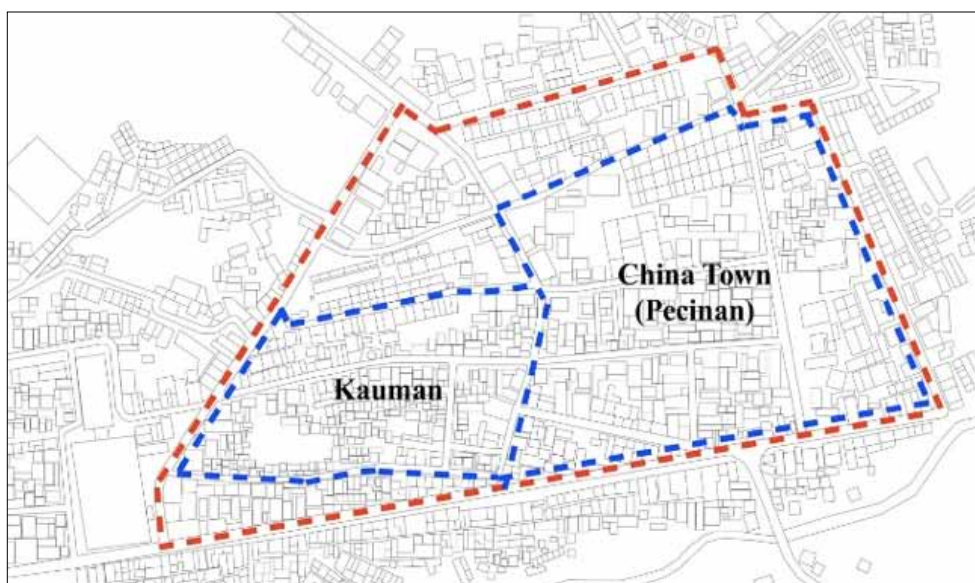


Figure 1. Research location within the historical site of Parakan (Kauman and Pecinan).



Figure 2. Mapping of the cultural heritage locations in the Parakan historical area.

There are 12 cultural heritage sites, six of which are the most significant

1. Masjid Al Barokah Bambu Runcing
2. Masjid Wali
3. Makam KH Subuki
4. Rumah Candi KH Subuki
5. Gedeng Ex BMT
6. Makam Kyai Parak
7. Jembatan Kali Galeh
8. Rumah Gambiran
9. Kantor Kawedanan
10. Klenteng Hok Tek Tong
11. Stasiun KA Parakan
12. Pasar Legi Parakan

#### Research Tools and Materials

Since this research is a part of wider architectural heritage research conducted using statistical methods, we used the following tools: (1) AutoCAD as software for drawing maps; (2) Corel Draw as a software for mapping analysis; (3) Questionnaires, which were distributed and circulated among the local community in Parakan; and (4) Ms Excel as software to make the quantitative analysis to identify and examine the results. Supporting and additional materials and tools used included a camera, sketchbook, and recorder.

#### Measurement Methods

Two approaches are used: oral tradition and community perception. In the oral tradition approach, we collected the data through direct interviews with the gen-

eration of a significant person with Parakan named KH Subuki. Around 40 respondents were interviewed from the third to the fifth generations. On the other hand, to support the results from the oral tradition approach, we distributed and circulated 300 questionnaires throughout the local community within Parakan. The community perception approach can be examined using the purposive sampling method. The 300 respondents varied in age, educational background, and status; they either originated from Parakan or were immigrants from another city. From the 300 respondents, there are 270 respondents have been collected as feedback. Two types of respondents represented ethnicity, one from the Kauman Area (Muslim and Javanese) and the other from the Pecinan Area (Khonghucu/ Confucian and Chinese). These two types of ethnicities were classified because we believed they would affect the results. The percentage of the type has been modified depending on the population. In the Kauman area, the population has been regarded relatively average with the population of Pecinan Area.

### **Respondents**

For the oral tradition approach, we interviewed 40 people, and for the community perception approach we prepared 300 questionnaires, with 14 related questions. The questionnaires were distributed randomly but covered two groups in the local community. Since the population in Kauman Area is relatively average with the population in Pecinan Area, we divided the questionnaire almost the same amount 50% for Pecinan Area and 50% for Kauman Area. Both areas were represented by male and female. The age of the respondents was randomly distributed using five age groups: <17 years old; 17-21 years old; 21-40 years old; 40-55 years old and >50 years old. From 300 distributed questionnaires, there are 270 questionnaires that have been collected which represented 2 area, 120 respondents from Pecinan Area and 150 from Kauman Area.

### **Analytical Methods**

Since the research aimed to reveal the paradox of a heritage city, which is part of the problem that arises in conservation and preservation activities, we identified the results of the data collection and classified them into various categories. We measured all the answers from the respondents to examine their perceptual opinions. The analytical results will be presented at the end of the research using the standard in an understanding of cultural heritage, as well as the willingness for conservation and preservation. They will then be interpreted to reveal whether there is a paradox or not in Parakan as a heritage city.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Understanding of Cultural Heritage**

Referring to Undang-Undang RI Number 11 Year 2010, the word “heritage” could be defined as either an individual object, a group of objects, or a part of an object which is about 50 years old or has represented a particular unique style for at least 50 years and is regarded as an object with significant historical, scientific, or cultural value.

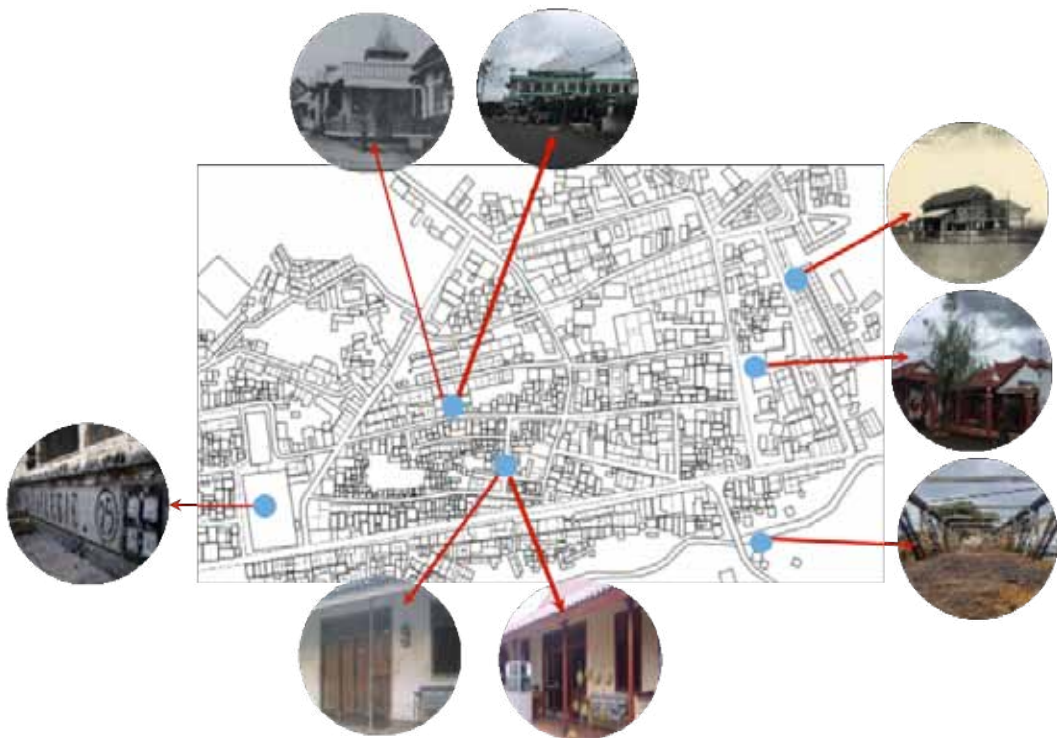


Figure 3. Locations of the six cultural heritage sites used as a measurement tool of community perception of cultural heritage.

According to the above definition, cultural heritage sites in Parakan which have significant value and are more than 50 years old include the following as shown in figure 3:

- a. Rumah Candi-House of KH Subuki
- b. Mosque Al Baroqah Bambu Runcing
- c. Chinese Temple-Klenteng Hok Tek Tong
- d. Railway Station from the colonial era - Stasiun KA Parakan
- e. Bridge from colonial era - Kali Galeh Bridge
- f. Market from colonial era - Pasar Legi Parakan

Purwantiasning and Kurniawan (2020) have stated that there are also some places within Kauman Area which were used for the activities of creating Bambu Runcing. Some of those places still remain the same, either the physical condition as well as the form of the building. But some of those places have been transformed into new form since that the community of Kauman, Parakan have tried to forget the past. The direct interviews using the oral tradition approach showed that almost all the 40 respondents stated that out of the six cultural heritage sites, only two were very significant, namely Rumah Candi-House of KH Subuki and Mosque Al Baroqah Bambu Runcing. They mostly said that both these sites represented the movement of KH Subuki with the Muslim community to fight against the colonial powers. Both sites are also a reminder of the history of Bambu Runcing, as well as the history of Parakan itself. The interviewers also stated that the remaining sites, particularly those representing the history of the colonial era, constituted a bad memory of the colonial era. They have said it is a bad memory

because within this site many Indonesian soldiers particularly from Kauman Area were murdered by the Dutch. One of KH Subuki's generation, Asrof said that, even the son of KH Subuki, known as KH Abdurrahman was killed in his own house, while the Dutch tried to find KH Subuki. Furthermore, to support the oral tradition approach, we distributed 300 questionnaires in Kauman and Pecinan Area and 270 respondents have given the feedback. The distributed surveys resulted in the following respondent profiles as shown in Figure 4.

Characteristic	Pecinan Area	Kauman Area
<b>Gender:</b>	120 respondents	150 respondents
Male	70%	60%
Female	30%	40%
<b>Age:</b>		
<17 years	1.11 % (3 respondents)	
17-21 years	2.6 % (7 respondents)	
21-40 years	44.44% (120 Respondents)	
40-55 years	40 % (108 respondents)	
>55 years	11.85 % (32 respondents)	

Figure 4. Profile of respondents.

Two questions indicated whether the respondents had knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage. The first question asked for a definition of cultural heritage. There were four possible answers to this question: ancient object, historical object, old object, and useless object. Out of the 270 respondents, 85 % stated that cultural heritage related to historical objects, with the remaining 15 % saying that it related to ancient objects (see Figure 5). Both answers have a similar meaning but are different with reference to the definition of cultural heritage. An ancient object not always has historical value, so is not always an object cultural heritage. However, a historical object might be an ancient object as it has historical value which represents a previous era. Both answers could show that the respondents had good knowledge and understanding about cultural heritage.

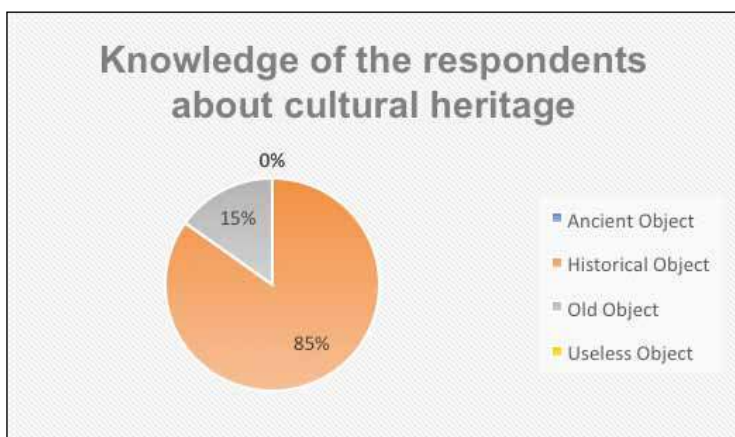


Figure 5. Knowledge of the respondents about cultural heritage.



The second question was about the knowledge and understanding as to whether Parakan had much cultural heritage or not. This question was posed to prove respondents' knowledge and understanding about cultural heritage. The results show that almost 100% of the respondents (96%) knew that Parakan has extensive cultural heritage, which indicates that the knowledge and understanding of all the respondents about cultural heritage is clear. Only two respondents, around 4 % (about 12 respondents) (see Figure 6), stated that they did not have any knowledge about whether Parakan had much cultural heritage.

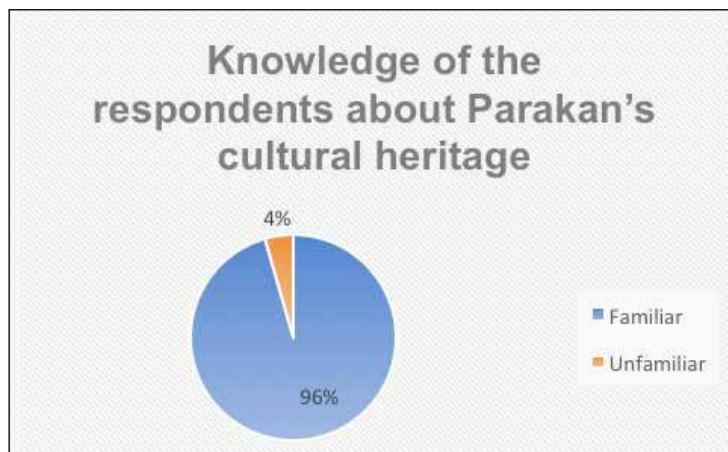


Figure 6. Knowledge of the respondents about Parakan's cultural heritage.

### The Willingness to Conserve and Preserve

In previous research, Purwantiasning (2018) mentioned that the designation of certain areas as conservation areas, as well as heritage areas in Indonesia, is encouraged by global concern about the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Since then, Indonesia, which has many heritage areas, has attempted to protect its cultural and natural heritage by designating some regions of the country as conservation or heritage areas. Ancho et al (2021) also stated that preserving heritage building can be seen as an aspect towards knowledge generation rooted on historical past. It provides contemporary perspectives in order to visualize the future. Studies such as these are platforms that celebrate cultural experiences for continuity and sustainable future. Social development in the midst of efforts to value the past requires commitment and sound policy attempts to ensure cultural resources are valued and given attention.

One of the initiatives of the central government is to encourage local governments to implement conservation and preservation programs. To help such programs succeed, local governments have established community groups known as Nata Parakan Luwes or NPL, to assist in their delivery. They have also arranged activities to encourage the local community to show commitment to conservation and preservation. However, many local communities still have a lack of understanding and knowledge about cultural heritage and conservation/ preservation, a situation which has affected conservation and preservation activities.

At this stage, we asked some questions to identify whether the respondents had the willingness to conserve and preserve. By posing six questions referring to the six cultural heritages in Parakan, the results of the research are clearly revealed (see Figures 7 and 8).

Cultural heritage site	Designated as a cultural heritage site			
	Community of Pecinan Area 120 respondents		Community of Kauman Area 150 respondents	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
House of KH Subuki	112 respondents/ 93.33%	8 respondents/ 6.67%	145 respondents/ 96.7%	5 respondents/ 3.3%
Mosque of Al Baroqah Bambu Runcing	112 respondents/ 93.33%	8 respondents/ 6.67%	145 respondents/ 96.7%	5 respondents/ 3.3%
Chinese Temple-Klenteng Hok Tek Tong	118 respondents/ 98.33%	2 respondents/ 1.67%	142 respondents/ 94.67%	8 respondents/ 5.33%
Railway Station from Colonial Era- Stasiun KA Parakan	118 respondents/ 98.33%	2 respondents/ 1.67%	82 respondents/ 54.67%	68 respondents/ 45.33%
Bridge from Colonial Era- Kali Galeh Bridge	118 respondents/ 98.33%	2 respondents/ 1.67%	82 respondents/ 54.67%	68 respondents/ 45.33%
Market from Colonial Era- Pasar Legi Parakan	118 respondents/ 98.33%	2 respondents/ 1.67%	82 respondents/ 54.67%	68 respondents/ 45.33%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>96.66%</b>	<b>3.34%</b>	<b>75.35%</b>	<b>24.65%</b>

Figure 7. Statistical results on the willingness to conserve & preserve the cultural heritage of Parakan.

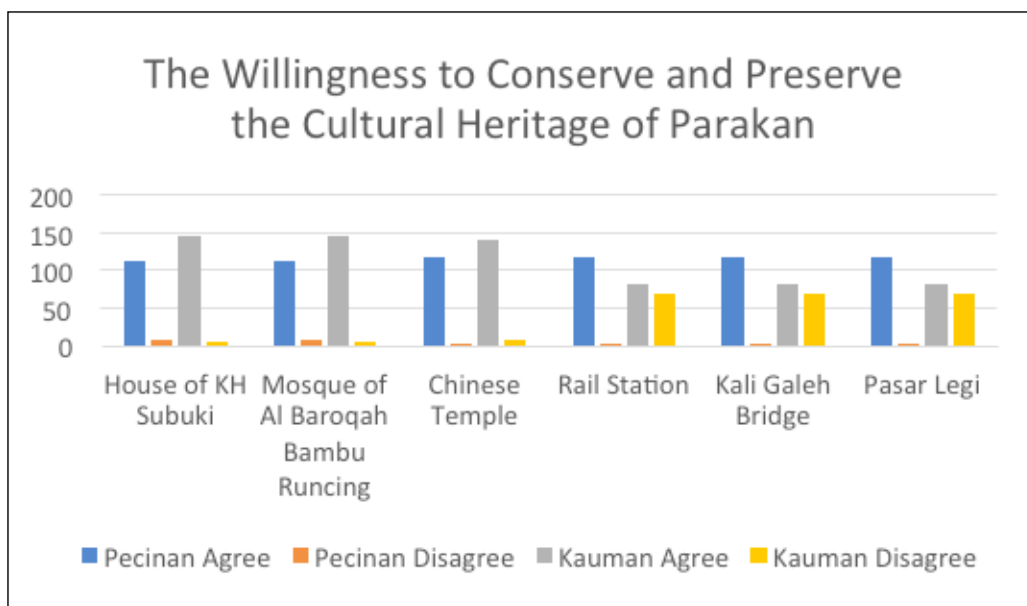


Figure 8. Chart of the Willingness to Conserve and Preserve the Cultural Heritage of Parakan.

Figure 8 shows that the willingness to conserve and preserve depends on the preference of the local community. For example, Figure 7 shows that the local community in Pecinan Area is willing to preserve all the cultural heritage representing the colonial era, such as the Parakan Railway Station, Kali Galeh Bridge and Pasar Legi Parakan, believing they should be preserved and conserved as cultural heritage, as well as Klenteng Hok Tek Tong as a sacred place for Chinese people (98.33% agreed with maintaining these four cultural heritage sites). On the other hand, out of the local community in Kauman Area, about 96.7% were willing to preserve and conserve Rumah Candi KH Subuki and the Mosque Al Baroqah Bambu Runcing, because in this area these two objects are historical places with historical value. Both sites represent the history of Parakan as a city of Bambu Runcing, and also both represent the history of KH Subuki as the founder of Bambu Runcing. Around 54.67% of respondents were willing to conserve and preserve the three cultural heritage sites which represented the colonial era, with the remainder, about 45.33% stating that the sites were reminders of the colonial era (bad memories), so they did not deserve to be preserved and conserved.

### **The Paradox of the Heritage City**

From the above results, the paradox of the heritage city of Parakan can be revealed. The first issue is about the willingness to conserve and to preserve regarding the understanding of cultural heritage, while another issue is about the willingness to cast off the bad memories of cultural heritage. We believe that we do understand this situation, because all the respondents who are related to the history or Parakan in the colonial era mostly live in Kauman Area. They believe that the bad memories of this era could have a bad effect on future generations. From the oral tradition and local community perception approaches, we are able to give various reasons why most respondents within Kauman Area had no willingness to conserve and preserve the cultural heritage which reminded them of the colonial era. These reasons are as follows: cultural heritage from the colonial era could become a bad memory; it could destroy the minds of future generations; it could generate bad emotions and hatred; it only comprises useless objects with poor performance.

However, a similar number of respondents (fewer than 50 % about 45.33%, see Figure 8) from Kauman Area agreed and had the willingness to conserve and preserve their cultural heritage. The reasons for their agreement are as follows: cultural heritage is regarded as a historical reminder; it is regarded as a heritage for future generations; it is regarded as an educational tool for future generations; it is regarded as a witness of old or historical events.

This paradox of the heritage city will always exist in architectural conservation. The local government, together with the local community, should initiate activities to improve the issues of architectural conservation. In this way, the paradox of the heritage city of Parakan could be minimized in order to avoid rejection from the local community, who are not willing to conserve and preserve.

## Conclusion

The uniqueness and architectural diversity within Parakan, particularly in Pecinan Area and Kauman Area, are significant reasons why the city is very suitable to be a heritage city. Understanding architectural conservation is not done only through the literature, but also by conducting research, particularly with the oral tradition, which has enabled us to understand the related issues more. By collecting information through the oral tradition and local community perception approaches, the paradox of the heritage city, particularly Parakan, can be revealed. Some reasons behind the issues have been defined as a result of this research.

Although there is a paradox in the heritage city, the issues of this paradox could be minimized if local governments are willing to take some initiatives to encourage the local community to enhance their knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage. We believe that there are still many people who do not have the will to conserve and preserve. We only conducted the research on a significant amount respondent to represent the community of Parakan and to achieve its aims, and the results of the questionnaire do not represent all the needs of the local community of Parakan. As a recommendation, we have suggested to the local non-government organization such as NPL or Nata Parakan Luwes to deliver our suggestion to the local Government such as Camat Parakan or Bupati Temanggung. We have recommended the local Government to organize and deliver such as a Forum Group Discussion and Workshop for community to enhance their knowledge about Cultural Heritage, Conservation and Preservation. Furthermore, Local Government should involve the local community in any activities regarding conservation or preservation of a significant area within Parakan. By delivering these activities, hopefully the willingness to conserve and preserve of Cultural Heritage will be enhanced significantly.

For further research, we suggest enhancing the study to a wider local community scope in Parakan, covering the whole area, not only the historical district. Further research could investigate and reveal the potency of Parakan as a historical site in Indonesia by making some investigations with either qualitative or quantitative methods.

## Acknowledgements

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