

THE MULTI-LAYERED IDENTITY OF A CITY: ARTICULATING CITIZENS' AND PLACE IDENTITIES IN YOGYAKARTA AS THE CITY OF PHILOSOPHY

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Received: 14 September 2019

Accepted: 29 November 2019

Abstract. Identity demonstrates the intrinsic values of a subject or object that can be used to recognise a territory. Through this study, the city of Yogyakarta expresses a complexity of identity making through the implementation of heritage conservation. In practice, the creation of city identity represents government's effort to promote the city on behalf of local economic development. This paper aims to explaining how the identity connects with the constructed identity in local society. In this sense, the residents or local community contribute to the construction of tradition that is in the central of tourism promotion. The investigation uses one cycle coding analysis to investigate governmental document associated with cultural heritage and placemaking, and interview transcripts. As the result, this paper demonstrates that the identity of Yogyakarta has three layers, i.e. city identity, place identity and citizen's identity. The three identities express an association between the implementation of heritage conservation policy and the constructed heritage meaning in local society. This article bridges heritage conservation and placemaking, and the creation of identity.

Keyword: multi-layered, philosophy, Yogyakarta

INTRODUCTION

The notion of identity is at the core of place-making. It is the primary goal of creating a place, providing a unique place associated with particular cultural and historical expressions (Relph, 1976). It is reasonable that the creation of identity and the placemaking are conflated when implementing heritage conservation (HC) in an urban area. An old urban district can be fostered as an attractive and unique area for its historical look, that is unique compared to the other contemporary areas, and consequently becomes an economic resource in the tourism industry. In terms of HC, the use of placemaking can highlight the intrinsic values of the site that constitutes identity. Nevertheless, a question arises about whether how the identity represents the place and residents. This question becomes a concern of this article.

This paper portrays the city of Yogyakarta as a case study, which is currently popular as a tourism city that is primarily supported by rich cultural and historical legacies. As a heritage city, Yogyakarta has legacies in architecture and urban form expressing a traditional and colonial city. The term "traditional" refers to the adoption of tradition or indigenous philosophy. The city was founded in 1755 and designed by the first Sultan introducing a traditional model called philosophical axis (Karsono and Wahid, 2008). In this model, the early urban centre or the kingdom centre was decorated by some elements laid from the north to south: *Tugu* monument, *Alun-Alun Lor* (the northern square), *Kraton* (palace complex), *Alun-Alun Kidul* (the southern square) and *Panggung Krapyak* monument (hunting platform). The configuration of these objects followed traditional Javanese philosophy. The expression of colonial city is represented by some colonial buildings especially the ones located in surrounding Alun-Alun Lor. Handinoto

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suggests this configuration as the model of New Hindia City due to reflecting a dualism of local and colonial authorities in the same area (Handinoto, 2015). In the present day, the popularity of Yogyakarta is strengthened through the nomination as a World Heritage (UNESCO, 2017). This situation reflects government efforts to legitimise the city identity by authorising HC as a part of the city development goals (JogjaDaily.com, 2015). The discourse becomes more interesting because there are traditional thought and collective memories attached to the residents that might become their identity. Therefore, the current identity becomes problematic regarding the association between the city and the resident's identities.

The study of geography contributes to the notion of place identity. Edward Relph asserts the formation of identity in individual or object and suggests the term of "place identity" (Relph, 1976). He suggests three elements of place identity, such as: "static physical settings, activities and meanings". In this model, the spatial quality of identity becomes the primary concern while humanity, as represented by activities and the perceived meanings, and contributes to the quality. Other scholars stress on meanings as the ingredient of place identity because it can associate a particular person or community with cultural landscape (Cheshmehzangi, 2012) and represent memories and attitudes occurred in place (Anton and Lawrence, 2014). Again, the physical setting, especially architecture, has a primary contribution to the development of identity (Popescu, 2006).

The discourse of place leads to a question about the association between citizens and place identities. Scholars have argued the contribution of social agents to place identity without specifying the personal identity of social agents as a part of place identity. For example, some works concern human's psychological attributes, such as memory, affection and values, as a fundamental element in defining place identity (Relph, 1976; Smith, 2006; Ercan, 2017). In line with this idea, place identity becomes a matter of social construction (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson, 2002; Brennen, 2012), which is specific to historical, social and geographical contexts. These scholars recognise the interrelationships between people and an object in a spatial setting that makes space meaningful as a place. Nevertheless, there is no explanation about how personal identity is embodied in place identity or vice versa. In the context of HC in Yogyakarta, if a place is meaningful (and thus have an identity) due to historical memory and cultural uniqueness authorised by the government, do the meanings (as the attribute of identity) represent the citizens' identity?

METHODS

This article applied a qualitative approach to reveal and interpret particular meanings to the case. The use of this approach aimed to understand the meanings constructed by social agents (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson, 2002), such as government agencies and residents. Information from mass media was also used to represent general opinion present in society (Brennen, 2012).

In general, the investigation had two analyses of: literature and thematic analyses. Literature analysis is conducted to investigate official documents (HC regulations and urban development plan) and media. This analysis aims to reveal identity associated with HC that is highly influenced by governmental policy. On the other hand, thematic analysis is applied to investigate interview transcripts from in-depth interviews of 19 participants. The participants were recruited in public space at Malioboro Street. The recruitment utilised purposive-random sampling. In this sense, the researcher recruited random people by considering age (adult persons) with an assumption that persons in this cohort had enough experience of local traditions and urban spaces. In the first time, the researcher only interviewed three persons until reaching data saturation (19 persons). The analysis of in-depth interviews aimed to reveal place and citizens' identities. In this case, the place and personal identities were investigated base on the constructed meaning of space users (Cheshmehzangi, 2012). Moreover, the personal identity that is attached to individuals representing one's character and attitudes towards Yogyakarta culture and history.

The one-cycle coding was conducted by exploring themes in the form of phrase or sentence with particular meaning (Saldana, 2013). Finally, the overall analysis resulted in findings of identity in three layers: the city, place and subject.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first layer: city identity

This layer demonstrates the central role of government in designating a label as “the city of philosophy”. It is a label created by the government when the city was proposed as the world heritage (Tempo, 2016). As a result, since 2017 the city was nominated in UNESCO world heritage for its philosophical axis (UNESCO, 2017; Lauder, Lauder, Erikha, Wardany, and Barus, 2017). Through this nomination, UNESCO recognises the traditional city layout of Yogyakarta representing the philosophy of human destiny as taught in Javanese tradition (UNESCO, 2017; Syahbudin, Meinata, Hanindita, and Mulyana, 2018; Mutiah, 2018; Aditya, 2017). Structures associated with this philosophy are aligned from north to south: *Tugu* monument, *Alun-Alun*, *Kraton* complex and *Pangung Krapyak* monument.

HC in Yogyakarta expresses the process of selection about “what should be remembered” as argued by Harrison (2010). The government designates or selects, a symbol representing Yogyakarta culture and history. Philosophical axis best articulates this intention. The axis represents the physical legacy of urban morphology since the city foundation in 1755. The philosophy is also deeply rooted in Yogyakarta society as the way of life reflecting people’s collective memory and represent cultural in terms of tradition and urban morphology. Therefore, Yogyakarta label as the city of philosophy constitutes an intention of introducing Yogyakarta and its society, in its historical and cultural depth.

This designation expresses the practice of “authorised heritage discourse” (AHD). The nomination of the philosophical axis in the World Heritage is preceded by the recognition of this axis as heritage through the provincial regulation of heritage conservation (The Provincial Government of Yogyakarta, 2012). Smith argues that this action expresses the involvement of experts and professionals in HC that constitutes the AHD (Smith, 2006). Later, Harrison suggests the same notion as AHD, using the term “official heritage” (Harrison, 2013).

Moreover, Harrison (2013) emphasises the involvement of state and the use of heritage legislation as the reason and legal standing of HC. In this case, the confirmation of heritage and the subsequent actions, such as heritage promotion and the economic use of heritage, are assigned by the heritage act (The Republic of Indonesia, 2010).

There are two institutions contributing to the designation of Yogyakarta as the city of philosophy: the government and UNESCO. The current government contributes to the confirmation of heritage and proposing the heritage as a label “the city of philosophy” (Tempo, 2016; Mutiah, 2018; Aditya, 2017; Tourism Department, 2017). The central government contributed to the ratification of UNESCO convention (T. R. of Indonesia, 1986) and legalised a cultural heritage act (The Republic of Indonesia, 2010), while the local government facilitates HC in local context (The Provincial Government of Yogyakarta, 2012). At the international level, the government cooperates with UNESCO to nominate the philosophical axis of Yogyakarta in the world heritage list.

This label can also be regarded as the city identity as the way people recognise Yogyakarta. From the in-depth interview, 11 from 19 participants argued that the identity of Yogyakarta is reflected by tradition that is still alive in the urban environment. Another 13 persons associated the identity with historic buildings including the elements of philosophical axis.

This identity was also widely recognised through media such as the official website and online news. The label of Yogyakarta as the city of philosophy demonstrates the particularity of the city and constitutes an identity. The identity is specific to Yogyakarta thanks to the unique

city layout (Tempo, 2016; Aditya, 2017). The elements of traditional city layout are well conserved awakening the philosophy. In this sense, the traditional urban morphology is a symbol representing the way of life for the residents. The identity is also expected to demonstrate the same criteria as other cities or sites recognised as world heritage. Therefore, if Yogyakarta passes this nomination, it means that the city has fulfilled the criteria of HC used by UNESCO and consequently can support the city promotion and heritage tourism (Tourism Department, 2017; National Geographic, 2016).

In this study, AHD is obvious on Malioboro Street, a corridor segment in philosophical axis. Yogyakarta government takes heritage tourism as a priority (JogjaDaily.com, 2015). The implication of this strategy incorporates HC into urban planning agenda. In the early of 2015, the government legalised the urban plan with particular zones for HC and heritage tourism areas (The Municipal Government of Yogyakarta, 2015). In this plan, *Kraton* and colonial buildings, such as *Gedung Agung* and *Vredenburg* fort, were included in conservation zones emphasizing Malioboro a tourism area. Later, the government improved this area by rehabilitating pedestrian way and public space (Sunartono, 2016) by planting Gayam and Asem trees along Malioboro Street (Sigit, 2016). These trees had symbolic meanings associated with Javanese philosophy. The development of Malioboro corridor was a part of the rehabilitation of philosophical axis.

The second layer: place identity

This layer presents the more complex interplay of social agents, such as government, visitors, traders and residents. This study takes public space on Malioboro Street as a focus in the analysis of place identity because the place is located in philosophical axis area near several important historic sites such as *Tugu* monument, *Kraton*, *Vredenburg* fort dan *Gedung Agung*. Malioboro is also widely recognised as a tourism spot. The promotion of heritage is followed up with the development of public space in the historic area. The study found that the development of pedestrian way on Malioboro Street aims to rehabilitate the representation of philosophical axis and create an enjoyable place for visitors. Traders, street vendors and shops, also use the space by selling souvenirs and foods. As a consequence, this street corridor provides various attractions to see, buy and memorise, such as the historic buildings, traditional monuments, souvenirs, foods and memorable time visiting the place.

Place identity was evidenced in in-depth interviews since this method was suitable to explore participant's perspective about Malioboro public space. The researcher started interviews by asking a question: "how do you like this public space?" Then, this question triggered an in-depth conversation with more detailed questions.

The analysis of in-depth interview reveals five themes expressing the quality of Malioboro public space as a place, such as: an *all-in-one* place, euphoria, tradition, enjoyable place and memory. Research participants argued that they could find anything in Malioboro area, thanks to the presence of shops and street vendors selling foods, garments and souvenirs. Many people gathered in the pedestrian way including the traders, locals and tourists. All people could do anything they want as long as they did not annoy anyone else. It was euphoria of the mass. Although some participants did not like the situation like this, others loved it because this situation made them felt free, allowing them to express individuality and forget the time. Therefore, the place was enjoyable. Also, there were some qualities that made the place enjoyable such as the friendly people, equity, a calm situation in the night, the present many street benches providing places for stopping, taking relax and chatting as well as beautiful street lamps with traditional design (using iconic ornaments and colours from *Kraton* building).

Malioboro also represented the place of tradition and historical memories. It was a place where the participants could meet the representation of Javanese culture, such as traditional transport (*andong*), people using traditional clothes, traditional language and friendly locals. The participants believed that the friendly attitude is the manifestation of Javanese philosophy. The historical place was the most dominant theme of Malioboro since participants could link the place with the mythology of Mount Merapi and Sultan as the most notable person in this region.

This place was also historic because participants could find many historic buildings (colonial and traditional buildings) including the components of philosophical axis and structures reminding of a war in the early of Indonesia Independence, such as *Gedung Agung* (the first presidential office) and *Serangan Umum* Monument (commemorating the military aggression of Dutch army).

These qualities embody the identity of Malioboro portraying the distinct corridor from other areas in Yogyakarta and even in other regions of Indonesia. Therefore, common visitors would agree that: “you have not come to Yogyakarta if you never visit Malioboro”. Despite this, Malioboro also demonstrates the sameness of two aspects: the public space and historic area. This place meets expectation about what should be regarded as a good public space and historic area compared to other places. In many occasions, participants frequently explain the quality of Malioboro by comparing it with other places, such as: Ijen in Malang city, Braga in Bandung, Kota Tua in Jakarta and so on. The differences lie on the public space, history and tradition melted into one place, which is Malioboro. On the top of that, it has been the Javanese tradition specific to Yogyakarta and philosophical axis shaping the place to be more particular. At this stage, the recognition of identity is widened, not only associating with Javanese tradition, but also contemporary lifestyle (the public space and tourism), and history (the colonisation and independence war). It is also a place where the citizens’ identity is initially recognised.

The third layer: citizen’s identity

This layer demonstrates the manifestation of heritage values in the self. In this study, the city contributes to the building of self through the intangible aspect of heritage. It is the values constituting identity produced through cultural practices or tradition. The values contribute to the character building in a society for a long period, creating “authentic self” or “subjective authenticity” (Su, 2018). This notion refers to the confirmation of personal identity associated with a particular cultural context. This paper suggests that the authentic self corresponds to personal identity. In other words, this kind of identity demonstrates the way people call themselves or associated themselves with particular cultural and historical values.

Regarding this topic, the researcher triggered in-depth interviews using a question: “what are the benefits of heritage conservation?” The participants responded to the question by asserting some benefits including the ones associated with the personal character, which is the focus of this paper.

The study demonstrates that there is a correspondence between the place and the citizen’s identity. In this sense, the way of participants acknowledging themselves or Yogyakarta residents relates to the place identity of Malioboro and the city. There are three themes revealed regarding citizen’s identity: pride, nationalism and tradition.

Participants called themselves as the proud people due to legacies in the form of cultural symbols, tradition and history. A participant obviously expressed the feeling:

“I am proud of the identity and anything resembling the particularity of this city ... This is my city, and this is my culture inherited to me (from the ancestors). Everyone should know about this ... that it makes me as a Yogyakarta and inspire me. It is me; I am a Javanese.”

This statement demonstrates the development of self through the affection of being proud and the sense of belonging that makes this person a part of Yogyakarta and local society. Traditional urban fabric such as philosophical axis is one example of cultural symbol and along with Yogyakarta history as the first capital of Indonesia made the city unique and has an identity. The participants are proud of this.

The spirit of nationalism was also a part of individual characters in Yogyakarta. There was a wide recognition about memories of independence wars evoked by colonial buildings especially *Vredenburg* fort and *Gedung Agung*. Participant argued that in the present days, the memories about tragedies and heroes motivated people to sustain the Independence and development. The last character, the tradition, was dominant. Participants argued that there is a reflection of Javanese tradition in their lives and most of Yogyakarta residents. The tradition was

manifested in traditional norms, as a legacy, traditional language and traditional belief that still are practised recently. It was the way of being a Javanese by having the same cultural background. The majority of participants asserted that the friendly and modest characters, as demonstrated by people in Malioboro public space, reflect Javanese tradition.

The themes demonstrate the personal identity of participants who called them as a Yogyakartaan or an *authentic* person of Yogyakarta. This character represents not only the Javanese, a cultural context where the people belong to, but also the historical context where the local society has experienced the hard ages of colonisation and in the present time, inherits a set of cultural legacy.

Articulating the multi-layered identity

The multi-layered identity can be understood through the relationship between the city label, place identity and citizens’ identity. Figure 1 depicts the relationship between the three layers of identity. In this figure, the philosophical axis has three implications for Yogyakarta and its society. At the bottom layer, the axis and its philosophy have resided with Yogyakarta society for a long time ago. The axis along with colonial buildings is cultural evidence about Javanese tradition and also a proof about the past colonisation. The physical sites contribute to the transmission of tradition, cultural values and history. Therefore, heritage also has a contribution to the character building of Yogyakarta citizens. At the higher level, the local government takes the potential of identity by regulating HC and amplifying the image of philosophical axis. The government has done some actions such as nominating philosophical axis for world heritage, HC policy, tourism, designating heritage tourism area and rehabilitating Malioboro Street. Therefore, there is a coherence between the three layers of identity.

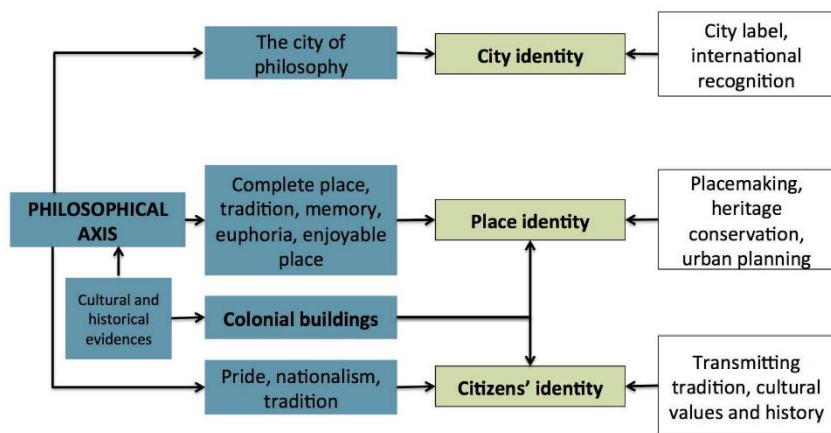


Figure 1. The Structure of Identities

The three layers of identity demonstrate scales and relations of HC practices and promotions. As argued by Harvey as also suggested by Harrison, the government usually has a top influence in regulating HC practices and assigning the policy on the society (Harvey, 2001). In this case, the local government of Yogyakarta regulates the conservation of philosophical axis and confirms the axis as a representation of Yogyakarta heritage. The government modifies the scale of heritage from local to national and international through a label the city of philosophy. This action connects with the situation at the lowest level: the local society. The locals, as expressed by participant’s opinions, demonstrate an enthusiastic effort to prolong the tradition and narrative. Therefore, the three layers express a cohesive identity. In other words, there is a consistent association between the authorised and personal identities. This situation is also

motivated by political and social situation in Yogyakarta where the King, Sultan, is currently recognised as a traditional and formal ruler through the implementation of *Keistimewaan* political system.

The relationship between the three layers is also obvious in participant's opinion during in-depth interviews. The participants associated the elements of philosophical axis and colonial buildings with the origin of Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta (the society, culture and urban fabric) is started from this site. The philosophical axis records the journey of Yogyakarta since its foundation in 1755, and then go through the colonial period before it arrives at the contemporary day. Regarding this, a participant argued that the sites are at the heart of Yogyakarta culture:

“The sites are more than a symbol ... they (the sites) resemble the heart of Yogyakarta culture.” This statement expresses the critical function of traditional urban fabric as a symbol. Herusatoto argues that symbol is a primary medium of transmitting traditional philosophies through generations (Herusatoto, 2001). The symbol represents the abstraction of traditional thought. The action of applying or preserving cultural symbols at an urban scale can disseminate the philosophy throughout urban settlements. The philosophical axis is not only a physical legacy but also the representation of Javanese culture in Yogyakarta. In this sense, the preservation of philosophical axis has a two ways consequence: firstly, at the local and national level: the axis strengthens the city identity and makes the city unique and recognisable through the presence of a monumental cultural representation. It also delivers a message to the outsiders about cultural characteristics of the city. Secondly, at the grass-roots level: the axis represents a part of people's way of life, a legacy that is still alive in the traditional lives of the city.

The in-depth interviews give a perspective about how the heritage sites, in this case, the components of philosophical axis and other historic buildings on Malioboro Street, can inform identity. The heritage sites have been attached to Yogyakarta society as cultural symbols and historical evidence. Philosophical axis is meaningful because it embraces the identity because it has a fixed cultural value that does not change through time. Assmann and Czaplicka call this value as “cultural memory” (Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995). The traditional urban fabric prolongs the memories through time, makes the traditional philosophy intelligible for people at present. In this case, the physicality of the symbol is essential to cultural transmission as suggested by Rowlands (1993).

CONCLUSION

This study reflects Yogyakarta as a best practice for the creation of identity in three layers: city label, placemaking and the city subjects. The city of philosophy is at the core of Yogyakarta identity because it connects to tradition, historical events and the present uses. It also reflects an effort to prolong historical narrative and tradition through HC policy. The city of philosophy, as a designated identity, sticks to the origin and tradition of Javanese people. Malioboro Street has a crucial role as a place to amplify the identity and strengthen the spatial character. Therefore, identity is recognisable for locals and visitors. Malioboro Street, especially the public space, becomes an exhibition place of HC practice contributing to the preservation of tradition and, in turn, the personal identity of locals. The label, the city of philosophy, successfully articulates the character of Yogyakarta and projects the identity through public place on Malioboro Street. Consequently, Malioboro makes the city popular as melting place of contemporary tourism, history and tradition.

The case of Yogyakarta demonstrates a model of identity that can inform the use of HC in policy making. The city identity and tourism are two inseparable aspects expected to boost economic development. For this intention, there is a need to adopt cultural and historical representation that has been deeply rooted in the society as a foundation for creating an identity in the city level.

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