Revealing Community Awareness in Semarang China Town Area

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Abstract The China Town Area is one of the historic areas that influenced the formation process of the Semarang City since the 17th century. However, in preserving the development of China Town, there are several issues arise; the community awareness. Community awareness is formed based on knowledge that affects the community's role of in the preservation. This research reveals the level of community awareness of the China Town Semarang towards the preservation of the Cultural Heritage Area. Qualitative research method was used to explain existing situation of community awareness. Interview was conducted with several key persons, for instance the Lurah (The Head of the Rural Areas), the owner of the Cultural Heritage Building, handicraft owners, and local community to find out the characteristics and their role in the preservation. The analysis showed found several issues such as decreasing population number, high level of community migration, and buildings facade change. These issues affect the social conditions of the community, especially the understanding and awareness of the local community regarding the conservation of the China Town area. The factor of trust and upholding the customary principles are the background of the China Town community still maintaining its ancestral heritage.

Keywords: Community Awareness, China Town, cultural heritage, preservation

INTRODUCTION

Efforts to preserve cultural heritage areas in Indonesia became an important issue and began to develop in spatial planning around 1990 [1]. Public awareness is one important aspect in the effort to preserve the cultural heritage area [2]. The community has a responsibility in preserving the heritage area by involving in the preservation process; and this is how the community awareness arises.

Research on public awareness is still very limited [3]. Previous research has focused more on how public awareness when visiting cultural heritage areas [4]; how to increase public understanding of cultural heritage areas [2], and more to discuss community participation in conservation of cultural heritage areas [5]. Discussions on how the awareness of the surrounding community (residents) who live in the area of cultural heritage to play a role in preserving historic buildings and intangible heritage has not been widely explored. Most of the research is more about the preservation of cultural heritage areas based on community participation without knowing more about the level of awareness of the surrounding community in terms of preservation of this area. In fact, public awareness is the basis for the emergence of the community's willingness to take part in participating in the Cultural Heritage Area preservation.

The existence of cultural heritage is a legacy from previous generations that gives uniqueness to a place where it can reveal the history of the place [6]. The Semarang City was nominated into 10 National Heritage
Involvement, socialization, type of work, number of visitors, etc. The factors that influence community awareness are the level of education, community conditions [12]. One of the public awareness is shown by an increase in the number of visitors who come to see objects or areas of cultural heritage [21]. But on the other hand, there are also some unconscious problems, which are also referred to as mindlessness, or lack of public awareness and perception about the area of cultural heritage they visit [13]. The factors that influence community awareness are the level of education, community involvement, socialization, type of work, number of visitors, etc.

**HERITAGE AREA AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS**

Cultural Heritage is a material cultural heritage that needs to be preserved because it has important values for the development of history, science, education, religion, and or culture. Cultural heritage is a tangible and intangible object that has a history, cultural values and the community in it has a certain identity [10]. Tangible cultural reserves can be in the form of Cultural Heritage Objects, Cultural Heritage Buildings, Cultural Heritage Structures, Cultural Heritage Sites, and Cultural Heritage Areas on land and/or in water that is determined through a process of study and determination of relief [17]. On the other side, intangible cultural heritage can be in the form of philosophy, tradition, values, ceremonies, music, dance, and oral history in the past [11]. The existence of a cultural heritage area in a city, making a city has tourism potential, to preserve the region, the Regional Government is carrying out efforts to preserve cultural heritage through the development of cultural tourism. The development of cultural tourism is one of the rational approaches in efforts to conserve cultural heritage. The development of cultural tourism has an impact on various aspects of urban life, such as economic growth (new employment, increased community income, increasing property values around cultural heritage buildings) and social aspects such as improving the physical quality of the environment and aesthetics of the region [26]. Conservation of cultural heritage areas is intended not only to increase the number of protected cultural heritage objects but also to preserve the preservation of cultural heritage itself [18]. One of the most important aspects and influences the conservation of cultural heritage is the existence of public awareness.

Public awareness is a form of a great sense of responsibility and a straightforward sense to carry out certain obligations [19]. Public awareness is born from the community itself which arises from the habits in the community, influenced by the environment, regulations and the role of the government [20]. The creation of awareness is a process that takes time and requires local commitment and support. Public awareness can be shaped by community knowledge and shaped cognitively by individual experience and social environmental conditions [12]. One of the public awareness is shown by an increase in the number of visitors who come to see objects or areas of cultural heritage [21]. But on the other hand, there are also some unconscious problems, which are also referred to as mindlessness, or lack of public awareness and perception about the area of cultural heritage they visit [13]. The factors that influence community awareness are the level of education, community involvement, socialization, type of work, number of visitors, etc.
METHODOLOGY

The location of this study is in China Town which is administratively included in the Kranggan Village, Central Semarang District. Based on the Semarang City Spatial Plan 2011-2031, the China Town Area is one of the Semarang City cultural heritages which cover a lot of potential both tangible and intangible. The China Town area is a special Chinese settlement area, which has strong social and cultural characteristics so that it grows into a strategic trade and service area so that this area becomes a "generator" that drives people to carry out various activities within this region.

The method in this research was descriptive qualitative survey method. Qualitative methods are used to get data that contain meaning. Meaning is actual data, definite data and is a value behind visible data. Therefore, qualitative research does not emphasize generalization, but rather meaning [22]. The descriptive qualitative survey method aims to explain the phenomena that occur in the community, make the community or human therein as a tool (instrument) in research, understand the detailed issues in the development of the research area and find new perspectives from the findings in research [23]. This is very relevant to the objectives of the study that revealed the awareness of the Semarang City China Town Cultural Heritage Area. Qualitative research is rooted in a natural setting that relies on humans as a research tool. This research needs some data to support the analysis in the form of physical and non-physical data from China Town.

Primary data collection was carried out to determine the physical and non-physical characteristics of the study area and figure out the views of the community and related parties on the issues discussed in the study. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained based on the results of data processing, for example, planning documents, related literature, and the law. Therefore, the data collection methods consisted of interviews and field observations. Interviews were conducted with 6 selected interviewees using snowball sampling which serves to identify, select and take samples in a network or a continuous chain of relationships [14]. The criteria for determining the right key person (key person) in providing data and information that is accurate and accurate in research on revealing public awareness of the China Town Cultural Heritage Area are the Head of the Kranggan Village, Central Semarang District and Community Leaders in the China Town in the Kranggan Village. Field observations were made to observe the physical condition of the area such as land use and building characteristics. It also observes non-physical conditions such as social and economic conditions. Literature studies, document reviews and agency surveys are also carried out to support revealing the level of public awareness in China Town. After the data supporting the analysis is collected, the data is used as the material in analyzing the level of awareness of the community of the China Town.

The analysis technique used was descriptive statistics and qualitative descriptive. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe population growth and mobility in the China Town. Qualitative descriptive is used to describe the characteristics of the China Town community both in terms of social, economic, and cultural and describe the level of awareness of the China Town community associated with the preservation of cultural heritage areas.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Growth and Mobility of China Town

The population number in China Town area continues to decrease every year since 2005 (please see the figure 1). It is because many people who migrate out. Outgoing migration is caused by employment, marriage and economic income. People with high economic income tend to choose to live in a housing area that has good quality. There are many local community consider the China Town Area to represent a trade area. Narrow house lots also make some people move and have wider houses. This perception was revealed by Mr. Oei Sing How as the Chines people or indigenous community This is consistent with previous research by [15] which says that satisfaction with the environment and location characteristics directly affect the decision to move China Town. In addition, the migration into the China Town also makes many migrant communities living in the China Town. Chinese people who migrate mostly caused by marital factors.

"... the house in the original China Town is narrow, only 4x9, like a shop, so many of my neighbors chose to move"

(Oei Sing How – Indigenous People of China Town)
China Town continues to grow; people who live in this area are not only indigenous people but also many newcomers who live in this area. On the other hand, many people are still recorded as residents of China Town, yet they do not live in the area. This is caused by several things, such as the desire of the community to make the building into a trading office, maintain the heritage house as a place to celebrate the Chinese holiday, and the tax value that has increased 2 times the last 5 years. This condition is an obstacle for the social conditions of the China Town, given that the decline in the number of residents affects reducing the participation of local residents.

According to the Head of the Kranggan Village, the increase in the population in 2011 did not only occur in the China Town, but in the Kranggan Dalam area (see figure 2 below). This is because China Town is a high-density area, so there is no land for receiving residents into China Town. Migration in and out in the China Town is influenced by several factors consisting of push factors and pull factors. The driving factor is due to reduced natural resources, limited employment in the area of origin, and the presence of political, religious or ethnic pressure in the area of origin. While, the pull factors that cause outgoing migration are better to work and destination environments.

Characteristics of China Town

Community characteristics will be discussed based on economic, social, cultural and educational levels. Communities in the China Town area consist of indigenous people (ethnic Chinese), migrant communities, and groups of people who have the same vision in preserving the China Town, such as Kopi Semawis. When viewed from an economic perspective, the location of the China Town Area is strategic, encouraging high economic activity in the community. This is proven by the majority of the residents' livelihoods being traders. The dominant types of traders in the China Town area are traders of cloth, soy sauce, paper, gold and groceries which usually also take the form of a trading office. Mr Oei, who lives in China Town since 1963, explained that the trades exist since decades before. Evev, this trade activities exists since most of the Chinese community businesses are relatively small and only need to be managed by one family without requiring workers from outside. If the trading business becomes large, they usually open a branch in another city in the same form, held by a relative or other relative. Generally, their businesses are specialized in trading one type of goods, such as textiles, although it does not rule out the possibility of them also entering into other trading fields. Besides trade, the service sector is also quite commonly found in the China Town region. The type of service that is commonly found in this region is banking.
"The dominant type of trade in China Town from my time was kid (since 54 years ago) was fabric, paper, and groceries, if the craft was a statue for a tomb."

(Oei Sing How – Indigenous Community of China Town)

The strategic location of China Town for trading activities attracts many (non-permanent) residents who are only in the China Town area for work purposes, namely trading. It revealed by the chairman of Village Community Empowerment Agency (LPMK), Mr. Markus. The community generally does not live in the China Town area, but is still a Semarang City community and commits a commuter movement every morning and evening, so that at night the China Town is devoid of activity. These people rent or buy buildings (most of the buildings in the Warung alley, Beteng alley, and Pinggir alley) are then turned into trading offices or wholesale goods production sites. This certainly increases the trading activities of the China Town area because it is not only attractive to the local community, but also people outside the region. Although the economic activity of the region has increased, this condition has worsened the social conditions of the region. This is because traders from outside the region do not have a concern for the social environment. Besides, because the main purpose of the community is trading, so relations between neighbors are not maintained.

"If the people here (China Town) are more likely to build a trading office, like mine, a soy sauce trade office, there are fabric, paper trading offices, such as CVs and PTs, if there is banking in the Middle alley but it doesn’t know whose it is"

(Markus Julipurwanto - Chairman of LPMK)

On the other hand, cultural factors also greatly affect economic activity in China Town, namely the existence of special skills and skills that characterize the culture or belief in China Town which is passed down from generation to generation. The expertise of the China Town community which can be said as the craft of the local community is the craft of sculpture, paper, and snacks for religious and traditional events (see figure 3 below). Paper craft is a craft whose existence is still strong because it is more acceptable to the general public who are interested in art from this paper. Whereas the statuary craft is now beginning to decline because the sculpture business is usually used for the graves of the China Town community which does not promise high profits. Coupled with Confucius’ community of trust is continuous to decline due to shifting faith. Also, this business is not used for traditional events such as paper crafts, so the demand is unpredictable or uncertain. Until now, the number of sculpture traders is only 1 person. However, hereditary businesses that are still running in China Town are soy sauce and snack businesses for religious and traditional purposes (offerings) at major events such as Chinese New Year, Cap Go Meh, and Ceng Beng. Types of snacks that can be found are sticky rice sticks, sticky rice, sticky rice tape, cupcakes, layer cakes, sengkulan, persikan, lemper, jongkong and so forth. Just like a paper craft business, this business is considered more promising because it is not limited by religious interests.

In terms of social aspects, relations between neighbors in China Town are very low. This is because of the characteristics of local residents who are not too concerned with the neighbors. In addition, many residents
only work in China Town (migrant traders) who will only be in the China Town from morning to evening. This decreases social relations because the area is an office/trade area. In contrast to kinship relations between neighbors, kinship relations within the family in the ethnic Chinese community are considered very high. This is because the ethnic Chinese community has a tradition to continue to know, understand and remember their ancestors. In addition to the existence of traditional Chinese activities, such as the Chinese New Year which is held once a year will encourage each family member to gather at the family home. Kinship in the family can also be seen through efforts to maintain a family heritage home even though the price of taxes continues to rise. Mr. Markus Julipurwanto and Mr. Oei Sing How said that each family member had a sense of responsibility in paying for the PBB.

"Relationships with people outside the ethnic Chinese are good, there is no difference. In fact, we are more kind to non-Chinese communities than to Chinese community. We are, the Chinese community, live individually. Even more, the average workers here are a non-Chinese community. They just work for trading, it would be more individual"

(Oei Sing How – Indigenous Community of China Town)

In retrospect, the kinship between local communities does not affect the values found in the China Town [25]. On the contrary, the kinship between families is something that must be upheld for the native people of China Town. This is because the China Town community tends to remember ancestors and protect ancestral heritage. Until now, the kinship between family and neighbors has not changed. Today's China Town community still maintains vertical family-wide relationships, that is, relationships between families (parents and siblings) and the families of the eldest sons (offspring). Likewise with the form of family-wide vitriol, it is the relationship between families (parents) and the child's family (the descendants of each biological child). It's just that kinship between neighbors can be said to be low since long ago.

The phenomenon of population numbers in the China Town region continues to decline due to the migration of people out of China Town. Native China Towns choose to move from China Town because they are not satisfied with the environmental conditions of the region. This is because the China Town Region which is already more dominated by trading activities affects the environmental conditions of the dwellings in the China Town area. In addition, weak links with local communities are also a factor that causes people to choose to move from the area. People also choose to move because of the characteristics of families who tend to send their children to schools outside the city or abroad. Family characteristics are also influenced by marital status and family income. While the emotional attachment owned by the China Town community is their reason to continue to maintain their homes even if they are left empty or rented out. Besides, based on BPS data, the level of education in the Kranggan Village is very diverse, starting from elementary, junior high, high school graduates and university graduates. The diversity of education levels in this region affects the level of community understanding and participation in the conservation of the China Town Area as a Cultural Heritage Area (see figure 4 below).

![Figure 4. Level of Education in the Village Kranggan [24]](image)

**Community Awareness**

Factors that influence public awareness are the level of education that represents community knowledge, and also the involvement of the community and non-governmental organizations around the community. Different community education forms the community's understanding of the preservation of cultural heritage areas so that this affects the level of community awareness and participation in the conservation of China Town. Most of the China Town community does not yet understand the preservation of cultural heritage areas,
especially in communities with high school and junior high school education. This lack of understanding affects the level of public awareness of the conservation of China Town as a cultural heritage area. Also, the lack of socialization from the government regarding the inventory of cultural heritage buildings in China Town and the socialization of understanding the importance of preserving China Town as a cultural heritage area. In fact, local officials such as the heads of RT and RW approved development permits to cultural heritage buildings, even though they did not know which buildings in the China Town area were categorized as cultural heritage buildings. They are only based on the function of the China Town area as a mixture (trade and residential). On the other hand, people with tertiary education levels that claim to know and understand the preservation of cultural heritage areas, and have the awareness to be involved in the preservation of the area. They believe that if all the people realize the importance of preserving the China Town, the China Town will develop into a tourist area and also a better residential area so that it can improve the regional economy.

In the effort to preserve the China Town area, it is related to the role of the local community consisting of indigenous people and migrant communities. The China Town community tends to still uphold custom, where when they move out of the China Town, they still maintain the ancestral heritage home as a family gathering place to celebrate the Chinese holiday (interview result from Chairman of Community Empowerment Agency). Hence, the house is left empty. The presence of inward migration in the China Town area has led to a migrant community which basically has a different mindset from the indigenous people. Apart from marital factors, the existence of these migrant communities generally they have a purpose only to trade in the China Town region. Most of the traders in China Town only open their businesses from morning to evening, so their time is up for work. This affects the role and participation of the community in the conservation of China Town. If in terms of cultural heritage, the role of the next generation of people to continue the craft decreases. Evidenced by the decreasing number of craft traders, especially sculpture crafts. In addition, so far the one who has played a role in the preservation of the area as a supporter of the need for building cultural heritage (pagoda) is precisely from large Chinese entrepreneurs such as Swiss Bakery, Virgin Bakery, etc. The role of the local community is usually in the form of funding because most people who work as entrepreneurs do not have time to participate directly. On the other hand, the passivity of China Towns is caused by the trauma of discriminatory treatment during the New Order era with the emergence of Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 which banned all activities from China including the Confucius religion, which limited the role of the Chinese community in all aspects, thus causing a lack of public awareness in the preservation of the region.

"Usually the next generation lives elsewhere (outside the Kranggan Village). Habitually, the house in Kranggan is a family home, from grandparents/ancestors. The next generation is usually the fifth/sixth generation already has a high education, working outside the city, staying outside the city as well. Usually, the house is inherited and sold/rented. Some are not for sale but their house is used as a Pong house to gather on Chinese holidays (for example Chinese New Year) "

(Markus Julipurwanto-Chairman of LPMK)

In its development, to preserve cultural heritage areas, not only requires the participation of the community, but also the role of a non-governmental organization called Kopi Semawis. Kopi Semawis has the goal of developing the China Town area as a cultural and historical tourism area. So Kopi Semawis was appointed as a facilitator in carrying out the revitalization activities of the China Town Area, namely through physical revitalization (improving physical quality at several points in the area), and economic rehabilitation by activating the old Semawis Imlek Market activities (development of the tradition of the Chinese New Year market in the New Gang), and developing new activity in the form of Warung Semawis (to revive the China Town area at night). But in its development, there is a tendency that Kopi Semawis as a facilitator seems to be more involved than the local community. This can be seen from the fact that there are still many people who do not understand the purpose of the conservation of the area and the planned program that will be carried out. Plus, the community feels that the program conducted by Kopi Semawis only benefits several parties and pays little attention to the social conditions of the community, so there are often forms of rejection from the community. Community awareness factors and its relation can be seen in figure 5 below.
CONCLUSION

Public awareness is a form of a great sense of responsibility and a straightforward sense to carry out certain obligations properly, especially in the preservation of cultural heritage. Public awareness is the most important aspect of the preservation of cultural heritage, which begins with a community understanding of the importance of the cultural heritage area itself. This study of community awareness in the China Town is seen based on socialization, population mobility, social culture, economy, education level, and the participation of local communities in the preservation of cultural heritage.

Based on the results of the study, public awareness in the China Town Region towards the preservation of cultural heritage areas has emerged, one of which is evidenced by the formation of the non-governmental organization Kopi Semawis where they have carried out activities to revitalize the China Town. Public awareness can also be seen from the role of indigenous people (ethnic Chinese) and migrant communities. For the ethnic Chinese community, they already know that the area is a cultural heritage area but they still uphold custom, where when they move out of China Town, they still maintain the ancestral heritage home as a family gathering place to celebrate the Chinese community and leave it empty or used as a place of business or leased as a place of business when they move. For the people of China Town, whose main purpose is only to trade, they also know that the China Town area is a cultural heritage, but they tend to do nothing because they are busy with work activities where trading activities only operate from morning to evening so that the China Town area is quiet at night the day. This migrant community has the potential to bring new patterns of thinking, especially regarding the preservation of cultural heritage areas. This makes the social value and kinship between neighbors in the China Town area low.

With the development of the China Town region as a trade zone, the value of building tax in the China Town has increased accompanied by a decrease in population each year due to out-migration. This makes the successive generation less and less to preserve the heritage of both heritage and intangible heritage (culture,
skills, etc.). The lack of government socialization to the community affects the lack of public awareness of the preservation of the area due to the lack of community understanding of the existence of the China Town area as cultural preservation.

In its development, to preserve the cultural heritage area, it is inseparable from Kopi Semawis. The role of Kopi Semawis seems to be more important than the local community. Kopi Semawis has been a facilitator in the revitalization program of the China Town Area with physical revitalization (improving physical quality in several areas), and economic rehabilitation by intensifying the old activities of the Semawis Imlek Market (developing from the Chinese New Year market tradition in the New Gang), and developing new activities in the form of Stalls Semawis (to revive the China Town area at night). Therefore, it can be concluded that rapid economic development and a decline in public awareness are feared to reduce the cultural value of the China Town Area and be a challenge in its development as a cultural tourism area. To increase public awareness in the China Town, it is necessary to have a community understanding of the position and role of China Town as a Cultural Heritage.

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