

Historic Environmental Conservation Studies in Kudus

R. Suharso¹, Wasino²
{r.suharso@mail.unnes.ac.id¹, wasino@mail.unnes.ac.id²}

^{1,2}Graduate School of Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract. This study aims to uncover the historical environmental conditions in Kudus which are characterized by Islam. The research questions are 1) how the historical and cultural environment in Kudus and 2) how the social construction of the community regarding the conservation of the historic environment. This research was carried out with qualitative methods with case study design. This research involved 3 city elements, namely community, government, and cultural expert. The important findings of this study indicate that the historical environment characterized by Islam in Kudus reflects the identity and self-esteem of the community. Based on the social construction of the community, conservation is important to maintain the authenticity and preservation of the historic environment in Kudus. The implication of this research is that the conservation strategy of the historic environment in Kudus can be done through Social Studies Education.

Keywords: Historical Environment, Islam, Conservation.

1. Introduction

Many historical buildings found in Kudus, relics of the Islamic period are the most numerous and most memoryable for the community [1], [2]. One of the most striking buildings is Kudus Minaret which is shaped like a temple. The Kudus Minaret is located in the southeast of the complex courtyard and faces west. Mosque complex or also commonly called the Sunan Kudus Tomb complex is surrounded by densely populated houses, including many traditional houses called *Pencu*. Surrounding the houses, the streets are interspersed with narrow roads that serve as the boundaries of the houses and are now public roads. This shows the characteristics of ancient villages. This has also been alluded to by a Dutch scholar, J.E. Jasper, indeed around this minaret complex is the Ancient Kudus [3]. The existence of various kinds of Islamic-style historical relics in Kudus is currently quite worrying [4]. Many buildings with characteristics of Javanese and Islamic culture that experience physical changes that no longer reflect the original buildings that affect the changing characteristics of the historical heritage of the Kudus as community settlements from various ethnic groups, as well as trade zones. Minaret of Kudus also reflects the style of traditional Islamic environment in the past Java.

This study wants to see how the condition of the historical environment in the style of Islam in Kudus as well as the social construction of the community. Therefore, the first stage of this research is to identify historical Islamic heritage objects, then find out the social construction of the community about the building and environment. The knowledge developed is applicative knowledge, which can be used as a reference for the government or stakeholders in conserving historical environment.

2. Research Method

This research was conducted using qualitative methods with case study design [5]. The case in this study is the social construction of society about the cultural environment in Kudus. This research involved 23 informants, which were divided into 3 categories, namely cultural activists, government, and society. All information obtained during the research is significant enough to develop narratives according to the objectives of this study. The object of this research observation is historical heritage in Kudus and the activities of the surrounding community. Analysis of the data used is the analysis of water model data [6].

3. Historical and Cultural Environment in Kudus

3.1 The Short History of Kudus

The history of Kudus Regency was apparently inseparable from the role of one of *Wali Songo* who spread Islam on the north coast of Central Java. He is Sunan Kudus, also known as Raden Ja'far Shodiq. Sunan is a propagator of religion and leader [7]. The Kudus Name comes from Arabic, *Al Quds* which means purity. The word *Al Quds* was taken when Sunan Kudus performed Hajj. He stopped at Bait Al Makdis (*Al Quds*) to deepen religious knowledge. The return of Sunan Kudus brought souvenirs in the form of stones bearing Arabic. The stone is now located above the priesthood of the Kudus Mosque. To commemorate it, the city is called the Kudus [8], [9].

In Kudus Regency there is the Gelis River which divides the Kudus area into two parts, West Kudus (west of the river) and East Kudus (east of the river). In East Kudus, also known as Kauman Village, in West Kudus there are also Chinese villages in the Kudus Market area, not far from the Minaret Kudus Mosque complex[10]. East Kudus is the center of government since colonial times. This area in the Dutch Age was a place for European and Chinese settlements [11].

The Kudus became the capital of the District under Dutch rule since the XVIII Century. Aside from being the capital city, Kudus was once also one of the main cities in Kudus Regency. Until 1921, Kudus Regency was divided into four areas, namely the cities of Kudus, Cendono, Undaan, and Tenggeles [3]. In the early days of independence, Kudus Regency was divided into three districts (later changed its name to the District Assistant Office), which included 9 Sub-districts. The Kawedanan region is City, Cendono, and Tenggeles. Each Assistant Regent consists of three Districts. For the City area, it consists of City, Teak and Undaan Districts. For the Cendono area, it includes Kaliwungu, Bae, Gebog. While the Tenggeles region includes Jekulo, Mejobo and Dawe Districts.

3.2 Cultural Environment of Kudus

In general, the social conditions in Kudus Regency are relatively good, this can be seen from the level of population growth and a fairly stable population growth rate, the availability of public service infrastructure that can be reached by the community, the creation of an atmosphere of religious community life. However, in line with global dynamics, there are several things that still need attention, including the quality of public service infrastructure facilities, the quality of human resources and the development of cultural characteristics of religious communities [12].

The atmosphere of harmony in religious life and trust in God Almighty is highly desirable for the community. Various places of worship, is one proof of religious harmony among people. Places of worship available in Kudus Regency in 2010 were 659 mosques, 1769 mosques, 21 Christian churches, 7 Catholic churches, 10 Buddhist monasteries, and 3 Buddhist temples [3], [7], [13].

The Kudus Community has quite a lot of customs or traditions that have been running long enough and run every year. Various kinds of traditions are routinely carried out because according to the belief the Kudus community can provide blessings, as a repulsion, and to recall an important event and pray for the death of a figure (elder or in Java is called *Sesepuh*). Customs/traditions in Kudus include: 1) Dhandangan Tradition. The Dhandangan tradition is routinely held annually to welcome the coming of the fasting month (*Ramadhan*) around the Kudus Minaret Mosque to the East to *Simpang Tujuh* Square and to the West until the Jember intersection [8], [14]. 2) Buka Luwur Tradition. *Buka Luwur* there are two places, namely the 10th of *Muharram* (*Suro*) at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the 15th of *Muharram* at the Tomb of Sunan Muria. The closing ceremony of the netting cloth on this tomb is completed with salvation, reading *tahlil* and pray. At the *Buka Luwur* ceremony the atmosphere was crowded, many visitors who came not only the Kudus community but also other areas; 3) Ampyang Rituals. The ampyang ritual aims to hope for blessings (In Java is Called *Ngalab Berkah*) which are held at the *Wali Loram Kulon* Mosque. The community held a procession by bringing various agricultural products, especially ampyang crackers which were white and round in shape [15]; 4) Ketupat Parade. This tradition is found in the village of Colo, Dawe District, Kudus Regency. This tradition is carried out by collecting diamonds and lepet from the community which will be collected into one. The *ketupat* mountain was then carried by officers dressed in black from the Colo village hall until the tomb of Sunan Muria who passed 700 traps of stairs after that was prayed for by the community which was eventually distributed back to the community around the village and accompanied by tambourines.

The traditions that exist in Kudus, if observed in depth, are the product of Islamic culture, but the unique culture also contains elements of Hinduism and Javanese culture [16], [17]. This means that culture in Kudus is the result of acculturation between the values of Islam, Hinduism and Javanese culture. This is as conveyed by Syafwandi, that Kudus is an example of an Islamic city that upholds the traditions and values of Javanese culture [3]. This can be found in each of the traditions described above, in the Ampyang Ritual, prayers are recited using Islamic methods, but Ampyang itself is a traditional Javanese food. This is a concrete example of the success of Islam being preached on Java.

The ritual/tradition diversity that is owned by the people of Kudus Regency indirectly gives birth to a physical culture, namely heritage of historical objects and buildings that are protected by the government, which is commonly referred to as cultural heritage buildings, because in addition to being a cultural heritage building used to support the implementation of a ritual/tradition [18].

3.3 Historical Environment of Kudus

Historical heritage buildings in the Islamic city of Kudus are actually not inferior to other buildings in the old cities in Indonesia. Even according to Castles historical relics in the Kudus show a high civilization with high historical values [8]. The following is the historical heritage of Islam in Kudus, as follows:

Kauman Village is an area where the ulamas live around the *Menara* (Minaret) Mosque. The Kauman environment is an ancient village environment and can be said to be the center of

the city and the environment at that time replaced Sunggingan which was excluded due to new activities around the Minaret. Kudus Minaret Mosque also called *Masjid Al Manar* ("*Masjid Menara*", official name: *Al Aqsa Mosque Manara Qudus*) is an ancient mosque built by Sunan Kudus since 1549 AD (956 Hijri). The current location is in Kauman Village, Kota Subdistrict, Kudus Regency, Central Java. There is a uniqueness of this mosque because it has a minaret that is similar to a temple building and an architectural pattern that combines the concept of Islamic culture with Hindu-Buddhist culture which shows the acculturation process in Javanese Islam [11].

In Demangan Village, south of Kudus Market there is a building which according to local residents' beliefs is a former mosque disbanded. It was said to be disbanded because when the mosque was being built by Sunan Kudus it failed because someone else knew it (Javanese language: *Kemenungsan*). This building is made of arranged bricks and ornamented andesite stones [19], [20]. Salam argues that from the overall building form, the building is not a former mosque building, but approaching a monastery or ancient hermitage of Hindus which was then dismantled by Muslims [7]. This is reinforced by the Traditional Architecture Data which states that this heritage building is actually a building complex of Hindu worship, as evidenced by the worship section in the form of relics including lingga, yoni, slimpetan ornaments and human reliefs in the form of Lord Shiwa. Meanwhile, according to the results of the interview, human relief was the incarnation of humans who knew the construction of the mosque in the morning carried out by supernatural beings and made them angry so that they cursed the human being a relief on a stone [21].

Kyai Telingsing's tomb is located in Sunggingan Village, south of Demangan. According to local beliefs, Kyai Telingsing was a teacher from Sunan Kudus and was one of the muslim leaders of the Kudus, before being replaced by Sunan Kudus. He is a Tiong Hoa Muslim who is also a famous sculptor and artist. By the community the name Telingsing was interpreted as the Chinese name of the words of The Lian Sing [22], [23]. But the Kudus community is more familiar with the term Telingsing.

To the west of the Minaret Mosque of Kudus is the tomb of Sunan Kudus and its followers and descendants located in one complex. At the door of the Sunan Kudus tomb was engraved with the words *Asma'ul Husna* and was dated in 1895 Java or 1296 Hijriah = 1878 AD). The form of *maesan* (grave marker stone) on the tomb of Sunan Kudus is surrounded by a wall decorated with carvings, above which the tomb is given mustaka as found in the mosque beside it, as well as a tajug building to the south of the tomb [3].

Historical heritage in Kudus is the largest masterpiece of Hindu, Islamic and Javanese culture in Indonesia. This shows that the process of Islamization in Kudus was carried out in a peaceful manner rather than through war [2], [24], [25], considering that before Islam came at that time the majority of Javanese people were Hindu, referring to Castles, Islam in Kudus was quite entrenched because it was disseminated using a cultural approach [8]. The cultural approach is termed in Islamic historical relics, such as the Menara Mosque and Bubar Mosque, which in the building's ornaments contain elements of Javanese culture. This is a valuable legacy from our ancestors that needs to be preserved collectively both in memory and in monuments.

4. Social Construction on Historic Environmental Conservation

The amount of damage that occurs in cultural heritage buildings is not solely caused by human actions, it turns out that animals and nature can also cause fatal damage to buildings if not handled immediately. According to Deni, the caretaker of Makam, Masjid, and Menara Sunan Kudus Foundation (YM3SK), brick materials are difficult to maintain, because they are susceptible to interference from nature. When the rain of bricks is exposed to salt, this condition affects when dry white crystals appear which become food for birds around the minaret, resulting in porous bricks gradually. The treatment carried out by cleaning the remnants of the salt or moss substance is by brushing, but with ordinary brushes, it should not be made of steel, because it will make the brick broken and porous quickly [26].

In Kudus Regency a number of immovable cultural environment objects/buildings were allegedly unloaded without permission. This violates Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage. Based on Law Number 11 of 2010, whosoever damages, takes, or moves, changes forms, and destroys parts, groups and entities of cultural heritage objects without the permission of the parties concerned, is considered to have committed a violation. All of this is caused by ignorance or intentional owners of cultural heritage buildings [27]–[29].

In addition, part of the Islamic historical relics is poorly maintained, because it is not inhabited by owners or their heirs who are unable to bear the cost of their care, so the inhabited cannot afford maximum maintenance because of limited funds or lack of attention from the building owner. The community hopes, tax deductions for owners of cultural heritage objects, such as traditional houses or traditional houses such as in Kudus [30]. This is expected to be a motivation for traditional homeowners to maintain them properly, because the incentives previously obtained from the government are also limited. Regarding efforts to maximize the maintenance of cultural heritage objects, he said, the government will maximize based on priority scale. One that is considered, namely the cultural heritage building that is considered to still have a high historical value [31], such as containing the value of education, religion, culture and potential to attract visitors [32].

The existence of fear or concern about the damage to the cultural heritage buildings resulting from utilization is reasonable or at least understandable, because there is almost no activity in utilizing cultural heritage buildings that do not cause negative impacts on the cultural heritage buildings [33]. The essence of cultural heritage buildings that are fragile, unique, limited in number, and no longer renewable, are the main reasons for maintaining cultural heritage buildings from damage, weathering or even destruction. So that there are no activities under any pretext, including their use, which is permissible if it results in damage to cultural heritage buildings or contrary to its sustainability aspects.

According to Sutiyono, Head of cultural and archaeological service of Kudus Regency, revitalization activities aim to increase the social and economic activities of the historic environment, which has lost the vitality of its original function, and those responsible for the cultural heritage building are Kudus societies initiated by the Department of Culture and Kudus Tourism [34], [35]. For this reason, the Department of Culture and Kudus Tourism revitalized according to the Main Duty and the function of Law Number 11 of 2010 Article 20 which explains that the Office of Culture and Tourism has the main task of carrying out regional government affairs in the field of culture and tourism based on the principle of regional autonomy and co-administration.

Public attention to cultural heritage buildings is shown by the involvement of the community in an activity by accepting certain responsibilities and activities and by contributing the resources they have. The issue of preservation of cultural heritage objects is

not only absolutely must be carried out by the government [36]. Conservation efforts are also expected from the participation of community members in order to ensure continuity in the development and use of cultural heritage objects. Community participation is actually very large, and is very necessary, in maintaining and developing cultural heritage objects. It is time to grow sensitivity and independence in seeing and observing their environment as well as conditions that have taken root in society in the past.

Participation in planning is the highest involvement of the community because the community participates in making decisions. Before the emergence of a person's interest or desire towards something is strongly influenced or depends on his knowledge of it. Basically this knowledge ultimately leads to interest and desire to love something [37]. The cultural heritage buildings in Kudus are not only protected by the government, but also the local community. Maintenance by local people is needed considering that cultural heritage objects are the historical and cultural heritage of their ancestors.

The public's attention to the cultural heritage building makes building sustainability more awake, because in general the Kudus community is aware of the importance of preserving cultural heritage buildings. It all starts with the maintenance of private property heritage buildings [38], and most of the cultural heritage buildings are used for recreational facilities because of the uniqueness of the building, so that it is more profitable and adds to their income which indirectly increases the income of the Kudus Government.

The form of attention and participation in the community living around islamic historical relics in the form of places of worship is usually indicated by participating in enlivening the traditions/rituals, doing prayers together at the place of worship (in the same belief) [17], doing devotional work every month. In the community around the tourism place, they generally earn a living as traders, the form of attention is usually to clean up the trash that comes from the merchandise, and for traders who do not do it usually pay taxes for cleaning costs, and the people who live around private and individual islamic historical relics forms of attention usually indicated by the affirmation of the jailer who often scribbled the wall and even damaged the building.

5. Conclusion

The historic environment in Kudus is dominated by Islamic culture. This shows that the Kudus in the past was one of the centers for the development of Islamic civilization in Java. This is evidenced by various kinds of historical and cultural relics in Kudus that are very closely related to Islamic traditions. Some traditions that can still be witnessed are the tradition of Dandhangan, Buka Luwur, Ampyang Rituals, and Ketupat Parade. While important historical relics related to Islamization in Java are the Kudus Minaret, Bubar Mosque, Tomb of the Kyai Telingsing, and the Tomb of Sunan Kudus. Based on the social construction of the community, it shows that historical and cultural relics in the community of Kudus need to be preserved because they are related to the identity and self-esteem of the community of Kudus. The implication of this research is that the historic environment in Kudus can be conserved through education, one of the recommended subjects is Social Studies Education.

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