



Cultural Preservation in Javanese Society

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Abstract. This research reveals how Javanese people maintain Javanese culture in residential houses. In their lives, Javanese people show their commitment to strive for the defense and development of cultural existence, especially in residential houses. The research question departs from cultural changes that go hand in hand with the times can result in the loss of the existence of cultural heritage which certainly affects the identity of a cultural group. This research aims to show the efforts to preserve residential houses as cultural heritage despite modernization. This research use ethnographic studies as a research method to reviews important issues related to the preservation of residential houses as cultural heritage. The results of this study show how Javanese people maintain Javanese culture in their houses even under the onslaught of modern problems, through (1) reveal preservation efforts through the preservation of building forms and (2) the preservation of spatial functions. In the midst of massive changes, Javanese people try to preserve the values, norms, and identity of Javanese culture in residential houses. The preservation effort shows the awareness of the Javanese community regarding the importance of preserving culture which is done by maintaining the form of the building. The implication of this research refers to the preservation of identity in a Javanese residential house. Javanese residential houses are maintained by preventing changes and destruction and maintaining the shape of the building to match the original state, either maintaining old materials or using new materials.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Ethnographic Studies, Javanese residential houses, identity preservation.

1 Introduction

Javanese society expresses Javanese cultural values in various forms, one of which is through Javanese residential houses. Javanese residential houses have a distinctive shape. The shape of the Javanese residential building is closely related to the traditional courtesy of the Javanese community. Cultural traditions in Javanese society reflect various kinds of daily values of the community. Javanese residential houses are the center of community life. It is the place where traditional ceremonies and cultural activities take place. The architecture, space, and layout of Javanese residential houses reflect Javanese cultural values and identity.

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This research focuses on Ndalem Pangeran. Ndalem Pangeran is a Javanese residential house built for princes or those who maintain the king's authority to live and conduct their lives. Pangeran itself is a title given to a male descendant of the king or sultan. In addition, pangeran was also given to the king's son-in-law or someone who would succeed the king. These parties were given or allowed to build a residence called Ndalem Pangeran.

Ndalem pangeran, apart from being a place to live, also displays symbols that symbolize dignity and perfection for humans. This symbol reflects Javanese men who are considered perfect in life if they have fulfilled their complete needs. These needs are *wisma*, *wanodya*, *turangga*, *curiga*, and *kukilo*. The value of this completeness is contained in a residential house which generally must have a *pendopo*, *pringgitan*, *ndalem ageng*, left *senthong*, middle *senthong*, right *senthong*, *pawon*, well, *gandhok*, stables or vehicles, and *abdi dalem's* houses.

The diversity of Javanese traditions shown in Ndalem Pangeran must face changes due to globalization and modernization in this era. The influence of globalization has both negative and positive impacts on traditional culture. Intercultural encounters can shape the cultural richness of a region, but can also threaten the existence of culture, including in Java, this raises the idea of the importance of cultural preservation carried out in a sustainable manner.

This problem was analyzed using ethnographic methods to analyze the relationship between Javanese culture and residential houses. According to Setyowati, Fanggidae, Nainggolan, Vitrianto, and Sari (2023), ethnography method in a research is applied to review the cultural applications in living systems. Spradley (2016) explains that ethnography is used to analyze cultural systems through understanding the perspectives, actions, and lives of the people of a group. According to Spradley (2016), ethnography is conducted by determining informants, interviewing informants, making data records, asking descriptive questions, analyzing ethnographic interviews, making domain analysis, asking structural questions, making taxonomic analysis, asking contrastive questions, making componential analysis, finding cultural themes, writing ethnography. Based on this idea, ethnography is conducted using participatory observation and interview techniques.

The urgency of this preservation stems from the data obtained by researcher. Based on observation (2022-2023), there are fourteen Ndalem Pangeran in Surakarta. The area of ndalem pangeran is divided into two, namely inside Baluwarti and outside Baluwarti. The princely palaces inside Baluwerti are Ndalem Mloyokusuman, Ndalem Kayoman, Ndalem Ngaben, Ndalem Brotodinningratan, Ndalem Prabuningratan, Ndalem Mangkubumen, Ndalem Mangkuyudan, Ndalem Purwodinningrat, Ndalem Suryohamijayan, and Ndalem Sasono Mulyo. Outside Baluwerti are Ndalem Djoyokusuman, Ndalem Suryabratan, Ndalem Hadiwijayan, Ndalem Kusumoyudan, and Ndalem Kusumobraton. Of the fourteen princely palaces, three are damaged and three have been lost.

The destruction and disappearance of Ndalem Pangeran is a cause for concern. The cultural values of Javanese society that are attached to residential houses have faded. The Javanese dwelling house which was originally the center point of culture was damaged and lost. It is important to study the causes of this event further.

Of the three damaged Ndalem Pangeran, this research focuses on one Ndalem Pangeran, namely Ndalem Purwodiningrat. The choice of Ndalem Purwodiningrat as the focus of this research refers to its historical aspect. Historically, there are three ndalems that were first built before the Surakarta palace was established, namely Ndalem Sasono Mulyo, Ndalem Purwodiningrat, and Ndalem Mloyo Kusuman. This data also encouraged the selection of Ndalem Purwodiningrat as the object of research. Ndalem Purwodiningrat is occupied by the descendants of RMH. Purwodiningrat, the son-in-law of PB IX. Based on stories spread in the community, Ndalem Purwodiningrat was once used by PB IV to sit on the throne for one day to create a commitment to reunite the divided Mataram. Figure 1 shows the current condition of Ndalem Purwodiningrat.



Source: Researcher Observation Results, 2022-2023

Fig. 1. Ndalem Purwodiningrat

Based on observations (2022-2023), Ndalem Purwodiningrat is often dubbed as a miniature palace. This is because it was the only palace built with complete and beautiful architecture in its time. Moreover, the virtue of a princely palace is the completeness of the building structure and space. Ndalem Purwodiningrat also has an architectural form and pavilion color that still uses the early Mataram model, which is complete architecture with unadorned wood color. This fact shows that Ndalem Purwodiningrat has an important position in the center of Javanese society. However, currently, many changes have occurred in the form and space of Ndalem Purwodiningrat.

Ndalem Pangeran is one of the Javanese cultural heritages that has an important role for the Javanese community. The typical architecture of residential houses shows the value of life, one of which is shown through the selection of natural materials based on Serat Centini. Serat Centini as a reference in the process of selecting raw materials shows the ideas and views of the Javanese community on environmental preservation before the start of residential construction. The preservation of residential houses shows the idea that Javanese people believe in the concept of spirit in space. Each part of the Javanese residential house is the center of life that shows the value of Javanese life. Based on this, Ndalem Purwodiningrat can be designated as a cultural heritage.

Based on the background that has been described, this research was conducted to review the efforts of Javanese people in maintaining cultural values contained in Javanese houses. The review of Javanese residential houses was carried out by reading the ideas of Javanese people, actions, and space design of Javanese residential houses. Javanese residential houses have symbols that are deeply meaningful regarding cultural values. Geertz (2013) [1] explains that symbols are a way for humans to interpret an aspect in various forms. Geertz (2013) [1] also explained that the meaning of symbols can reveal the thoughts, concepts, and ideas of the community. The cultural values that are still reflected in Javanese residential houses question the commitment of the Javanese community to maintaining and preserving Javanese residential houses.

This research offers novelty in the multidisciplinary field. The novelty and urgency of this research is the discussion of the interaction between courtiers and homeowners in preserving Ndalem Purwodiningrat, preservation activities, and challenges faced in maintaining Ndalem Purwodiningrat. Physical maintenance and socialization are needed to maintain the cultural value of the house. Spreading knowledge about the insights of Javanese residential houses can foster awareness and commitment of the Javanese community to participate in preserving Javanese residential houses. This research examines how Javanese people care for and maintain residential houses in modern times. The development of the times has influenced changes in the perspective of Javanese society. It also changes the level of importance of residential houses in the eyes of Javanese people. Javanese people who used to think that the Javanese dwelling house was the center of community life began to decrease. The changing times have an impact on the decreasing concern of Javanese people for Javanese residential houses.

2 Ndalem Pangeran

Ndalem pangeran is a Javanese residence built for princes or those who maintain the king's authority to live and conduct their lives. Budiwiyanto (2009) [2] explains that the prince's residence is called Ndalem Pangeran. Nuryanto (2019) [3] explains that Ndalem Pangeran has a typology that presents Javanese culture. This makes Ndalem Pangeran an image of Javanese culture.

Ndalem Pangeran has implicit and explicit content that leads to good meanings, especially for the lives of Javanese people, namely the symbolization of the shape of a mountain that symbolizes sacred symbols, especially on the pendopo. The form of traditional Javanese architecture is an inspiration for the development of design in the country. The architecture of traditional Javanese houses not only represents Javanese culture but also the outlook on life of the Javanese people. It also shows that the community still refers to traditional Javanese houses whose every aspect has a meaning.

In the idea of traditional Javanese society, every cultural value system is embodied in a symbol and emblem. These symbols and symbols are displayed in a building. Javanese culture is embodied in Javanese architecture which cannot be separated from Javanese beliefs. Beliefs that are also related to myths are shown through symbols

that influence Javanese people's daily lives. This makes every area in the building have an implied meaning. This research sees a connection between the influence of modernization, modern society, and traditional Javanese houses.

Ndalem Pangeran has rules in determining its space. Ndalem Pangeran has a distinctive structure. Based on the results of interviews and observations, Ndalem Pangeran generally has three parts in the house, namely pendopo, pringgitan, and ndalem ageng. Each space and its shape has a different meaning. The room plan of Ndalem Pangeran can be seen in Figure 2.

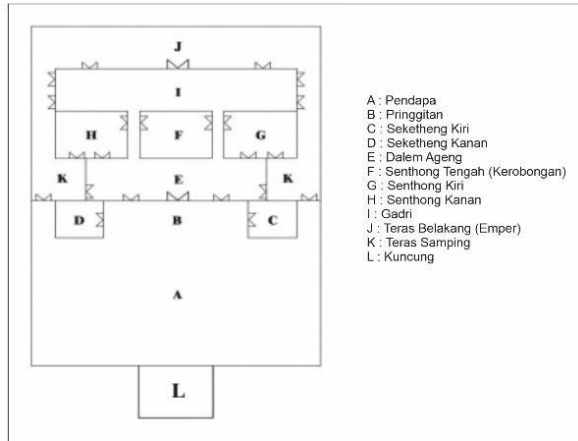


Fig. 2. Ndalem Pangeran's layout

Traditional Javanese architecture has basic concepts in its construction. A traditional Javanese house has a joglo-shaped roof. A house with a joglo roof has several parts consisting of the front part of the pendopo, in the middle the pringgitan, and the rear-most and innermost part is the ndalem. The shape of this traditional Javanese house forms a three-part linear arrangement [4]. The basic concept of the residential house is identical to the understanding of the inherent nature of human life, both men and women, which is socially and culturally constructed by Javanese cultural values. The existence of a Javanese residential house signifies the harmonization and stability of humans with their lives and the creator, God Almighty.

Ndalem Pangeran is a place to do various ceremonial procedures. This procedure is the process of the ceremony that already has clear rules, while the ceremony is the uba-rampe completeness used as a means of procedure [5]. This ceremony is carried out with the hope and prayer that humans will get eternal blessings and happiness [6]. This Javanese cultural order extends to various fields, including the appearance of the building form in which Javanese people live. This statement according to opinion states that culture is a whole system of ideas, actions, and human works in the context of community life that is made by humans by learning [7].

Based on interviews with informants in this research, a Javanese house has three parts in its residence, namely pendopo, pringgitan, and ndalem ageng. The size of space in a Ndalem Pangeran has a meaning that the prince or king has an equal posi-

tion with other people in the eyes of God, the difference is power. In the layout of a traditional Javanese house, ndalem becomes the core space or the inner space. Ndalem Pangeran always pay attention to harmony with the surrounding nature in the sense that they always pays attention to respect the surrounding area. The concept of Javanese residential space is different if we look at the Western concept of space but rather leads to a place that is strongly influenced by the dimensions of time and ritual.

The shape of the traditional Javanese house forms a three-part linear back order [4]. The spatial configuration of a Javanese house is known for its dualism (binary opposition), between outside and inside, and between left and right, between resting areas and activity areas, between the male spirit which is usually placed on the right and the female spirit in the placenta which is usually placed on the left, then there are right sentong and left sentong [8]. This shows the meaning behind the stages of making each area in a Ndalem Pangeran. The house as a place to live is interpreted as a symbol of dignity and perfection as a human being, especially for Javanese men who will be perfect in life when they have *wisma*, *wanodya*, *turangga*, *curiga*, and *kukilo*, so that the construction of the house is made by not contradicting the laws of cosmology, custom, and natural law.

The Javanese residential house is one of the manifestations of the way of life for Javanese people. The house is a form of self-reflection for Javanese people who are still bound by cultural concepts, including all routine activities, ritual activities, and the concept of residence. This can be seen in the architecture and space of Ndalem Purwodiningrat.



Source: Results of Researcher Observations, 2022-2023

Fig. 3. The front of Ndalem Purwodiningrat

Javanese residential houses present the process of the human journey in living their culture. The Javanese residential house is a symbol to clarify the culture and ideas of Javanese society that have been embedded in the minds of each member. This is interpreted by Roland Barthes' statement about myth described by Iswidayati (2007) [9], that mythology can be manifested in photography, film, painting, and various other forms that represent implied meaning. Mythology need to be revealed through in-depth interpretation. Based on this idea, the myth and meaning of the Javanese

residential house needs to be interpreted deeply to see the meaning behind it. This meaning shows us the idea of Javanese society in Ndalem Pangeran.

3 Cultural Preservation in Javanese Society

Modernization has created a shift in many aspects of life. The development of technology affects the shift in people's perspective, way of life, and culture. The culture of the community is manifested in the form of buildings, especially in this research is a traditional Javanese house. Javanese traditional houses are influenced by modernization. As time progresses, buildings are designed in accordance with modernization. However, the shape of the building still refers to traditional houses that have meaning.

The preservation of the shape of the Javanese residential house is shown through the shape of the joglo house. This form of house is characteristic of Javanese houses. Javanese houses have joglo with a pyramid shape and lined rooms arranged symmetrically. Javanese people also maintain the pendopo space as the main living room. This shows the characteristics of Javanese society. The soko guru is also maintained as its function is believed by the Javanese. The soko guru consists of four large poles placed under a roof that rises upwards at the top. The shape of the soko guru symbolizes the sanctity and prosperity of the house owner. Javanese society also reflects social status through beautiful carvings on the walls of houses. This carving is a symbol of balance in Javanese life.

The Javanese community also maintains the pendopo space in the residence. Pendopo shows the relationship between man and God. This is represented through the relationship between the building and the surrounding space and the harmony in life. Pendopo reflects the attachment between the vertical human relationship to God. The shape of the house also shows the relationship between humans and fellow humans. The form of the house that is maintained is also in line with the preservation of cultural diversity in Javanese society.

The stage of making a Javanese residential house also shows efforts to maintain the existence of symbols, that also affect the lives of the people and are related to myths that have good meaning for the house. The Javanese view of the stages of life is represented through the stages of the construction of a Javanese house. Modernization brings about the domination of power by those who have the authority, forcing them to follow all policies under the pretext of preservation, not to preserve culture but to benefit and attract profits for certain groups. The culture that they have carried out for generations suddenly have to be unleashed, following modernization to change the ideology that has already been embedded in people's understanding. The residential house is still maintained even though the life of Javanese society is shifting towards a more advanced civilization. The changes that occur in Javanese houses do not necessarily eliminate the traditional nuances.

The meaning of the architectural forms and spaces that are still maintained today face challenges in preservation efforts. This challenge was found in the researcher's observation. After the observation and interview process, it was found that Ndalem Purwodiningrat was damaged. This event shows that there is a serious urgency to pay

more attention to the preservation of Ndalem Purwodiningrat. The preservation of Ndalem Purwodiningrat can be supported by various stakeholders, ranging from the surrounding community, neighbors, homeowners, and the government. In practice, stakeholder cooperation in the maintenance of Ndalem Purwodiningrat is lacking. This is due to the conflict of interest among stakeholders.

Ndalem Purwadiningrat is currently occupied and maintained by one person. Based on the interviewees, the government does not provide funding for the process of maintenance and preservation of Ndalem Pangeran. Looking deeper, the aspects that influence the preservation of Ndalem Pangeran are certainly not only economic factors.

Preservation efforts are carried out through small steps by involving the community. This shows that preservation efforts are not only done because of financial assistance. Maintenance is done through small things such as routine cleaning every day. The existence of Javanese residential houses that are still standing today also shows that there is still existence because of social value and cultural values.

The maintenance of Javanese houses should be done by doing gotong royong as one of the strong values in Javanese society is not implemented. Rotating cleaning and painting are also not done to maintain the shape and color of Javanese houses. Seen from the current condition of Ndalem Purwodiningrat in Figure 4.



Source: Results of Researcher Observations, 2022-2023

Fig. 4. Condition of Ndalem Pangeran

Efforts to preserve Ndalem Purwodiningrat are not carried out regularly. When viewed from the preservation steps, Ndalem Purwodiningrat does not experience a renewal of the raw materials of the residence to maintain the shape and color so as not to be damaged. This can also be seen from ndalem ageng in Figure 5.



Source: Results of Researcher Observations, 2022-2023

Fig. 5. The condition of Ndalem Ageng at Ndalem Purwodiningrat

Ndalem ageng is a part of Ndalem Pangeran that has an important role. For the Javanese community, ndalem ageng is the center of Ndalem Pangeran. Ndalem ageng consists of three rooms, namely the hallway called *pringgitan*; *petanen* (*pasren*) in the center, right and left; *sentong* right and left; and *gandrik* at the back. Ndalem ageng is private and can only be entered by the family of the house owner. In addition, ndalem ageng was the space that is built first. This stage must be followed as a reference in building a house. Referring to the ideas of Sachari (2002) [10], the symbols in the spatial arrangement of Ndalem Pangeran represent Javanese culture. This proves that the space of Ndalem Pangeran represents Javanese culture that prioritizes the process.

Ndalem Pangeran was also damaged in some parts. Ndalem Purwodiningrat was made with wood from the Donoloyo Forest. The architecture and color of the pavilion also still use the early *mataraman* model, which is the color of wood without decoration. It has suffered significant damage. Some of the walls are fragile and some are almost collapsed as shown in Figure 6.





Source: Researcher Observation Results, 2022-2023

Fig. 6. The condition of Ndalem Purwodiningrat which has suffered various damages

This damage is a regrettable phenomenon. Based on the observation, there are still many servants in Ndalem Pangeran. However, they are no longer fully involved due to a lack of payment. This phenomenon shows that the maintenance and preservation of a cultural heritage requires funds.

Routine maintenance needs to be done regularly, either daily or monthly. This can be done by getting help from various parties, including the family of the Javanese house owner. Observations also show that the involvement of the prince's family or noble family is relatively low. This is due to the feeling that they do not occupy the residence.

The lack of attention from the government, family, and community shows a lack of ownership. The lack of ownership of Ndalem Purwodiningrat means that maintenance is done as much as possible. The lack of attention from stakeholders is also influenced by the diminishing power. Before the modern era, stakeholders and the family of the

house owner had a higher level of power. Ndalem Purwodiningrat will have servants who can take care of it, with so much energy and with abundant funding.

The changes experienced by Ndalem Purwodiningrat also occurred due to the changing concept of the city. The changes also show the influence of the surrounding houses. Despite its terrible condition, Ndalem Purwodiningrat still has the same architectural form and color as before. The simultaneous destruction of Ndalem Purwodiningrat shows that the change of cultural heritage is not easy to occur.

This event shows the connection between cultural heritage and the modern understanding of architecture. The development around Ndalem Purwodiningrat has made it difficult to maintain tradition and the view that Ndalem Pangeran is the center point of cultural life. The fading traditions also affect the destruction of Ndalem Purwodiningrat.

The preservation of Javanese residential houses is carried out to maintain authentic Javanese values and cultural systems. The values and cultural systems maintained in residential houses can reflect the identity and life history of the Javanese community. This refers to the idea of Sugiharto (2019) [11], that cultural commitment can protect a culture from interactions between cultural groups. The relationship that exists can weaken the strength of a culture. Unmaintained Javanese residential houses can have an impact on the loss of cultural authenticity so that Javanese cultural values become unstable.

The preservation of Javanese residential houses is done to maintain the conceptual system of Javanese society. It preserves the thoughts, ideas, emotions, symbols, and meanings reflected in the building form of Javanese residential houses. In addition, the layout of Javanese residential houses also represents the conceptual system of Javanese life. Sugiharto (2019) [11] explains that cultural commitment is an important part of cultural change which is realized in the form of translation, appropriation, resistance, subversion, or compromise. This is applied by the Javanese community to maintain the Javanese dwelling house.

In the case of Ndalem Purwodiningrat, the government does not provide financial assistance to the community to maintain the condition of the house. The community must independently have the awareness of maintaining the house. This is done by the Javanese community. Although government assistance does not reach them, the community still maintains the authenticity and shape of Javanese residential houses. This effort departs from the meaning of a residential house which is not just a building but is closely related to the ideas and beliefs of the Javanese community.

Preservation of residential houses can also be done with preservation and reconstruction efforts. Reconstruction is not done in the preservation process of Ndalem Purwodiningrat. Javanese people try to preserve residential houses as ancient buildings that have a long history independently by maintaining the shape of the space. However, the robustness of the Ndalem Purwodiningrat building is not maintained.

The form of commitment of the Javanese community can actually be further enhanced by maintaining Javanese houses as a community strategy to face cultural change. This needs to be done because cultural change that occurs massively is a serious problem. According to Sugiharto (2019) [11], cultural commitment is very important for cultural communities to preserve the existence of cultures that are threat-

ened due to various factors, such as globalization, modernization, and technological advances. The interconnectedness of buildings and culture makes Javanese people have to work hard. They still maintain the function of residential space. The shape of the house and its position are also maintained as before. This effort shows the commitment of the Javanese community, despite not receiving assistance from the government and the family of the house owner.

4 Conclusion

Javanese residential house is a symbol of Javanese culture that represents the attitude of Javanese people in viewing their lives. The traditional cultural knowledge of the Javanese people is presented through the meaning of the space. Values that are considered 'old-fashioned' and not in line with the pace of modernity, turn out to contain humanist guidance in living life. In a broader context, the house actually reflects the life journey of Javanese people in the past and present, displayed through symbols that explain the value system in carrying out daily life. Modernization has influenced traditional houses. Efforts to preserve Javanese residential houses are carried out by maintaining the existence of space.

Through observation and interviews, the process of maintaining Ndalem Purwodiningrat, there are several obstacles, namely (1) the construction of houses for courtiers that take up space for the main house; (2) families who do not help; and (3) insufficient government funding. The reduction of cultural values that originally placed the center of life in the Ndalem Pangeran has made people no longer pay as much attention as before. Changes also occurred due to changes in the traditions and basic principles of Javanese life. Conflicts of interest, political, social, and economic, affect the maintenance of Ndalem Pangeran.

The existence of culture in Javanese residential houses survives along with the commitment held by the Javanese community. The Javanese community independently and voluntarily maintains residential houses shows the importance of the position of residential houses for their society. Through the preservation of the form and function of space in the house, Javanese people can continue to carry out traditional ceremonies. This reflects the idea of life. Primarily about belief as one of the cultural aspects that the Javanese community tries to produce continuously in various forms. This tradition is maintained and preserved with a commitment held by each individual in the form of a sense of care and a sense of belonging from within the Javanese community for religious beliefs as a cultural product that has become an identity. Preservation efforts are also seen in the way Javanese people maintain the function and building form of Javanese residential houses.

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