

MANAGING URBAN HERITAGE: HARMONIZING COMMUNITY UNIQUENESS AND URBAN PLANNING IN PASURUAN CITY

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Abstract

This research examines Pasuruan City as a cultural heritage landscape shaped by colonial, Islamic, and multi-ethnic layers that continue to color the dynamics of its urban space. The research aims to identify how this heritage is interpreted and integrated into tourism development while uncovering the obstacles that arise in the preservation process and community participation. A qualitative method with an ethnographic approach was employed, utilizing participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of archives and policy documents. Research subjects included local residents, cultural actors, and local government representatives directly involved in heritage management. The data were analyzed using thematic interpretation to understand the interconnections between historical narratives, urban spatial patterns, and tourism practices. The findings indicate that Pasuruan displays a cultural palimpsest, where colonial buildings, religious sites, and multicultural areas intertwine to form a distinctive urban identity. However, the fragmentation of heritage asset ownership, weak management, and the absence of a connecting narrative between clusters remain major obstacles. In conclusion, a multi-stakeholder strategy is necessary, involving the government, communities, and cultural asset owners, to enable heritage to serve a dual function: as a pillar of collective memory and as a driver for sustainable tourism and the city's creative economy.

Keywords: *Heritage, Cultural Heritage, Urban Tourism, Colonial Traces, Ethnography, Pasuruan City.*

1. Introduction

Cities in Indonesia, particularly post-colonial port cities, often function as complex cultural palimpsests where historical, social, and cultural layers overlap and interact (Graham et al., 2000). Pasuruan City, located on the northern coast of East Java, exemplifies this phenomenon, possessing a rich landscape shaped by pre-Islamic civilization, centuries-old Chinese trade, deep-rooted Islamic traditions, and a dominant Dutch colonial industrial past (Chawari, 2002). This layered identity is not abstract; it is manifested in distinct spatial clusters that define the city's urban fabric. These clusters include the colonial-industrial zone (centered around the P3GI research facility), the Islamic-religious center (anchored by the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque), and multi-ethnic commercial quarters like Chinatown. This rich, multi-layered tapestry presents a significant and unique potential for developing heritage tourism (Suryana & Setiawan, 2018). However, the modern understanding of heritage management goes beyond mere conservation; it involves navigating the complex social and political processes of meaning-making in the present (Waterton & Watson, 2015).

Despite this clear potential, the utilization of Pasuruan's heritage is hindered by significant structural challenges that remain unresolved. The city's most valuable heritage assets are physically and administratively fragmented. Many iconic properties, particularly in the colonial and commercial clusters, are not owned by the local government but by various state-owned enterprises (BUMN), private foundations, or individuals. This ownership fragmentation creates a critical governance deadlock, making it nearly impossible to implement a cohesive urban heritage narrative or an integrated management plan (Tappe & Riotto, 2018). Furthermore, developing heritage tourism in a multicultural city like Pasuruan requires a delicate balance. Without careful, inclusive governance, development risks descending into cultural commodification, social friction, or the marginalization of certain community identities (Timothy, 2022).



Figure 1. The port in Pasuruan, which was once a center of trade and a gateway for outside cultures.
Source: Author, 2025.

In response to these challenges, the Pasuruan city government has recently implemented a focused *city branding* strategy, repositioning the city as "*Pasuruan Kota Madinah*" (Pasuruan, the City of Madinah). This policy has been visibly successful in revitalizing the central religious cluster around the city square. However, this strategic choice simultaneously creates a significant research gap that this study addresses. The policy actively promotes a singular, religion-focused narrative above all others. This promotion creates a clear and observable dissonance between the government's mono-narrative branding strategy and the city's tangible multi-narrative historical and socio-spatial reality. How this dissonance is managed, what its implications are for the "silenced" heritage clusters (like the colonial-industrial zone), and how it impacts the community's collective identity remains critically under-examined.

This research frames this policy dissonance through the lens of critical heritage studies. From this perspective, heritage is understood not as a neutral relic of the past, but as a selective, politically-charged "production" in the present (Labadi, 2017). The government's branding strategy can therefore be analyzed as an Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). This discourse is a top-down process where an official narrative one that aligns with current political or economic goals is chosen and promoted (Smith, Waterton, & Watson, 2016). A logical and direct consequence of forming an AHD is the "silencing" of other, alternative narratives, such as Pasuruan's colonial industrial history or its multi-ethnic trade legacy. This framework is particularly relevant for understanding power dynamics and identity negotiation in post-colonial Indonesian cities.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the gap between Pasuruan's heritage policy and its complex urban reality. The specific research objectives are: (1) to analyze how Pasuruan's multicultural identity is shaped by its competing historical layers and spatial clusters; (2) to critically evaluate the structural obstacles and socio-political dynamics of the current "*Kota Madinah*" heritage policy, particularly the dissonance caused by its AHD; and (3) to propose a more inclusive and integrative "multi-narrative" management model as a strategic solution. This research contributes an original, evidence-based framework for harmonizing conflicting narratives in urban heritage governance. By doing so, it offers a path for Pasuruan to develop a heritage tourism model that is not only economically sustainable but also truly representative of its entire cultural mosaic (Orbasli & Vellinga, 2020). The focus on heritage is critical, as contemporary research increasingly

defines cultural heritage as a core component of urban sustainability, inextricably linked to a city's social, economic, and environmental resilience (Song & Selim, 2022).

2. Method

This research is anchored in a constructivist paradigm, which posits that reality is socially constructed and subjective. This paradigm was chosen because the study seeks to understand how the community and various stakeholders in Pasuruan City interpret, define, and give meaning to the concept of heritage (Wijaya, 2014; Zaluchu, 2020). Consequently, a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design was employed. Ethnography allows for an in-depth and holistic exploration of the cultural and social phenomena surrounding heritage management, focusing on the community's lived experiences, perspectives, and daily practices in their natural setting. This approach is essential for uncovering the underlying structures of thought and collective actions that constitute the unique culture of Pasuruan in relation to its historical legacy.

The research was conducted in Pasuruan City, East Java, a location specifically chosen for its rich historical palimpsest and recent heritage development initiatives. The fieldwork, including participatory observation, was conducted intensively over a one-month period in July 2025. Research subjects were selected purposively, totaling seven primary informants (or informant groups) to capture a multi-stakeholder perspective. These informants included three cultural actors and local experts (a researcher from P3GI, a cultural practitioner/educator, and an artist), three heritage site managers (representing the Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple and the Mbah Salim Tomb Complex), and one group interview with representatives from the local government (Pasuruan City Office of Tourism, Youth, and Sports). In this ethnographic study, the researchers acted as the primary instrument, immersing themselves in the field to gain an emic (insider's) perspective on the issues being studied.

Data were collected through a combination of three primary ethnographic techniques to ensure triangulation and data richness. First, participant observation was conducted by attending community events (such as the Haul of Kyai Hamid), visiting key heritage sites, and observing daily interactions in the urban space. Second, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the selected subjects to explore their narratives, perceptions, and experiences regarding heritage preservation and tourism development. Third, document and archival analysis was performed on various materials, including colonial maps, local government policy documents on urban planning, historical archives, and media reports related to heritage in Pasuruan (Simbiak, 2016). This combination of techniques provided a comprehensive dataset covering both spoken words, observed actions, and official records.

The data analysis process was conducted iteratively and followed established ethnographic procedures. The analysis began in the field with the writing of descriptive and reflective field notes. Upon completion of data collection, a thematic analysis was employed. This process involved several stages: (1) familiarization with the entire dataset (interview transcripts, field notes, documents); (2) generating initial codes from the data; (3) searching for, reviewing, and defining themes that emerged from the codes; and (4) interpreting these themes to construct a coherent narrative that answers the research questions. This systematic approach allowed for the identification of key patterns, connections, and contradictions in how heritage is managed and perceived by different actors in Pasuruan City. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researchers continuously compared the emerging themes with the collected empirical evidence throughout the analysis process. The interpretation of the data was conducted by considering the diverse perspectives of different actors involved in heritage management, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding heritage preservation in Pasuruan City. This iterative process enabled the researchers to capture not only shared perceptions and practices but also variations and tensions among stakeholders, resulting in a deeper and more contextualized interpretation of heritage management dynamics.

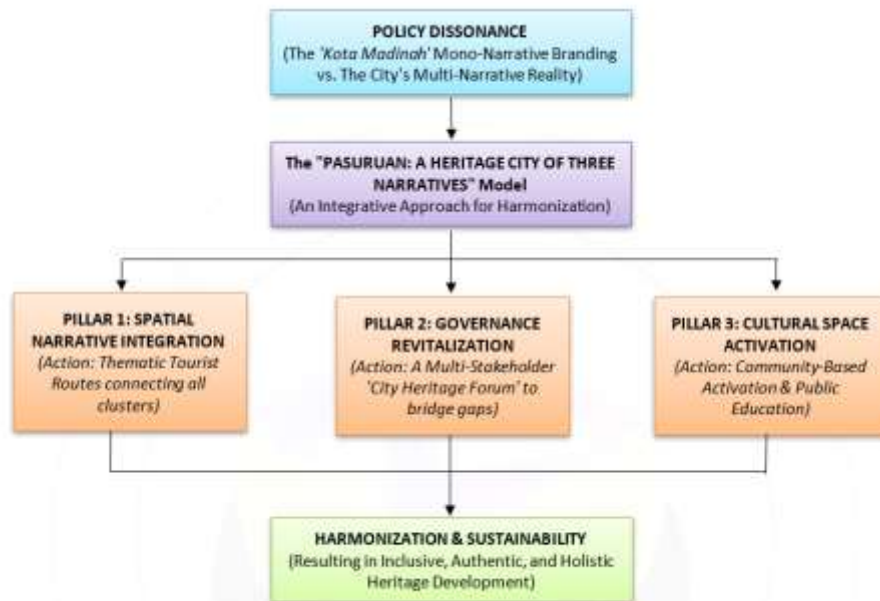


Figure 2. Research Framework for The model of "Heritage City of Three Narratives
Source: Author, 2025.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. The History of Pasuruan City in Religious and Governmental Dynamics

The historical formation of Pasuruan City is a dialectical process that demonstrates the capacity of a social space to continuously absorb, adapt, and integrate various civilizational influences. Rather than negating one another, each historical phase has become the foundation for the next, creating a rich and layered socio-historical landscape. An analysis of these historical traces indicates that Pasuruan's identity was not singularly formed but is the result of a superposition of Hindu-Buddhist, Chinese trade, Islamic, and colonial-era modernization layers. This phenomenon makes Pasuruan a cultural palimpsest a manuscript repeatedly written upon, where traces of older writings remain present and give meaning to contemporary reality. This is key to understanding the dynamics of socio-infrastructural harmony in the future.



Figure 3. Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple as evidence of the arrival of Chinese civilization in Pasuruan
Source: Author, 2025.

The initial foundation of civilization in the Pasuruan region was marked by a strong Hindu-Buddhist influence, which formed the most fundamental cultural substratum of the area. Significant archaeological evidence, such as the existence of the Jawi Temple, indicates the practice of syncretism between Shivaite Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, reflecting a society that had achieved a high level of philosophical harmony (Adhitama, 2023). Furthermore, the existence of the Gunung Gangsir Temple reinforces the evidence of an established civilization from the Medang Kamulan era (Ma'rufin & Utari, 2021). This heritage is manifested not only in physical forms but also in the collective memory of the community, such as oral narratives about the existence of Kebon Candi as a center for Hindu architectural learning in the past and the figure of Patih Menak Supetak, who represents the "Gatra Blambangan Madura" identity (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025; Rosidi, personal communication, July 10, 2025). This civilizational layer became the basis for local values and aesthetics before the arrival of new external influences.

Simultaneously with the Hindu-Buddhist civilization, Pasuruan's geographical position as a city on the northern coast of Java made it a crucial node in the Nusantara maritime trade network. Its function as a port city was the primary factor facilitating the arrival and formation of merchant communities from various ethnicities, especially the Chinese community (Chawari, 2002). The presence of this community gave the city's character a cosmopolitan color and laid the foundation for a trade-oriented economy. The most monumental physical evidence of this layer is the establishment of the Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple, which is estimated to have existed since the 17th century, making it one of the oldest religious institutions in Pasuruan (Prabhita & Christiana, 2018). The temple's proximity to the old market center indicates a symbiotic relationship between economic activities (trade) and the fulfillment of its community's spiritual needs (Hartono, personal communication, July 5, 2025). Thus, this historical layer instilled Pasuruan's identity as a commercial city open to inter-ethnic interaction.

The subsequent process of Islamization occurred as a dynamic cultural dialogue, not as a process of total substitution. The arrival and preaching of charismatic clerical figures, such as Mbah Slagah and Mbah Salim, became catalysts for socio-religious transformation (Sofyan, personal communication, July 5, 2025). Their central role is evident not only in the oral narratives that developed within the community but also in their influence on the city's morphological formation. The establishment of the city center with the distinctive *catur gatra* configuration—comprising the city square (*alun-alun*), a mosque (Masjid Jami' Al-Anwar), a government center, and a market—reflects the implementation of a Javanese-Islamic urban spatial concept (Junianto, 2017). This spatial pattern became a new physical marker representing the Islamic identity that began to take root in the center of power and public life.



Figure 4. The Al-Anwar Grand Mosque is historical evidence of the rapid growth of Islamic civilization in the city of Pasuruan.

Source: Author, 2025.

Furthermore, the Islamization process in Pasuruan demonstrated remarkable cultural flexibility through mechanisms of acculturation and syncretism. Instead of eradicating existing traditions, Islamic values often blended harmoniously with deeply rooted social practices. This acculturation phenomenon can be seen in the *bancaan* tradition, a social rite believed by the community to have adapted elements of Chinese culture, which has now become an integral part of Pasuruan's communal life (Rosidi, personal communication, July 10, 2025). On the other hand, syncretic practices also persist, with some community members maintaining an interest in mystical and sacred aspects rooted in pre-Islamic beliefs, which exist latently alongside normative Islamic practices (Farrisca, personal communication, July 17, 2025). This flexibility shows that the community's religious identity is not monolithic but rather a rich spectrum of cultural fusion and negotiation.



Figure 5. Forms of relics at the Indonesian Sugar Plantation Research Center since the Dutch colonial period.
Source: Author, 2025.

The most recent layer of civilization was formed during the European colonial era, which fundamentally changed the scale and orientation of Pasuruan City. Under the governance of the VOC and the Dutch East Indies, Pasuruan was positioned as an important center in the global commodity economy, particularly the sugar industry. To support this function, the colonial government built large-scale modern infrastructure, including a railway network, a modernized port, and the leading sugar plantation research station, Proefstation Oost-Java (now P3GI) (Danang, personal communication, July 22, 2025; Chawari, 2002). This development was also accompanied by the introduction of distinctive European and Indies architectural styles, which became new visual markers for the elite residential and government centers in the city (Tutuko, 2003).

The addition of this colonial layer also had implications for the city's social and spatial order. The Dutch East Indies government implemented a modern administrative system, often accompanied by the practice of spatial segregation. The emergence of separate European residential areas, complete with their own facilities such as a *societeit* building (Harmonie) and a church, created a dualism in the city's structure (Junianto, 2017). On one hand, there were the pre-existing centers of activity for the indigenous and other ethnic communities; on the other, new centers emerged as symbols of colonial power and lifestyle. It is this complex, layered, and sometimes fragmented urban structure that was ultimately inherited by the government of the Republic of Indonesia and became the physical and social context for Pasuruan City's development to this day.

3.2. The Socio-Cultural Constellation and Collective Identity of the Pasuruan Community

The socio-cultural constellation of Pasuruan City's community is a living manifestation of the historical layers previously described. The city's collective identity is neither static nor monolithic, but rather a dynamic mosaic composed of long-term interactions among various ethnic groups. The community's composition, historically consisting of Javanese, Madurese, Chinese, and Arab ethnicities, is a sociological fact rooted in Pasuruan's historical function as a significant port city on the northern coast of Java since the colonial era (Farrisca, personal communication, July 17, 2025; Chawari, 2002). This economic function as a commercial gateway was the driving engine for the formation of demographic diversity, creating social spaces such as the Chinatown (Pecinan) and the Arab quarter (Kampung Arab), which to this day serve as spatial markers of this multicultural history.

This inter-ethnic interaction occurs not only in residential contexts but also manifests fluidly in inclusive public spaces, especially in economic activities. The Jalan Niaga area, for example, can be analyzed as a laboratory of everyday pluralism, where ethnic boundaries become

more fluid in commercial transactions and interactions (Farrisca, personal communication, July 17, 2025). This centuries-long interaction has gradually built strong social capital, in the form of a web of economic interdependence and social tolerance that has become the foundation for communal harmony. This social capital is an invaluable asset for Pasuruan City, an organic product of its long history as a meeting point for various cultures.

Within this mosaic of identity, the religious character of Islam holds a highly central position and has been significantly reinforced in recent decades. This phenomenon is embodied in the city's image or branding, consciously constructed as the "City of *Santri*" or "Pasuruan, the City of Madinah." This is a strategy formally implemented by the local government in an effort to create a unique tourism identity in the era of regional autonomy (Firdaus & Setiadi, 2024; Agustiniingsih & Oktariyanda, 2023). This policy, as confirmed by the Office of Tourism, Youth, and Sports, is a strategic choice aimed at capitalizing on existing religious tourism assets, such as the charisma of K.H. Abdul Hamid's tomb and the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque (Disparpora, personal communication, July 31, 2025).

Despite the emphasis on one aspect of identity in formal policy, social harmony at the grassroots level remains well-preserved. This is inseparable from the vital role of the *ulama* or *kiai* as guardians of social balance. The senior *kiai* in Pasuruan possess what can be analyzed as "personal and institutional charisma," making them effective moral exemplars and conflict mediators (Pratama, 2024). The figure of K.H. Abdul Hamid, for instance, is remembered by the community not only as a great scholar but as an egalitarian individual capable of embracing all groups, which directly fostered a cool and cohesive social climate (Rosidi, personal communication, July 10, 2025). The presence of such figures serves as an internal mechanism within Pasuruan society, ensuring that the strengthening of Islamic identity does not lead to social exclusivity but remains within the framework of deep-rooted tolerance. The central role of the *kiai* as guardians of social balance in Pasuruan reflects findings in various local contexts in Indonesia, where community figures are key to the success of community-based tourism development (Mulyani & Al-Banna, 2022).

The richness of Pasuruan's collective identity is also most authentically reflected in its diverse intangible cultural heritage, which continues to live and adapt. These cultural practices serve as tangible evidence of acculturation and cultural resilience. Local arts such as the Tari Terbang Bandung (Bandung Flying Dance), for instance, are an innovation of the Takruk Bandungan tradition, which has a specific social function in wedding ceremonies, demonstrating the community's ability to revitalize its arts to remain relevant (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025). On the other hand, communal traditions like *Riyoyo Tupat* (Ketupat Day) and *Purnamaan* (Full Moon Celebration) serve as markers of how social rites can strengthen citizen solidarity, blending religious celebrations with local wisdom (Disparpora, personal communication, July 31, 2025). Furthermore, pluralism in Pasuruan is clearly manifested in the spiritual domain. The existence of the Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple, which functions not only as a center for Tri Dharma worship but also as a social space for cultural practices like the Lion Dance (*Barongsai*) and Ciam Si rituals, demonstrates a belief system and tradition that runs parallel to and in harmony with the life of the majority (Hartono, personal communication, July 5, 2025; Prabrita & Christiana, 2018). Coupled with the continued interest of some community members in the mystical and syncretic aspects of pre-Islamic heritage (Farrisca, personal communication, July 17, 2025), it becomes clear that Pasuruan's socio-cultural identity is highly complex. It is this wealth of social practices, informal leadership, and diversity of traditions that truly constitutes the "social uniqueness" of the Pasuruan community a reality that must be deeply understood in any planning effort for heritage area development.

3.3. Physical Heritage and Cultural Heritage of Pasuruan City

The physical heritage of Pasuruan City constitutes a three-dimensional archive that records the traces of each civilizational layer that has shaped it. The spatial distribution of cultural heritage buildings and areas in the city is not random; instead, it forms thematic clusters that directly reflect the historical narratives, social functions, and cultural identities previously discussed. By inventorying and mapping these assets, several key areas can be identified, each with a strong historical character, including a colonial-industrial cluster, an Islamic-religious cluster, and a multi-ethnic economic cluster. An analysis of this spatial constellation is crucial, as the city's physical

landscape functions not merely as a backdrop but as a text that reveals the dynamics of identity and the structural challenges in heritage management.

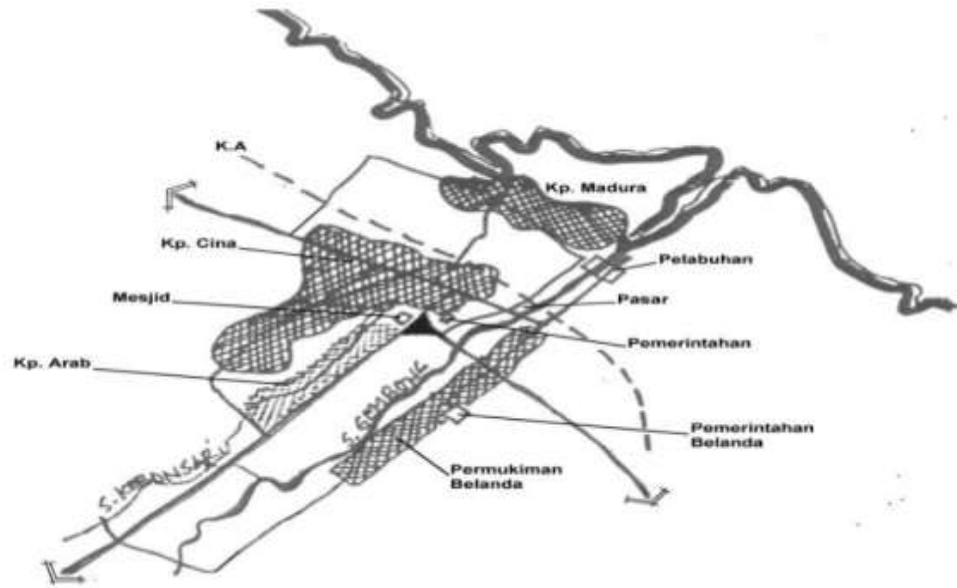


Figure 6. Patterns of social segregation in Pasuruan City that still exist today.
Source: Junianto, 2017.

The colonial-industrial cluster is the most dominant visual marker in the landscape of Pasuruan City, with the Jalan Pahlawan corridor and the Indonesian Sugar Plantation Research Center (P3GI) complex as its epicenter. This area is a legacy of Pasuruan's golden era as the center of the sugar industry in the Dutch East Indies (Chawari, 2002). The P3GI complex itself, designated as a cultural heritage site, holds extraordinary architectural wealth. Studies have shown that the proportions of its building facades were precisely designed using the golden section ratio (Karyadi & Purnomo, 2021). This indicates that the building's value lies not only in its historical function but also in the aesthetic and technical merits of mature colonial architecture (Danang, personal communication, July 22, 2025).

In addition to the P3GI complex, the colonial cluster is enriched by other iconic buildings. The Harmonie Building, as a former societeit, symbolizes the colonial lifestyle (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025). Near the port area, PT Boma Bisma Indonesia stands as a witness to the supporting industrial infrastructure (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025). Furthermore, the "Lion House" (*Rumah Singa*), with its distinct Indies architecture, collectively forms a visual narrative of the power and modernity of the colonial era, characterized by its unique architectural style (Tutuko, 2003).

Adjacent to the colonial cluster is the Islamic-religious cluster, which serves as the spiritual and social heart of the community. The center of this cluster is the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque, which, together with the alun-alun (city square), forms the core of the traditional Javanese-Islamic urban layout (Junianto, 2017). Around this area are the burial complexes of highly respected ulama, such as the tombs of Mbah Slagah and Mbah Salim, which have become important pilgrimage destinations (Sofyan, personal communication, July 5, 2025). This cluster functions as an identity anchor, reinforcing Pasuruan's image as a city with deep and revered Islamic historical roots.

Next, the multi-ethnic economic cluster is the most tangible evidence of Pasuruan's cosmopolitan character. The Chinatown (Pecinan) area, with the Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple as its center, is a living socio-cultural ecosystem where religious practices and economic activities merge (Putra & Dwiningsih, 2023). Adjacent to it, the port area holds the memory of being a gateway for various cultures. The spatial distribution of these clusters, in close proximity to one another, demonstrates a pattern of harmonious coexistence among various ethnic communities united by economic interests.

The core analysis from mapping these three clusters reveals a unique spatial constellation as a strength and a clear identity for each cluster (Colonial, Islamic, Multi-ethnic), coexisting within a relatively compact urban space. Physically, Pasuruan City is not dominated by a single marker. Instead, its visual landscape presents a dialogue, or even a contestation, among several equally strong grand narratives. Walking in the city center means crossing the imaginary boundaries from one identity cluster to another in a short time. The implication of this spatial constellation is profound: the city's physical landscape inherently demands a heritage management policy that is also pluralistic and integrative, capable of representing and celebrating all three grand narratives in a balanced manner.

The challenge of realizing such an integrative policy is hindered by a fundamental structural obstacle: the fragmentation of ownership status of cultural heritage assets. The finding that most of the iconic buildings in the colonial and multi-ethnic clusters are not owned by the city government but by state-owned enterprises (BUMN), foundations, or private individuals is a key explanatory factor (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025). This ownership fragmentation effectively creates fragmentation in management. Consequently, the potential to design a cohesive and integrated city heritage narrative becomes extremely difficult to realize, and the risk that policies will only focus on the easiest-to-manage clusters or those most aligned with short-term political agendas becomes very high. Thus, the physical heritage of Pasuruan City not only reflects its rich history but also exposes the most crucial governance challenges it currently faces.

3.4. Preservation Policies and Heritage Area Development Plans

The challenges in implementing the revitalization policy faced by Pasuruan, particularly concerning coordination and social impact, are also noted as important in similar experiences in the Old Town area of Semarang (Wijayanti & Kurniawan, 2019). The governance challenges faced by Pasuruan, particularly regarding ownership fragmentation and weak coordination, are fundamental issues in urban heritage management in cities worldwide that demand a sustainability framework (Orbasli & Vellinga, 2020). In the context of regional autonomy, the Pasuruan city government, like other local governments, is faced with the demand to formulate a unique and competitive city identity. An analysis of planning documents and interviews with policymakers reveals a clear strategic direction: prioritizing the development of religion-based tourism. The decision to rebrand the city with the image of "Pasuruan, the City of Madinah" was a conscious policy choice aimed at capitalizing on the most prominent spiritual and cultural assets in the public eye, especially the charisma of the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque and the tomb of K.H. Abdul Hamid (Disparpora, personal communication, July 31, 2025; Firdaus & Setiadi, 2024). The 'Pasuruan, the City of Madinah' branding strategy can be understood as part of a global phenomenon where cities attempt to 'reimagine' their identities through art and culture to compete on a global stage (Neil, 2015). This policy is physically manifested through flagship projects, such as the revitalization of the Alun-Alun (city square) area with the construction of iconic giant umbrellas, which visually and symbolically affirm this religious identity.

However, the construction of a city identity based on religious and cultural heritage requires careful consideration to ensure that branding efforts remain connected with the historical meanings and social values embedded within heritage sites. While the "Pasuruan, the City of Madinah" initiative provides opportunities to strengthen tourism appeal and public recognition, its long-term sustainability depends on inclusive governance, active community participation, and balanced preservation strategies. Heritage revitalization should therefore move beyond physical transformation and symbolic representation by also maintaining cultural authenticity, supporting local communities, and ensuring that heritage assets continue to function as living spaces that reflect the collective identity of Pasuruan's society. Furthermore, the success of heritage-based city branding depends on the ability of local governments to harmonize development goals with heritage conservation principles. Strengthening collaboration among government institutions, local communities, and cultural stakeholders is essential to ensure that revitalization programs create meaningful social and cultural benefits while preserving the uniqueness of Pasuruan's heritage identity.

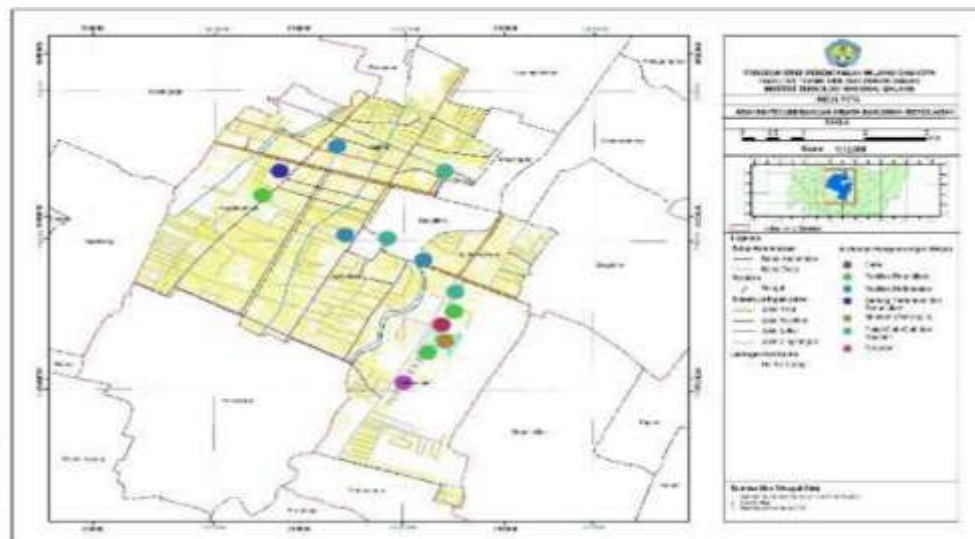


Figure 7. Guidelines for the development of heritage tourism in Pasuruan City.
Source: Asuri et al., 2020.

Formally, the implementation of this policy involves cross-sectoral coordination within the local government structure. The Office of Tourism, Youth, and Sports (Disparpora) acts as the main conceptualizer and promoter of tourism programs. Meanwhile, the Office of Education and Culture (Disdikbud) has the mandate for preserving cultural and historical values, and the Office of Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) is responsible for the planning and execution of physical infrastructure development, as seen in the grand design for the revitalization of Jalan Pahlawan (Disparpora, personal communication, July 31, 2025). This institutional structure indicates the existence of a formal mechanism for program planning and implementation. However, in practice, the effectiveness of this mechanism faces various complex challenges on the ground.

Despite having a focused policy direction, its implementation tends to be partial and faces significant structural challenges. The first challenge relates to coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, particularly between the local government and non-governmental institutions that manage vital heritage assets. The relationship between the City Government and P3GI, for example, is characterized by a lack of collaboration in developing an integrated heritage area (Danang, personal communication, July 22, 2025). This situation creates a paradox: on one hand, P3GI possesses highly valuable cultural heritage assets, but on the other, the institution operates with its own agenda, separate from the city's grand tourism plan.

The second challenge, which is the root cause of coordination difficulties, is the fragmentation of authority due to asset ownership status. As identified in the previous section, the local government does not have direct legal power over most of the most iconic cultural heritage buildings. These assets are managed by state-owned enterprises (BUMN), foundations, or individuals, which places the government in a position where it cannot unilaterally intervene or plan (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025). Consequently, development policies tend to be concentrated in spaces that are fully under government control, such as the Alun-Alun and some road segments, while other potential heritage areas are difficult to integrate into a coherent master plan.

The third challenge is finding a model for cultural heritage utilization that is both sustainable and equitable. This dilemma is most evident in the case of the management of the Arts Building (Gedung Kesenian). The policy of imposing a rental fee on the building, with the aim of increasing local revenue (PAD), creates a contradiction between economic logic and the logic of cultural facilitation (Farrisca, personal communication, July 17, 2025). For artists and cultural communities, this policy has the potential to become a barrier that limits their access to infrastructure that should function to nurture the local arts ecosystem. This case represents a classic challenge in urban heritage management: how to balance the demands of conservation, the needs of community expression, and economic-administrative objectives.

In addition to structural and administrative challenges, there are also socio-cultural challenges rooted in the perception and meaning of 'heritage' at the community level. In some public discussions and even among cultural experts, there is a tendency to narrow the meaning of 'heritage' to exclusively refer to legacies from the Dutch colonial era. This misconception has serious implications, as any effort to preserve or revitalize colonial-era buildings can easily be misinterpreted as an act of "glorifying" or celebrating the history of colonialism. This sentiment, as reflected in the criticism of the use of the name "Harmonie," which is considered inconsistent with the narrative of local struggle (Rosidi, personal communication, July 10, 2025), creates a psychological and political obstacle that can trigger public resistance to heritage development projects, even if their purpose is historical education or tourism development.

Overall, the analysis of policy and governance dynamics reveals a gap between the macro vision and the reality of implementation on the ground. The Pasuruan City Government has succeeded in formulating a clear and focused strategic vision centered on religious tourism. However, the effectiveness of this vision in creating a holistic heritage area is hampered by fundamental structural challenges, namely weak coordination among stakeholders, fragmentation of asset ownership, and difficulty in formulating a fair and sustainable utilization model. It is this condition that will ultimately determine the level of "harmony" between the formulated policies and the broader cultural values and needs of the community.

3.5. Analysis of Harmony: Cultural Identity Confronts Heritage Policy

The culmination of this research is an evaluation of the degree of "harmony" between the rich and layered socio-cultural identity of Pasuruan City and the direction of the heritage area development policy implemented by the local government. This analysis is not intended to be judgmental but to critically dissect the dynamics that occur when a pluralistic cultural reality confronts a focused policy vision. Using the analytical framework of multiculturalism and a critical approach to urban heritage planning (critical heritage planning), it can be identified that while there are points of harmony at the micro-level, there is also significant dissonance or disharmony at the macro-strategic level.

Viewed from a multiculturalism framework, the current heritage development policy in Pasuruan City tends towards a model that is more monocultural or symbolic multiculturalism, rather than substantive multiculturalism. The choice to highlight one aspect of identity is a common city branding strategy, as shown in the case study of Tasikmalaya, which also sought to enhance the city's image by emphasizing specific values (Firmansyah & Ma'mun, 2020). The main priority given to the development of religious tourism and the "City of *Santri*" branding effectively positions one narrative the Islamic narrative as the central discourse and primary representation of the city. Meanwhile, the cultural expressions of other groups, such as the Chinese New Year celebrations and Lion Dance performances at the Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple or the preservation of the Tari Terbang Bandung, are permitted to exist. However, their presence is more of a "token" or an ornamental marker of diversity, not fully integrated into the grand narrative and main strategy of the city's image development. The policy, therefore, does not yet fully reflect the reality of the city's DNA, which was historically and sociologically formed from an equal blend of Hindu, Chinese, Islamic, and European civilizations.

Using a critical heritage approach, the "City of *Santri*" branding policy can be analyzed as an Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). Within the framework of critical heritage studies, this narrative selection process is known as the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD), where the state actively chooses which version of history to promote and which to silence (Smith, Waterton, & Watson, 2016). An AHD is a selection process undertaken by those in power (in this case, the local government) to choose, interpret, and promote one version of history or identity as the official narrative deemed most valid and representative. The logical consequence of the formation of this AHD is the process of silencing alternative narratives. In the context of Pasuruan, discourses about the history of the colonial-era sugar industry, the commercial glory of the Chinese community, or even the traces of pre-Islamic civilization become "silenced" narratives not erased, but not actively promoted or celebrated as part of the city's core identity. The criticism from some cultural experts regarding the name of the "Harmonie" building can be seen as a form of counter-discourse that seeks

to challenge the dominance of the colonial narrative and demand recognition for the narrative of local struggle.

The most fundamental dissonance ultimately lies in the disharmony between the city's physical reality and its policy representation. As analyzed in Section III, the spatial landscape of Pasuruan City visually presents a balanced dialogue among three equally strong identity clusters: the Islamic-religious cluster, the colonial-industrial cluster, and the multi-ethnic economic cluster. The city's physical structure is inherently plural and demands a management policy that is also pluralistic and integrative. However, the implemented policy tends to focus on only one cluster (Islamic-religious), while the potential of the other two clusters has not been optimally and integrally developed. An incongruence occurs: the city's infrastructure is multi-narrative, while the policy that governs it tends to be mono-narrative. The decision to prioritize the revitalization of the religious cluster over the colonial cluster is not merely a technical choice but a political act in the production of heritage, consciously selecting which narrative deserves representation in the urban space (Labadi, 2017).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that harmony is not entirely absent. At the micro and event-based levels, harmony can be achieved quite well. The full support given by the city government to the organization of the Haul (commemoration) of K.H. Abdul Hamid, for example, is a perfect instance of harmony between government policy and the socio-religious pulse of the community. The educational tourism initiatives independently developed by P3GI also show the potential for harmony between asset preservation and public education needs. However, these points of harmony are still partial and have not yet been successfully woven into a holistic and integrated heritage area development strategy for the entire city.

In conclusion, this research finds that the "harmony of socio-infrastructure uniqueness" in Pasuruan City is a dynamic and tension-filled concept. There is a significant dissonance between the reality of the city's multicultural cultural identity and the direction of a heritage development policy that tends to prioritize a single narrative. The greatest challenge for Pasuruan City in the future is to formulate a more inclusive heritage policy that not only celebrates one pillar of identity but is capable of weaving together and harmonizing the entirety of its rich cultural mosaic. This requires a deeper dialogue among stakeholders and the political courage to promote a city narrative that represents the totality of its history. This observed dissonance in Pasuruan reflects a common challenge in heritage tourism, where a significant gap often exists between high-level public policies and the dynamic problems faced in conservation implementation (Zhao et al., 2023). This policy failure to effectively respond to on-the-ground realities necessitates a new model to find 'equilibrium' between competing narratives.

3.6. Towards Harmonization: A Proposed Development Model of "Pasuruan, a Heritage City of Three Narratives"

In response to the identified dissonance between the multicultural reality of Pasuruan City and its cenderung singular heritage policy direction, this research proposes a conceptual development model as an evidence-based policy recommendation. This model, named "Pasuruan, a Heritage City of Three Narratives," is designed not to negate or replace the already strong "City of *Santri*" identity, but to enrich and contextualize it. Its goal is to harmonize the three main identity clusters that de facto form the city's DNA the Religious-Spiritual narrative, the Colonial-Industrial narrative, and the Commercial-Multi-ethnic narrative into an integrative, inclusive, and sustainable development framework. This model is based on three interconnected pillars of action: Spatial Narrative Integration, Governance Revitalization, and Cultural Space Activation. The proposed model emphasizes that heritage development should be approached as a process of negotiation between historical continuity, cultural diversity, and future urban aspirations. By recognizing the coexistence of different narratives within Pasuruan City, the model encourages a more balanced representation of heritage that reflects the experiences of various communities. Such an approach can strengthen social cohesion, enhance cultural tourism potential, and support sustainable urban development by ensuring that heritage policies are not limited to a single dominant narrative but accommodate the complexity of the city's historical and cultural landscape.



Figure 8. Tangible and intangible aspects identified regarding heritage in the city of Pasuruan
Source: Author, 2025.

The first pillar, Spatial Narrative Integration, directly addresses the challenge of fragmented tourist experiences and the "silencing" of non-dominant narratives through the creation of curated thematic tourist routes. These routes would allow visitors to see sites not as isolated points, but as parts of a complete story. Priority routes include an Interfaith Tolerance Route to celebrate harmonious coexistence by connecting the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque (Junianto, 2017), the Tjoe Tik Kiong Temple (Hartono, personal communication, July 5, 2025; Prabhita & Christiana, 2018), and the GPIB PNIEL Church (Chawari, 2002). Another route, the Glory of the Sugar Industry, would revitalize the city's economic-historical narrative by linking the P3GI research center (Danang, personal communication, July 22, 2025), the grand Indies architecture on Jalan Pahlawan (Tutuko, 2003), and the historic Port (Adawiyah & Eprilianto, 2025). Furthermore, a Struggle and Decolonization of Memory Route would be designed to counter perceptions of glorifying colonialism by using colonial assets like the Harmonie Building to tell the story of local resistance and nationalism (Rosidi, personal communication, July 10, 2025).

The second pillar, Governance Revitalization, is designed to overcome the fundamental structural challenge of fragmented ownership and weak coordination. This would be achieved through the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform named the "Pasuruan City Heritage Forum." This forum would not be a new bureaucratic body, but a platform for dialogue and joint planning to bridge the interests between the City Government and key asset owners like P3GI and private foundations (Faisol, personal communication, July 22, 2025). Its purpose is to collaboratively formulate integrated action plans and develop innovative Public-Private Partnership schemes for financing restoration, thus moving beyond a sole reliance on the regional budget. The establishment of the 'Pasuruan City Heritage Forum' aligns with a collaborative approach proven effective in other regions, such as the application of the Penta Helix model which synergizes academics, business actors, communities, government, and media in cultural tourism development (Suwena & Putri, 2021). The proposal for a 'City Heritage Forum' directly addresses the structural

fragmentation identified in this study by advocating for a participatory governance model. As argued by Iaione et al. (2022), sustainable heritage management requires moving beyond traditional top-down state control toward collaborative frameworks that actively involve diverse public, private, and community stakeholders.

The final pillar, Community-Based Cultural Space Activation, focuses on "breathing life" into heritage areas, transforming them from static objects into stages for contemporary cultural expression. This directly answers the need for accessible creative spaces, as highlighted in the case of the Arts Building (Farrisca, personal communication, July 17, 2025). Activation programs would include reviving arts and culinary festivals in the Jalan Pahlawan corridor, empowering the Chinatown area through regular cultural weeks featuring local traditions like *potehi* puppet shows (Putra & Dwiningsih, 2023), and collaborating with industrial sites like P3GI to host public education programs that combine history, science, and culture. The case of the Arts Building underscores the importance of substantive community engagement, as the success of heritage preservation is measured not only by the physical integrity of buildings but by the extent to which heritage is alive and relevant to its community (Wadham, 2021).

By implementing the "Pasuruan, a Heritage City of Three Narratives" model, the "City of *Santri*" identity is not weakened but enriched and solidified as one of three strong narrative pillars. This model offers a path to transform dissonance into harmonization, creating a heritage tourism ecosystem that is not only more diverse and inclusive, but also more authentic, competitive, and firmly rooted in the entire spectrum of Pasuruan City's history and identity.

4. Conclusion

This research concludes that Pasuruan City is a cultural palimpsest, a complex urban landscape where the narratives of an Islamic-religious, colonial-industrial, and commercial-multi-ethnic identity coexist as equally powerful spatial and social layers. The core finding of this study is the identification of a significant dissonance between this pluralistic, multi-narrative reality of the city's DNA and the current heritage development policy, which tends to promote a singular, religion-focused identity under the "Pasuruan, the City of Madinah" brand. This mono-narrative approach, while effective in capitalizing on one strong cultural asset, inadvertently "silences" the other historical narratives that are equally integral to the city's identity.

This dissonance is not merely a matter of branding, but is rooted in fundamental structural challenges. The primary obstacles identified are the fragmentation of heritage asset ownership with key properties controlled by state-owned enterprises, foundations, and private entities and the consequent weakness of multi-stakeholder coordination. These factors severely limit the local government's capacity to implement an integrated, city-wide heritage master plan. The result is a partial and fragmented development strategy that focuses only on government-controlled spaces, failing to weave a cohesive story from the city's rich and diverse assets.

This research contributes to the global discourse on implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 11, by highlighting the critical challenges public management faces in institutionalizing sustainability for urban cultural heritage (Magliacani, 2023). The proposed 'Three Narratives' model offers a tangible governance framework to address these challenges. Therefore, this study argues that for Pasuruan's heritage to be transformed into a sustainable driver for tourism and community empowerment, a paradigm shift in governance is required. Moving beyond the current approach, this research proposes the "Heritage City of Three Narratives" model as a strategic framework. This model advocates for an inclusive and integrative policy that harmonizes all three core narratives through thematic tourist routes, a multi-stakeholder "City Heritage Forum," and community-based cultural activation. By adopting such a pluralistic approach, Pasuruan can resolve the identified dissonance, ensuring that its development not only preserves the physical artifacts of its past but also celebrates the totality of its unique and multicultural history for the benefit of all its communities.

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