

Reconfiguring Javanese Cultural Heritage as a Living Archive: Museum Karaton Studies and Bahana Pancasila as a Framework for Sustainable Development

Maram Taher^{1*}, Sahid Teguh Widodo², Dwi Susanto³, Sri Kusumo Habsari⁴

¹Hama University, Syria

^{2,3,4}Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

*) Corresponding author: maram.taher@iicanada.net

Abstract

This study reconceptualizes Javanese cultural heritage as a living archive that actively sustains civic knowledge, values, and institutional practices in contemporary society. Grounded in the concept of Bahana Pancasila, which understands cultural institutions as living vehicles for the enactment of Pancasila values, the research focuses on Karaton Surakarta Hadiningrat as a designated kawasan cagar budaya (national cultural heritage area) to examine how Museum Karaton Studies (MKS) transform heritage governance from static preservation into a dynamic process of knowledge production, cultural transmission, and civic engagement. Employing qualitative analysis of ministerial policy frameworks, institutional structures, and embedded cultural practices, the study demonstrates how Javanese philosophical principles such as rukun (social harmony), musyawarah (deliberation), and ethical leadership are continuously enacted within the Karaton as expressions of Bahana Pancasila. The findings show that this living archive is institutionally reinforced through state-recognized heritage governance, including cultural protection, inter-institutional coordination, asset management, accountability mechanisms, and participatory engagement, as mandated in national cultural policy. These practices position the Karaton as a hybrid civic space that bridges traditional authority and contemporary governance systems. Furthermore, the study reveals that this model contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through the safeguarding and activation of cultural heritage as a resource for community resilience, and to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by fostering inclusive governance, cultural rights, and value-based institutional accountability. The study proposes a "Living Archive Civic Model," in which Bahana Pancasila serves as the normative foundation for reinterpreting cultural heritage as an active civic pedagogy. By situating Javanese local wisdom within global development frameworks, this research offers a culturally grounded and scalable approach to integrating heritage-based knowledge systems into governance innovation

Keywords: Civic Model, Javanese Living archive, Sustainable development Goals (SDGs).

Introduction

Cultural heritage is increasingly recognized not only as a collection of museum artefacts but also as a dynamic, living resource that contributes to sustainable development. Beyond preserving the past, it strengthens cultural identity, supports social cohesion, and promotes economic and environmental sustainability through community participation and digital innovation. Cultural institutions, therefore, increasingly act as instruments of

civic education, fostering identity and well-being. This reconceptualization positions heritage not as a relic of the past but as a dynamic resource for addressing contemporary social and environmental challenges (UNESCO, 2024b).

The Sustainable Development Goals explicitly acknowledge culture's role. UNESCO (2024b) notes that culture contributes directly to multiple SDGs, including sustainable cities and inclusive

societies. In particular, SDG 11 ("sustainable cities and communities") explicitly calls for efforts to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage. Likewise, SDG 16 ("peace, justice and strong institutions") highlights respect for cultural diversity and understanding as foundations for peace. The integration of living heritage into sustainable development frameworks has gained particular momentum in the Asia-Pacific region, where scholars and practitioners have increasingly recognized that intangible cultural heritage plays a crucial role in mobilizing cultural heritage for building sustainable cities and communities, as demonstrated through case studies in Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Marshall Islands (IRCI, 2024). Recent global policy frameworks have reinforced this recognition: the 2024 Pact for the Future, adopted by the UN General Assembly, explicitly integrates culture as an action point within the sustainable development agenda for the first time, calling for its incorporation into economic, social, and environmental policies (UNESCO, 2024c). This landmark inclusion represents the culmination of decades of advocacy, following the historic MONDIACULT 2022 conference where culture was recognized by States as a "global public good" for the first time (UNESCO, 2024c). Promoting cultural diversity and understanding is seen as essential for social cohesion and the protection of all citizens. However, despite these international commitments, a critical gap remains in the operational literature: few studies have systematically examined how indigenous governance frameworks-rooted in specific local wisdom-can translate these global goals into tangible, day-to-day institutional practices, particularly within legally recognized palace-based heritage institutions in post-colonial contexts.

In the Indonesian context, safeguarding culture is explicitly mandated by the national ideology of *Pancasila*. *Pancasila*-Indonesia's foundational philosophy-consists of five principles that form the nation's core values. Indonesian policy frames cultural preservation as a constitutional obligation tied to *Pancasila* and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* ("unity in diversity"). Scholars note that preserving

Indonesia's cultural wealth is "the realization of the mandate of the *Pancasila-Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and the Constitution", making heritage protection a state responsibility rather than a mere antiquarian exercise. This constitutional mandate is operationalized through national laws on cultural heritage (*Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2010 tentang Cagar Budaya*) and cultural advancement (*Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 2017 tentang Pemajuan Kebudayaan*), which require state-community collaboration in maintaining living cultural traditions (*Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2010, 2017*). Specifically, Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Conservation establishes a comprehensive legal framework for the protection, development, and utilization of cultural heritage, explicitly grounding its provisions in the principles of *Pancasila*, unity in diversity, justice, legal certainty, sustainability, participation, transparency, and accountability (*Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2010*). Furthermore, Law No. 5 of 2017 on Cultural Advancement operationalizes these constitutional mandates by establishing a strategic framework for cultural advancement through protection, development, utilization, and guidance, based on principles including tolerance, diversity, locality, participation, sustainability, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), with the explicit goal of making culture a guiding direction for national development (*Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2017*).

Javanese local wisdom exemplifies these principles in daily life. Traditional concepts such as *rukun* (social harmony) and *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus) are deeply ingrained in community relations. The concept of *rukun* constitutes the core of Javanese socio-cultural behavior, encompassing social harmony and the peaceful resolution of differences, while *musyawarah* (deliberation) and *mufakat* (consensus) serve as social practices that facilitate the smooth functioning of *rukun*, complemented by *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) as a fundamental expression of collective social responsibility (Kim, 2008). Within the Karaton Kasunanan Surakarta museum, these values are not merely

abstract philosophical concepts but are actively transmitted through informal education, cultural practices, and daily life, functioning as a means of strengthening national character and civic identity (Wardhani, 2013). The Karaton (palace) of Surakarta Hadiningrat has long embodied such values. Its museum (Karaton Surakarta Museum) preserves royal artefacts and is jointly managed by the Karaton and the Surakarta city government. These arrangements create a hybrid civic space where ancestral leadership practices and modern governance meet under shared cultural norms. Crucially, the Karaton Surakarta represents an under-researched case where an indigenous institution actively functions as a co-creator of civic education and public governance, rather than serving merely as a passive heritage site. The existing literature on cultural governance has largely focused on European or Western models of participatory heritage management, leaving a significant empirical gap regarding how non-Western, palace-based knowledge systems contribute to sustainable development objectives.

A pivotal recent legal development underscores the national significance of this case. On 12 January 2026, the Indonesian Minister of Culture (Fadli Zon) issued Decree No. 8 of 2026, which formally reaffirms the Karaton Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat Cultural Heritage Area as a National-Level Cultural Heritage Area (originally designated in 2017) and, for the first time, appoints a specific individual-Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Harya Panembahan Agung Tedjowulan-as the official Implementer (*Pelaksana*) of protection, development, and utilization of the area (*Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2026*). This decree represents a groundbreaking legal innovation in Indonesian cultural heritage governance, as it transforms the Karaton Surakarta Museum from a passively protected site into an active governance partner with legally designated authority. The decree explicitly mandates that the Implementer must coordinate, synergise, collaborate, and deliberate (*berkoordinasi, bersinergi, berkolaborasi, dan/atau bermusyawarah*) with the traditional council (*Pengageng Sasana Wilapa dan Ketua*

Lembaga Dewan Adat) and the extended royal family. The legal instrument further stipulates that the Implementer's responsibilities encompass not only the cultural heritage area itself but also the protection, development, and utilization of cultural advancement objects and intangible cultural heritage located within the Karaton environment, including traditional ceremonies, performing arts, traditional skills, and knowledge systems (*Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2026*). Moreover, the decree legally embeds the principles of accountable, transparent, participatory, and sustainable management-directly mirroring the values of *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus) and *rukun* (social harmony) central to Javanese local wisdom and to *Pancasila* itself. The decree explicitly references the necessity of achieving outcomes through deliberation within the extended royal family in accordance with the historical traditions and customs of the Karaton Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat, thereby legally codifying indigenous decision-making processes within state governance structures (*Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2026*). This legal instrument thus transforms the Karaton from a passively protected site into an active governance partner in national heritage management, providing a unique empirical opportunity to examine how state-recognized indigenous authority operationalizes cultural heritage for sustainable governance. The national significance of this designation is further underscored by the fact that the Karaton Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat Cultural Heritage Area encompasses three distinct zones-the outer area north and south of the *Baluwarti* fortress wall and the area within the *Cempuri* fortress wall-containing at least 74 significant buildings and serving as a living space for more than 35 registered Intangible Cultural Heritage elements, including customs, performing arts, traditional skills, and knowledge about nature and the cosmos (*Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2026; ANTARA News, 2026*).

This paper directly addresses the identified research gap by reconceptualizing the Karaton Surakarta Museum as a "living archive" that actively enacts what we term "*Bahana*

Pancasila"-the resonant practice of *Pancasila's* principles through cultural governance. The study's primary objective is to demonstrate how the *Karaton Surakarta Museum* day-to-day activities transform heritage governance into a dynamic, participatory process that contributes to SDG 11 (sustainable cities) and SDG 16 (peaceful, inclusive institutions).

Specifically, this research investigates how the legal mandate established by Ministerial Decree No.8/2026 operationalizes Javanese local wisdom particularly *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus), *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and *rukun* (social harmony) through the concrete practices of heritage protection, development, and utilization within the Karaton Surakarta museum and cultural area. Rather than viewing the Karaton Surakarta Museum as a static collection, we analyze it as an active engine of knowledge production and civic engagement. Drawing on qualitative analysis of cultural policy and institutional practices, including the newly enacted Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026 as a primary legal document, we ask: How does the legally designated implementer of the Karaton Surakarta operationalize Javanese local wisdom (harmony, deliberation, mutual cooperation, ethical leadership) through heritage protection, development, and utilization programs as mandated by the 2026 Ministerial Decree, and what are the implications of this state-recognized indigenous governance model for achieving SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)? As *Sokka et al.* (2021) observe, heritage can serve as a medium to cultivate understanding and consensus between institutions and citizens. The Karaton Surakarta exemplifies this: it embeds Javanese values in contemporary governance, offering a replicable model for integrating local wisdom into public life. The significance of this inquiry is threefold: (a) it provides empirical evidence for the operationalization of SDG targets through a legally recognized indigenous institution, using primary legal sources; (b) it extends the literature on participatory heritage governance beyond Western-centric frameworks to include post-

colonial, palace-based governance systems; and (c) it offers policy-relevant insights for integrating local wisdom into formal governance structures, directly responding to the 2026 Indonesian Ministerial Decree's mandate for collaborative, *musyawarah*-based heritage management.

In sum, by situating this local wisdom-based model within broader development agendas, the paper offers a culture-centered approach to sustainable governance. In doing so, it responds directly to recent calls from UNESCO and UN member states to move beyond declarative recognition of culture's role towards documented, evidence-based accounts of how living heritage contributes to sustainable development (UNESCO, 2024c). Similarity, this study provides the first academic analysis of Indonesia's 2026 Ministerial Decree No. 8 as a case of legally formalized indigenous-state co-governance of cultural heritage, demonstrating how national legal instruments can activate local wisdom to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. The Karaton Surakarta Museum case demonstrates how heritage-based knowledge systems-grounded in *rukun*, *musyawarah*, and *gotong royong*-can innovate civic education, strengthen community resilience, and operationalize *Pancasila* principles in contemporary governance, directly contributing to SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 16 (peaceful, just, and inclusive institutions).

Based on the identified research gap concerning the operationalization of indigenous governance frameworks within legally recognized heritage institutions, this study pursues the following objective: To demonstrate how the Karaton Surakarta Museum, through its legally designated implementer under Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026, operationalizes Javanese local wisdom (*musyawarah*, *rukun*, *gotong royong*) as a living heritage governance model that contributes to sustainable development, specifically SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) with the main research question: How does the legally designated implementer of the Karaton Surakarta

Museum operationalize Javanese local wisdom (harmony, deliberation, mutual cooperation, ethical leadership) through heritage protection, development, and utilization programs as mandated by Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026, and what are the implications of this state-recognized indigenous governance model for achieving SDG 11 and SDG 16.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2018) to examine the Karaton Surakarta as a bounded system of indigenous cultural governance. The case study approach is appropriate given the study's focus on contemporary phenomena within real-world contexts, where the boundaries between the phenomenon (indigenous governance) and its context (Indonesian legal and cultural policy) are not clearly evident. The design integrates multiple data sources to achieve triangulation and comprehensiveness.

Data Collection

The primary legal documents analyzed include:

- Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026 concerning the Appointment of the Implementer for Protection, Development, and Utilization of the Karaton Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat Cultural Heritage Area as a National-Level Cultural Heritage Area.
- Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Conservation.
- Law No. 5 of 2017 on Cultural Advancement.
- Ministerial Decree No. 208/M/2017 (original 2017 designation).

Secondary documents include museum catalogs, visitor brochures, and previous

research reports on the Karaton Surakarta Museum.

Visitor Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with visitors at the museum exit area after they completed their tour. A purposive sampling technique ensured representation across visitor categories. A total of 30 visitors participated, including students and educators (n=8), domestic and international tourists (n=10), spiritual visitors seeking *ngalap berkah* (n=4), researchers and academics (n=4), and leisure/recreation visitors (n=4). Interview duration ranged from 10 to 20 minutes. Questions focused on:

- Primary reasons for visiting MKS.
- Activities engaged in during the visit.

Staff Interviews: Interviews were conducted with museum staff and management (n=5) regarding:

- Collection management and cataloging practices.
- Conservation challenges and aspirations.
- Understanding of the 2026 Ministerial Decree's implications

All interviews were conducted in Indonesian Language, with consent obtained prior to each session. Audio recordings were made with permission, supplemented by field notes.

Direct observations: conducted at MKS over 120 days. The observation focused on the physical display of the collections, including their arrangement, labeling, and overall condition, as well as the presentation of key artefacts such as Rajamala. It also examined visitor interactions with guides and exhibits and assessed the condition of collection items requiring preservation attention.

Observational data were recorded in structured field notes.



Figure 1. Interactive model of analysis
Source: Spradley, Huberman and Saladana (2014)

Result and Discussion

Analysis of *Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026* demonstrates a major transformation in the governance of the Karaton Kasunan Surakarta Hadiningrat by reaffirming its status as a National Cultural Heritage Area while, for the first time, appointing *K.G.P.H. Panembahan Agung Tedjowulan* as the official implementer responsible for the protection, development, utilization, monitoring, and evaluation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The decree institutionalizes collaboration between the government, the royal family, and the Karaton Traditional Council through the principles of coordination, collaboration, and *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus), while uniquely recognizing customary decision-making by making the appointment valid until internal royal deliberations are completed. The heritage area covers three main zones, containing at least 74 historic buildings and more than 35 registered elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Field observations at the Museum Keraton Surakarta (MKS), however, reveal serious preservation challenges, including deteriorating stone inscriptions, royal carriages, damaged reliefs, and inadequately protected sacred heirlooms. Although budget limitations have delayed immediate restoration, revitalization initiatives have begun through phased programs led by the Ministry of Culture, supported by local government and CSR partnerships, emphasizing that sustainable heritage conservation requires collaborative efforts among government institutions, communities, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

State-Recognized Heritage Governance (*Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026*): To synthesize the qualitative findings, Figure 2 presents the conceptual relationship among heritage governance, *Bahana Pancasila*, living archive development, and sustainable development outcomes. The figure illustrates how state-recognized governance progressively strengthens cultural transmission, civic engagement, and institutional collaboration, leading to greater contributions to SDG 11 and SDG 16.

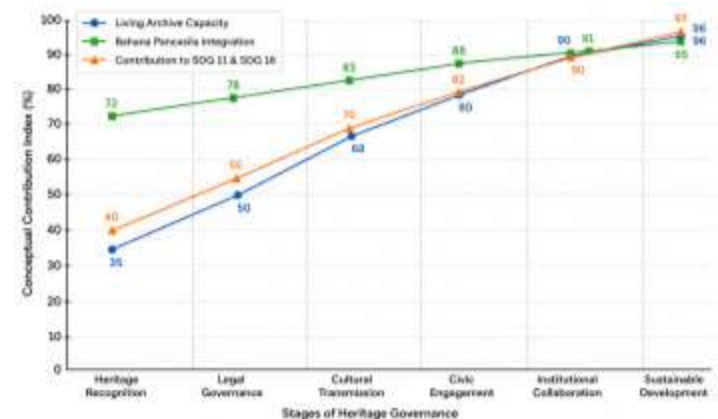


Figure 2 Integration of Living Archive Capacity, *Bahana Pancasila*, and Sustainable Development Goals

The figure 2 above present the Relationship between heritage governance, *Bahana Pancasila*, and sustainable development outcomes. The figure illustrates how state-recognized heritage governance strengthens the Living Archive model through Museum Karaton Studies. As institutional governance and cultural transmission increase, the implementation of *Bahana Pancasila* reinforces civic engagement and contributes progressively to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The values are conceptual and are presented to illustrate the relationships identified in this qualitative study rather than statistical measurements

Visitor Categories and Motivations: Analysis of interview data reveals five distinct visitor categories at MKS:

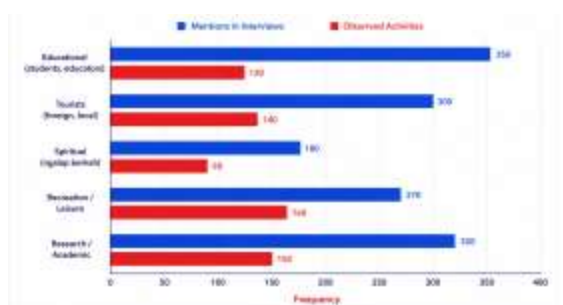


Figure 3 Visitor Categories and Motivations.

According to Figure 3, illustrates the distribution of museum visitor categories based on their primary motivations and typical activities. The findings indicate that educational visitors and researchers primarily seek knowledge and access to cultural resources, while tourists focus on cultural exploration and historical experiences. Spiritual visitors are motivated by religious and traditional practices, whereas recreational visitors engage with the museum for leisure, entertainment, and aesthetic appreciation. Overall, the figure demonstrates the diverse functions of the museum as an educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational heritage institution.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Karaton Surakarta represents an innovative model of state-recognized indigenous heritage governance, where *Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026* establishes collaborative governance between traditional authorities and the Indonesian government through *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus). The findings reveal that the museum serves diverse visitor groups with educational, cultural, spiritual, recreational, and research motivations, while also facing significant preservation challenges and limited digital infrastructure despite aspirations for AI integration. The study contributes to heritage governance, SDG localization, and museum visitor research by highlighting the role of indigenous governance in supporting SDG 11 and SDG 16, introducing the unique ngalap berkah spiritual visitor category, and proposing practical recommendations for heritage revitalization, digital transformation, and policy development. Although limited by its single-

case design, recent policy implementation, and qualitative scope, the research provides a foundation for future comparative, longitudinal, and AI-focused studies on sustainable cultural heritage governance in Indonesia and beyond.

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