Identity Representations in Cultural Landscapes: An Intervention in the Conservation of Sawahlunto, Indonesia

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Received	Accepted	Published
01.06.2023	29.12.2023	31.12.2023

https://doi.org/10.61275/ISVSej-2023-10-12-37

Abstract

Sawahlunto, is a former colonial coal mining site in Indonesia, with tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout the city. However, since the halting of mining activities in 2000, it has experienced fundamental threats posed by modernization and globalization. These have also led to changes in the economic base and the demographic structure. However, its history, Nature, built environment, and multi-ethnic community provides a rich cultural landscape. Therefore, in 2019, a conservation effort by the Indonesian government has got it listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Many studies have demonstrated that the conservation of cultural landscapes is closely related to identity. However, research focusing on using identity to conserve cultural landscapes is scarce.

This study examines identity representations in cultural landscapes as a conservation strategy that utilizes an identity-based approach. It examines how identity representations are constructed in the conservation efforts according to Sawahlunto's commitment to UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

This study used a qualitative method with a grounded theory approach. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews with 54 respondents who had a relationship with Sawahlunto. They were analyzed in three stages of coding: open, axial, and selective.

The findings reveal that Sawahlunto's three identity representations are the culture-valuescape, peoplescape, and creativescape, all of which are closely related and cannot be separated from each other. They are relevant and inclusive, making Sawahlunto's conservation efforts sustainable. This study argues that there is a need for multiple representations of cultural landscape identity to promote harmony, foster a sense of belonging, and achieve community empowerment, thus generating economic value for the site.

Keywords: Conservation, Cultural landscape, Identity, Representation, Sawahlunto

Introduction

This study examines Sawahlunto, Indonesia, a former colonial coal mining site. Sawahlunto incorporates elements of indigenous, Islamic, and Western colonial cultures. It is a part of Minangkabau's unique cultural sphere just like other places within the West Sumatera province. The long history of mining started when Dutch colonial Willem Hendrik de Greve (1840–1872) was ordered by the Netherlands East Indies Governor General to undertake an expedition and exploration of the area in 1858, after Dutch colliery expert Cornelis de Groot van Embden (1817–1896) suspected the existence of high-quality coal deposits in the middle of West Sumatra. The discovery called for the construction of key facilities consisting of the administrative mining town of Sawahlunto and the mines and the railway system all the way to Emmahaven port.

The multi-ethnic community of Sawahlunto originates from the forced labor used in the Ombilin coal mines under the colonial rule. Prisoners from various locations in Indonesia, and a few contract laborers of Javanese and Chinese descent have been sent to labor in the underground mining shafts. The mining history, multiethnic community, Minangkabau cultural-sphere, and the nature made Sawahlunto a cultural landscape. However, since the ceasing of mining activities in 2000, Sawahlunto has experienced fundamental threats, such as changes in economics and demographic structure, as well as threats posed by modernization and globalization. Therefore, it is crucial to conserve Sawahlunto as an urban industrial cultural landscape.

In 1992, UNESCO included place-based cultural heritage, cultural landscapes, and Saujana as a new category in the World Heritage Convention—a combination of interactions between people and natural systems over a certain period. Previous studies (Smith, 2006; Taylor and Lennon, 2012; Graham and Howard, 2016; Nezam et al., 2019; Jones and Pappas, 2023) have shown that the conservation of cultural landscapes is closely related to identity. Many studies have also focused on the theoretical basis of the link and relationship between identity and conservation of a place. However, they have not examined how to use identity as a dynamic intervention for conserving place-based heritage, particularly cultural landscapes.

This study aims to define identity representations in the cultural landscape (IRCL) as a conservation strategy that utilizes an identity-based approach. Its objective are:

1. To facilitate the conservation of the physical qualities as well as the cultural, social, and artistic components that distinguish Sawahlunto.
2. To ensure the long-term viability of conservation activities after its commitment to UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

Theorizing Identity Representation in Cultural Landscapes (IRCL)

Smith (2006) says that one of the uses of cultural heritage is socio-cultural activity, meaning, and identity formation. Place-based cultural heritage or cultural landscape contributes significantly to identity because of the attachment of individuals and communities to a place, and how the meanings associated with it shapes their identity. The concept of identity serves as an essential foundation and core for cultural landscapes. Taylor and Lennon (2012) show that one of the most basic human needs is "sense of identity" and "sense of belonging," which grows from people's attachment to landscapes, and forms an identity in landscapes and places. Therefore, conservation efforts of cultural landscapes are carried out using an identity-based approach.

Cultural heritage and identity are dynamic and not fixed. Identity is constantly negotiated (Smith, 2006). Individuals and communities engage in a dynamic process of selecting, interpreting, and representing aspects of their cultural heritage that align with evolving identity narratives. These negotiations often occur in response to social, cultural, and political changes; therefore, all conservation efforts must be inclusive and relevant to respond to various changes in the cultural landscape.

Cultural landscape conservation efforts are essential for fostering relevance and inclusiveness in understanding cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2005; ICOMOS, 2013). To ensure relevance, it is vital to understand the diversity of cultural landscapes and their significance for various communities. Smith has strengthened this idea by stating that the cultural landscape is a place to accommodate collective memory and community identity to make it relevant for various groups (Smith, 2006). In addition, Taylor and Lennon (2012) has emphasized the role of representation in ensuring that cultural landscape is inclusive and accessible to everyone, as well as being a means for hearing the diverse aspirations of communities (Taylor, 2007; Lennon, 2003). Moreover, according to Sauer's ecological view, cultural landscapes are not static entities but instead dynamic systems that develop along with changes and human interactions; thus, it is crucial to carry out conservation activities to maintain inclusiveness (Sauer, 1925). The conservation of cultural landscapes should preserve the past and encourage the inclusion of diverse voices and experiences, ensuring that cultural heritage remains relevant and meaningful for all members of the community.

Essence of Identity in the Cultural Landscape

Identity of a place is closely related to its local environment, which geographically influences human life, cultural heritage, and traditions that build local uniqueness (Fischer, 1984). Maintaining the identity of a place improves a person's quality of life, because it provides a sense of belonging that can create a harmonious and meaningful environment and society. Concerning the concept of cultural landscape, identity is closely related to the spirit of the place or *Genius Loci*. Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980) has pointed out that every place has a genial or guardian spirit who watches over it from beginning to end, determining the character of the place in both artificial and natural environments. Furthermore, Garnham (1985) has said that every place has a locus or genial loci, which are very important for the attachment between people and places, as well as elements that form a sense of place, including building style, climate, natural conditions, memories, metaphors, or images, use of local building materials, skills, spatial relationships, history and cultural diversity, social values, public spaces, and daily or special activities.

On the other hand, Tuan (1974) has suggested that *Genius Loci* is a unique character or soul of a place, which is shaped by its physical characteristics, cultural practices, and the emotional and sensory experiences associated with it. Tuan has also emphasized that the perception of a place is not based solely on physical attributes. It is strongly influenced also by the emotional and psychological connection with that place.

Spirit of place, also often referred to as the *Genius Loci*, includes intangible qualities that give character and uniqueness to a place closely related to the identity of a community. The spirit of a place reflects its history, traditions, and the cultural values associated with it. The cultural identity of a community is influenced by its attachment to the spirit of place because it provides a sense of continuity and connection with the past, proving that the spirit of place is the essence of cultural landscape conservation.

Spirit of place, an intangible yet profoundly-felt essence of a place, infuses cultural landscapes with emotional resonance (Tuan, 1977). Indeed, this connects people and communities to their spiritual and emotional places. As people interact with landscapes, they become a part of the narrative, imprinting their identity onto the spirit of the place.

The Activities of Identity in the Cultural Landscape

Relph (1976) has highlighted the influence of place on human identity. Places, and the activities associated with them are integral to shaping identity. Individuals and communities engage with the cultural landscapes through rituals, ceremonies, or everyday practices, creating a sense of identity rooted in that place. A place is a social artifact that is the physical embodiment of social life, ambition, theme, and events; it is built over time by a community and has its foundations in a specific housing and construction culture. Each person has the potential to make a useful contribution to a given location and each new contribution serves to enhance, perpetuate, and augment the collective as a whole (Widodo, 2019). Place formation refers to the psychological situation that a person develops in response to a certain setting. The notion of the place contains not only the tangible aspects, but also encompasses intangible dimensions. Place plays a key role in the interactions between people and their spatial surroundings (Zwain and Bahauddin, 2019). The presence of an intensified emotional connection and a strong need for conservation thus has a significant impact on the decision-making process.

Tangible Form of Identity in the Cultural Landscape

It is accepted that symbols within cultural landscapes serve as visual and conceptual representations of identity (Cosgrove, 1998). These symbols encapsulate cultural values, history, and narratives, manifesting as architectural landmarks, artwork, and natural features. Furthermore, products derived from landscapes embody cultural identities (Smith, 2006; Relph, 1976). They serve as material links to the essence of the landscape, sustaining traditions and connecting people to their heritage sites.

Identity Representation

Representation within cultural landscapes is pivotal in communicating one's identity (Taylor, 2007). Community stories, values, and aspirations are conveyed through interpretations and representations. As Lennon (2003) suggests, cultural landscapes are similar to palimpsests, bearing layers of identity that are inscribed and redefined over time. Representation is the medium through which these layers are revealed and celebrated.

Hall (1999) has proposed a dynamic cycle of identity, conservation, and representation within cultural landscapes. Identity informs conservation practices that lead to the preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage. In turn, conservation efforts reinforce and preserve people's identity. Representation has become a conduit for communicating this identity to the broader world and creating reciprocal relationships that ensure the vitality of cultural landscapes.

To define and embody individuality, it is critical to preserve social values, interactions, and practices as significant aspects of community culture. Accordingly, identity is an efficient means of representing people's meanings, experiences, and interactions based on their social and cultural values. This is because it is a clear process that establishes and uses the link between meaning and culture (Al Sultan and Al-Thahab, 2023).

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using the grounded theory. It employed data collected through semi-structured interviews and photo and video documentation to obtain information about the cultural landscape of Sawahlunto, West Sumatra, Indonesia, as a case study location. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected respondents using theoretical sampling to collect text data from 54 respondents.

It utilized two types of data: visual data from video recordings and photography, and text data from interviews. Visual data was collected via video recording and images captured during the initial visits to the Sawahlunto Indonesia research location in April 2021 and September 2022. Text data was collected from a semi-structured interview based on a questionnaire using a Google Form, distributed in two ways. The first distribution was via the "WhatsApp" communication platform for six weeks, and the questionnaire was filled in anonymously. The second text data collection involved printing the same Google Form and filling it out directly with respondents at the research location.

Data analysis was carried using grounded theory, specifically three stages of content analysis: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, and Morales, 2007). The open-coding stage involves identifying keywords from the answers of the respondents, whilst the axial coding stage creates categories using more general words by grouping keywords with similar meanings or properties. Finally, the selective coding stage comprises a hypothetical model based on the categories obtained from the axial coding stage. Within the selective coding stage, the correspondence analysis revealed a significant link between the respondent's relationship to and memory in Sawahlunto, which was the primary basis for theory building.

Furthermore, it conducted a cluster analysis of the categories that emerged from the grounded theory coding analysis to identify clusters of objects. These clusters have certain characteristics that distinguish them from the other clusters. A dendrogram was used as a graphical tool to present the results of the cluster analysis, of which the latter produced thematic findings that formed the basis for this study.

Findings

Considering the importance and long history of the Sawahlunto mine in Europe, Sawahlunto conservation must be carried out. This study discusses how Sawahlunto's identity, which is closely linked to past colonial coal mining activities, can be relevant and inclusive of current and future conditions and can anticipate changes and threats in conservation efforts with a view to ensuring that the Sawahlunto cultural landscape is sustainable and providing an economic contribution to the communities.

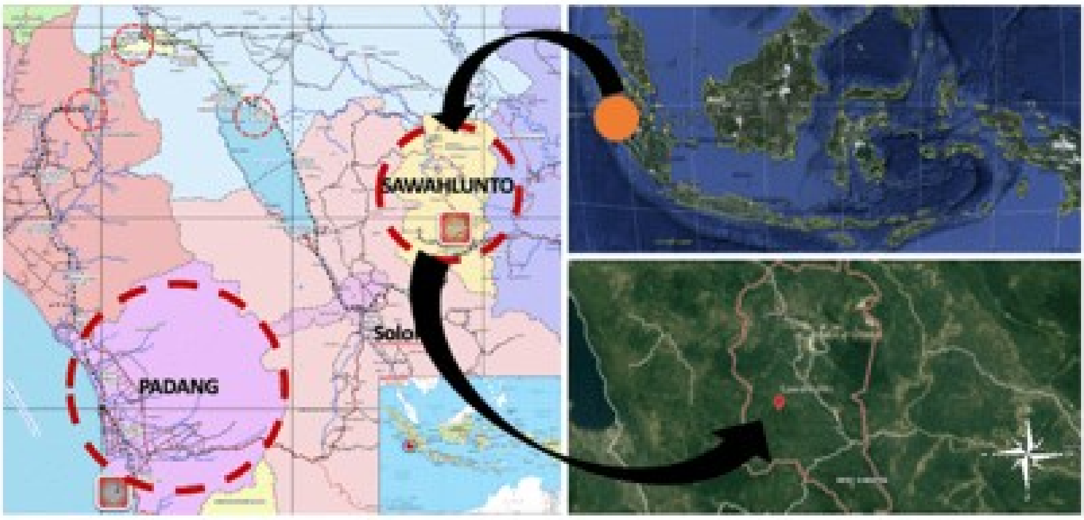

Fig. 1: Location Map of Sawahlunto West Sumatra Indonesia
Source: Rosa, 2022

Nominated in 2015 and inaugurated in 2019 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sawahlunto, sometimes referred to as Kota Arang, serves as a notable example of the substantial transfer of mining technology between Europe and its colonies in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century (criteria II Outstanding Universal Value). The Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage of Sawahlunto (OCMHS) is an extraordinary example of a technological ensemble designed for efficiency in the extraction of highly-qualified and strategic natural coal resources (criterion IV of Outstanding Universal Value). This nomination from Indonesia represents the most complete mining system using advanced technology during the colonial era, which includes not only the mining site and supporting city of Sawahlunto but also the associated port facilities in Padang, namely the Teluk Bayur port, formerly known as Emmahaven, as well as a 155-km-long railway line connecting the said ports.

The history of Sawahlunto development cannot be separated from all coal mining activities and related industries in western Sumatra. In 1990, the administrative area of Sawahlunto expanded by including areas from the surrounding Nagari-Nagari, giving rise to the terms “old city” and “new city.” The old city was built during the colonial period using an Indische architectural style, and became the centre of mining activities. The new city covers an expanded administrative city area spanning 27,793 hectares. The old city serves as an essential locus for historical buildings and significant sites to increase the attraction and interest of visitors (Suprayoga, 2008). Before the city’s expansion in 1990, the Sawahlunto administrative boundaries were only 7.79 km2 in length.

Sawahlunto currently consists of four administrative subdistricts, namely Barangin, Lembah Segar, Talawi, and Silungkang, with an area of 273.45 km2. This former coal mining administration city has a population of 65,687 people (2021), with the 2021 population densities in each sub-district standing as follows: Silungkang – 348.80 people/km2; Lembah Segar – 255.04 people/km2 (2013); Barangin – 232.03 people/km2; and Talawi – 203.69 people/km2.

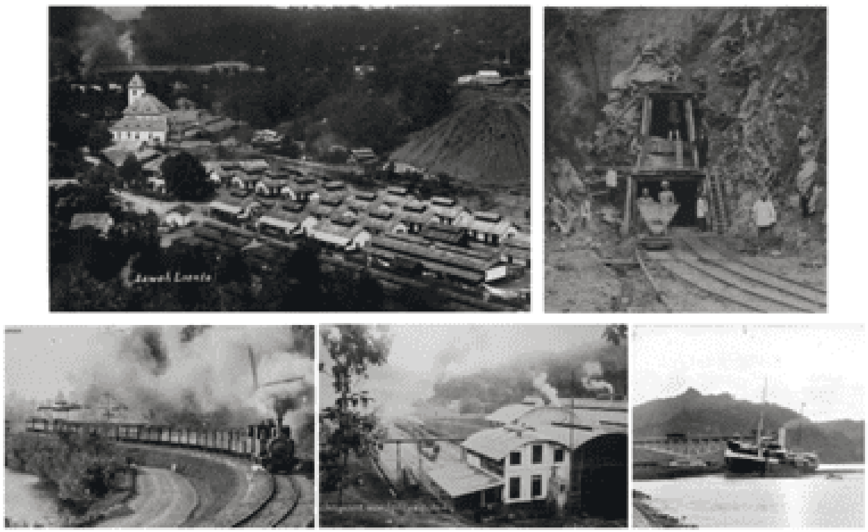

Fig. 2: Sawahlunto Mining Activities Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries
Source: https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl, downloaded 2020

After the golden age of mining ended in 2000, the population's economic base collapsed; however, Sawahlunto inherited a massive and important historical mining town with tangible and intangible assets. According to Sawahlunto 2020: Agenda for Creating a Cultural Mining Tourism City, the development policy in Sawahlunto is based on cultural heritage conservation and mining-based tourism. It was also stated that cultural heritage, as an element of the Sawahlunto cultural landscape, is an asset capable of creating a new future life for its residents, and so conservation efforts are needed to ensure that the said asset is sustainable and beneficial for the local community now and in the future. As Hidayat (2016) says one of the strategic steps implemented by the Sawahlunto City Government is to revitalize the city using a conservation approach and reuse its historical heritage from coal mining activities. According to city government policies, Sawahlunto has excellent potential to grow into a sustainable city as an attractive place to live, work, and as a tourism destination (Syafrini, 2017; Salam, Ingkadijaya, and Hermantoro, 2018; Anarta et al., 2019).

Fig. 3: Sawahlunto in Modern Days
Sources: Rosa, 2021;2022

The selected respondents were those who had a relationship with Sawahlunto. In total, 54 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Data from the interviews was collected in two ways: first, an online questionnaire, using Google Form, was distributed via the WhatsApp communication platform anonymously and voluntarily over six weeks, and second, for a period of three days, printed questionnaires were filled out at the research location. The time required to complete the questionnaires was approximately 15–20 min.

Table 1: Profile of Survey Respondents
Source: Rosa, 2022

			f	%
Gender		Male	34	63%
		Female	20	37%
Age		<17 years old	1	2%
		>55 years old	5	9%
		17 – 25 years old	9	17%
		25 – 55 years old	39	72%
Education		Diploma	4	7%
		Undergraduate degree	26	48%
		Postgraduate degree	8	15%
		Doctoral Degree	1	2%
		High school	14	26%
		Middle school	1	2%
Occupations	Professionals	Architect	1	2%
		Nutritionist	1	2%
		Surveyor	1	2%
		Journalist	1	2%
		Videographer	1	2%
	Teacher/Lecturer	Teacher/Lecturer	2	4%
	Government	Department of Cultural	3	6%
		Civil Servant	7	13%
		Honorary Employees	6	11%
	Business	Business owner	10	19%
		Employee	6	11%
	Freelancer	Freelancer	2	4%
		Housewife	1	2%
		Retired	3	6%
	Tourism	Tour guide	1	2%
		Facilitator	1	2%
	Unemployed	Unemployed	3	6%
		Student	4	8%

Respondents' Relationship with Sawahlunto

According to Cross (2001), there exist six forms of relationship: biographical, spiritual, ideological, narrative, commodification, and dependence. However, in this study, only four relationships merged—biographical (74%), dependent (16%), ideological (4%), and commodified (2%)—as shown in Figure 4.

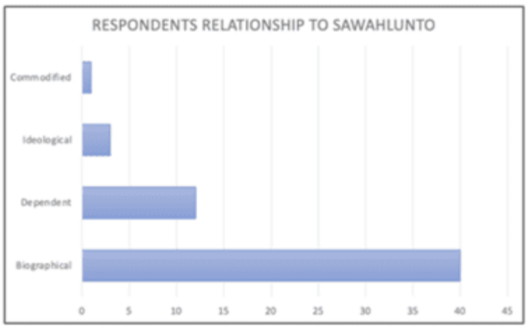

Fig. 4: Survey Respondents' Relationship with Sawahluntp
Sources: Rosa, 2022

The analysis of the data acquired through structured interviews demonstrated that the largest type of connection observed was biographical, accounting for approximately 74% of the respondents in total. The respondent's place of birth, or where the family has resided for generations, was characterized as a biographical connection. The biographical connection category included the following examples of respondents' answers:

- *In Sawahlunto, starting in 1920 from when grandfather came to work in a coal mine.*
- *... my grandfather and grandmother worked in Sawahlunto at one of the companies with a colonial legacy, PT BA. My mother was born in Sawahlunto, and my siblings and I were born, raised, studied, and lived in Sawahlunto.*
- *My birthplace, my mother, my grandmother, and the most comfortable place for me to come home to.*

The second aspect corresponded to an association arising from employment or dependence connections, constituting 16% of the total. The employment settlement indicates that Sawahlunto serves as a temporary residency only during the period in which the respondent is engaged in work; indeed, 3% of respondents who had received education in Sawahlunto can also be classified under the dependent classification. Examples of respondents' answers are as follows:

- *City of work.*
- *I have done research several (times).*
- *I wrote a book about Sawahlunto for three months there in 2020. Then, in 2021, I worked on restoring the Sawahlunto Kerkhof cemetery.*
- *Have been to school.*
- *Studied at SMA Negeri 2 Sawahlunto.*

Ideological relations, at 4%, constituted the next largest category. Ideological relationships are conscious values and beliefs about humans' relationships with places. The defining characteristic of an ideological relationship is an articulated ideology about how to live in a place, which can be interpreted as religious or spiritual teaching, secular ethics, and responsibility (Cross, 2001). Examples of respondents' answers in the ideological relations category are as follows:

- *The parents of the Padang Panjang community leader Sawahlunto.*
- *Its history makes me impressed that I live in the city of Sawahlunto.*

The last category is a commodification relationship of 2%. The commodification relationship refers to selecting a place based on choices, desired traits, and lifestyle preferences by comparing with ideal places (Cross, 2001). Examples of commodification answers are as follows:

- *A place for taking photographs*
- *Beautiful nature*

Respondents' Memories of Sawahlunto

Figure 5 shows the respondents' memories of Sawahlunto. Memories of the place gave the place meaning. In terms of the question "What do you remember about the place?", the answers of most respondents cited European-style buildings (24%). Examples of the respondents' answers are as follows:

- *The authentic (building) from the Dutch era.*
- *Old buildings with European architecture.*

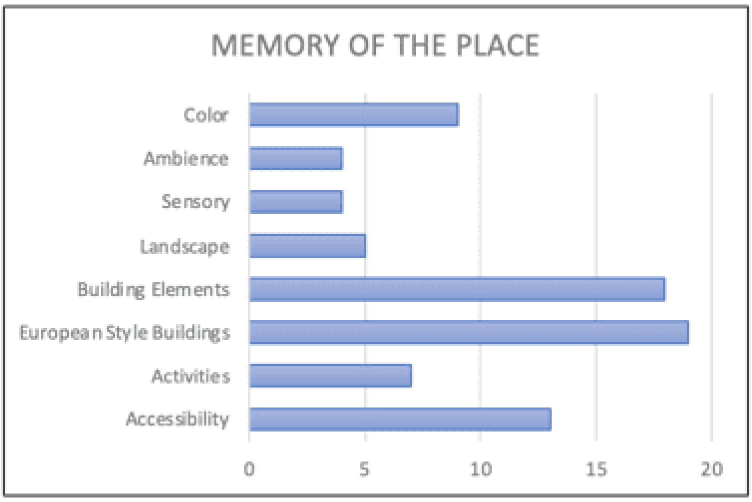

Fig. 4: Survey Respondents' Memory of Sawahlunto
Sources: Rosa, 2022

The answer with the highest percentage was building elements (23%). Examples of the respondents' answers are as follows:

- *...there was a chimney.*
- *...with a large clock at the top of the building, has many windows.*

Next is accessibility (16.5%). Examples of the respondents' answers are:

- *Location in the centre.*
- *Location and atmosphere.*

Colour is the next category of respondents' answers, at 11%; examples of the respondents' answers are as follows:

- *...black and white.*
- *...of course, the PT Bukit Asam Building with white patterns and towering silos.*

The above are followed by a variety of activities (9%); examples of the respondents' answers are as follows:

- *Positive activities.*
- *Stage and cosplay.*

The beautiful nature of Sawahlunto is the next respondent category, at 9%; examples of the respondents' answers are as follows:

- *Landscape of the old town of Sawahlunto.*
- *Natural beauty.*

The last categories are sensory and ambiance, each at 5%. Examples of the respondents' answers for the sensing category are as follows:

- *The smell.*
- *Temperature.*

Examples of respondents' answers for the ambiance category are:

- *The atmosphere.*
- *...feeling of nostalgia.*

Following steps involved cluster analysis of the categories that emerged from the grounded theory coding analysis. Cluster analysis produces several clusters or groups, and it aims to identify object clusters with similar characteristics that can be separated from other object clusters. As such, objects in the same cluster are more homogeneous than those in different clusters. It is also used to classify objects into relatively homogeneous groups called clusters. The objects in a cluster belong to each other and differ from other cluster objects.

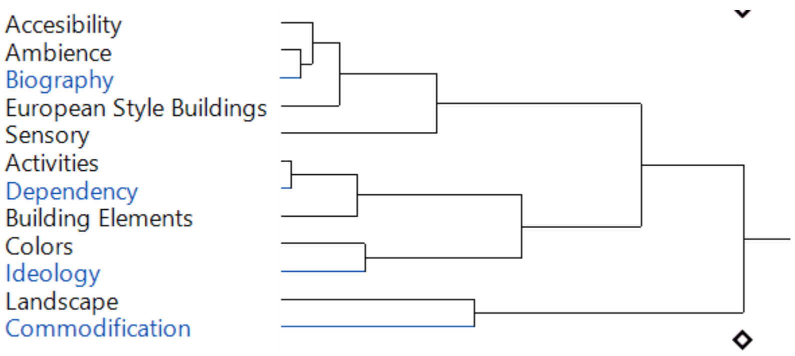

Fig. 6: Cluster Analysis of Respondents Relationship and Memory of Sawahlunto
Source: Rosa, 2022

In cluster analysis, cluster membership shows each object that is a member of the cluster, with a dendrogram used as a graphical tool to present the cluster analysis results. The vertical line on the dendrogram represents the merged clusters, and the line on the scale represents the distance between the merged clusters. This research used the JMP statistical computer software to conduct cluster analysis. The clusters formed were then interpreted by referring to previously discussed theories.

Table 2: Emerged Themes from Cluster Analysis
Source: Rosa, 2022

Relationship to Place	Memory of the place	Themes
Biographical	Accessibility	Spirit of the place
	Ambience	
	European style buildings	
	Sensory	
Dependent	Activities	Place and activities
	Building elements	
Ideological	Black and white colors	Symbols
Commodification	Nature	Products

As can be seen in the Table 2, four theme clusters emerged and represented significant findings: (1) spirit of place, (2) place and activities, (3) symbols, and (4) products.

1. Spirit of the Place

Respondents who had a biographical relationship with Sawahlunto formed memories of the spirit of the Sawahlunto loci. The spirit of the place, or Genius Loci, provides the most profound meaning and values, and is closely related to identity. It can thus be said that, in Sawahlunto conservation efforts, it is essential to implement an identity basis by focusing on the spirit of the place or genius loci. The spirit of the place, or Genius Loci, includes the intangible qualities that give character and uniqueness to a cultural landscape, which encompass elements of culture, history, nature, and emotional connections that determine the identity of a place.

2. Places and Activities

Data originating from respondents who live and reside in Sawahlunto with a dependency relationship highlights the importance of the availability of community activities and their varied locations. Sawahlunto has cultural heritage scattered throughout the city. Therefore, the need for various places and activities can be addressed by reusing cultural heritage buildings and giving them new functions or implementing adaptive reuse. An example is the reuse of land at the Sawahlunto train station, which no longer operates as a café or restaurant, to meet the activity needs of residents living in Sawahlunto.

3. Symbols

Sawahlunto, a mining-based urban industrial cultural landscape, is a strong mining facility. The data shows that respondents with an ideological connection have a strong memory of black and white—symbols of mining activities at that time. Thus, symbols from past mining activities could be a factor in efforts to conserve the Sawahlunto cultural landscape. Symbols are visual or conceptual representations of meaning and identity and could include landmarks, logos, flags, or other visual elements that convey the identity and value of a place.

4. Products

Sawahlunto is well known for its beautiful nature, which makes those who have a commodification relationship with Sawahlunto interested in immortalising it through photography, which can then be transformed into various products. Products created or associated with a place often reflect its unique spirit and identity.

Discussion

This study established the inclusion of IRCL as an intervention for an identity-based approach to conservation. The findings of this study illustrated that the identity of the Sawahlunto cultural landscape could be represented by three representations: first as a culture-valuescape, second as a peoplescape, and third as a creativescape (Figure 7). These multiple identity representations are closely knit together to reach various social layers of communities, relevant and inclusive, and respond to rapid changes for sustainable conservation of the cultural landscape. The three identity representations are as follows.

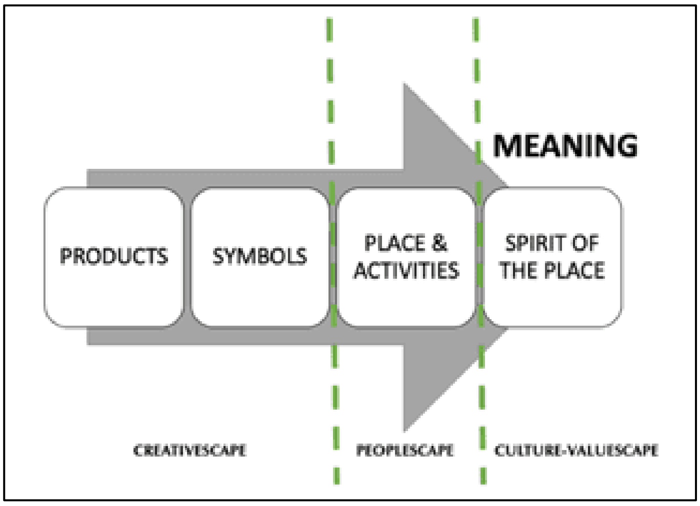

Fig. 7: Identity Representation in Cultural Landscape (IRCL) Sawahlunto
Source: Rosa, 2022

Culture-valuescape

The culture-valuescape represents Sawahlunto's essential identity, which focuses on maintaining the spirit of the place or Genius Loci. The spirit of the place, or Genius Loci, provides the most profound meaning and values, and is closely related to the identity of a place.

This finding aligns with statement of Cross (2001) that the most significant and persistent relationships are those rooted in personal experiences and connections with a specific location, also referred to as biographical relationships.

Furthermore, a strong sense of identification with the place and an extended length of residence are two characteristics of biographical relationships. Place is an integral part of one's personal history that gives meaning to cultural landscapes. Thus, conserving Sawahlunto means conserving the spirit of Sawahlunto's place, and the cultural valuescape represents Sawahlunto's identity.

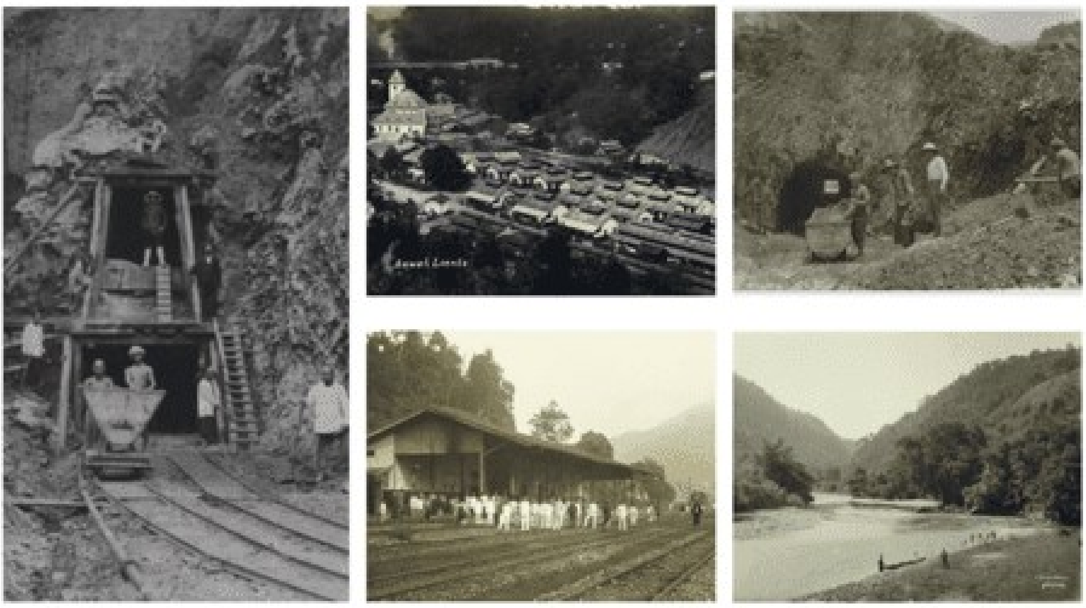

Fig. 8: Culture-valuescape as Identity Representations in Cultural Landscape (IRCL) Sawahlunto
Source: https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl

Peoplescape

Peoplescape represents Sawahlunto's identity as a place that accommodates the activity needs of those who live there. Rapid changes in demographics have given rise to contemporary needs that cities must accommodate. Historical buildings representing the cultural heritage of the former Ombilin colonial coal mine can be reused to meet contemporary needs with the new functions required, or with adaptive reuse interventions. In addition to preserving critical historical values, adaptive reuse creates new meaning for the cultural landscape. Many previous studies (Ariffin, Zahari, and Hanafiah, 2020; Thi and Nguyen, 2021; Rudan, 2023) have shown that the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings is a source of tourism products and facilities. However, this study found that the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in Sawahlunto is aimed primarily at meeting the activity needs of Sawahlunto residents, which, in the end, can attract tourists, whilst improving the local economy will serve as an additional benefit that can be strategized as a conservation plan for the Sawahlunto cultural landscape.

Fig. 9: Peoplescape as Identity Representations in Cultural Landscape (IRCL) Sawahlunto
Sources: Rosa, 2021; Rosa, 2022;
https://www.instagram.com/p/B4gqidZlzSu;https://www.instagram.com/p/B31gmQDFfKb;
https://langgam.id

Creativescape

Creativescape represents Sawahlunto's identity as a tangible expression of cultural identity whilst also representing the intangible, such as traditions, creativity, meaning, and the natural beauty of the Sawahlunto cultural landscape.The creativescape focuses on the visual representation of intangible heritage in the Sawahlunto cultural landscape to convey meaning and identity through symbols and cultural products. Symbols may include flags, landmarks, logos, or other visual elements that represent the identity and value of a place. These products can be mining goods, handicrafts, or cultural products.

Previous studies (Su, 2018; Baillie, Chatzoglou, and Taha, 2010) have focused on the commodification of cultural heritage; however, in the case of Sawahlunto, the most important aspect is the ability of these symbols and products to convey the meaning, uniqueness, and identity of the Sawahlunto cultural landscape, as well as the values and spirit of the place. Thus, creativescape can support efforts to conserve the Sawahlunto cultural landscape, and make it more relevant and inclusive.

Fig. 10: Creativescape as Identity Representations in Cultural Landscape (IRCL) Sawahlunto
Sources: Rosa, 2021; Rosa, 2022; https://lifestyle.okezone.com/read/2020/08/06/612/2258153;
https://www.liputan6.com/lifestyle/read/3161105

Conclusion

This study clearly establishes IRCL as an intervention in an identity-based approach to conservation. IRCL enhance the significance, relevance, inclusivity, and sustainability of conservation efforts. Compared to a single representation, a multiple identity representation reaches various social layers of communities.

Relevant and inclusive identity representations foster a sense of belonging and can serve as a powerful tool for community empowerment to respond to rapid changes and conserve cultural landscapes, thus generating economic value for the historic place.

Integrating the three representations of Sawahlunto identity shows a holistic and community-based conservation approach. This approach can contribute to the sustainability of conservation efforts following Sawahlunto's commitment to UNESCO World Heritage Site status by preserving not only the physical attributes but also the cultural, social, and creative dimensions that make Sawahlunto unique.

The findings of this study provide theoretical inputs on cultural landscape conservation from a practical perspective, as a complement to the theoretical perspective of previous studies. Further research can be carried out on each identity representation to manifest dynamic identity-based conservation of Sawahlunto.

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