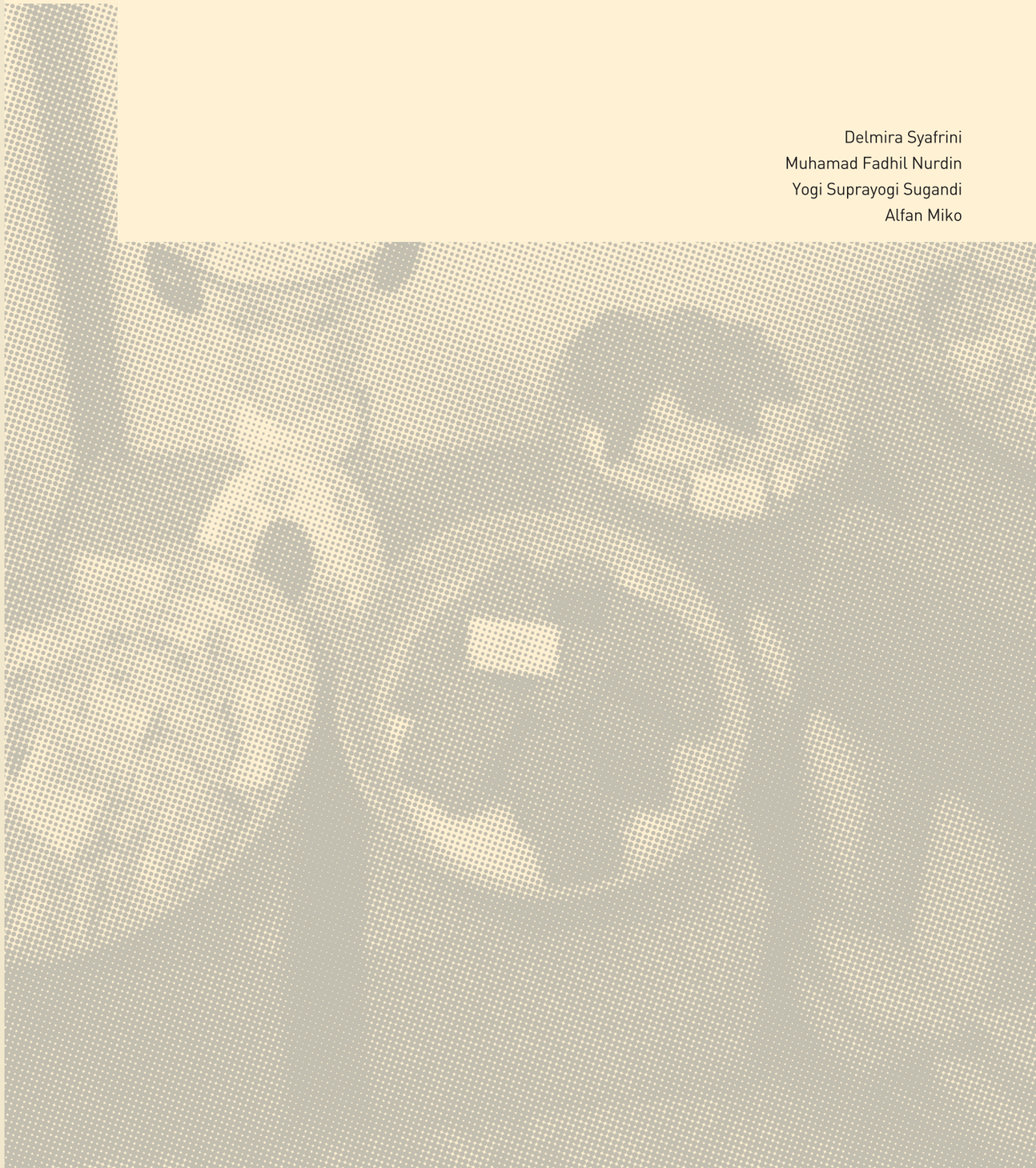
Re/constructing collective memory: coal-mining Heritage Museums in Sawahlunto, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The demise of the coal mining industry in Sawahlunto, Indonesia, not only left behind old buildings and damaged environments, but also a long history of mining activities, including the stories of the miners who worked during the Dutch colonial period. This mining history and the miners' stories, have been captured in three mining museums: the Goedang Ransoem Museum, the Hole Mine Site Museum Mbah Soero and Sawahlunto Railway Museum. This study examines how the coal-mining heritage of the days of Dutch colonialism has been preserved and constructed as community knowledge through the three mining heritage museums established following the demise of coal mining in Sawahlunto, West Sumatra, Indonesia. They form a collective memory of the mining city's history for present-day local communities and visitors, providing information about the origin of their ancestors and increasing the communities' understanding of their identity and their city. The findings in this study indicate that a museum does not merely serve as a place to store historical objects, but also as a medium for passing down knowledge about the history and identity of a community. Currently, the Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage of Sawahlunto is inscribed on UNESCO's *List of World Heritage* 2019.

Keywords

coal-mining, heritage museums, Goedang Ransoem Museum, Hole Mine Site Museum Mbah Soero, Sawahlunto Railway Museum, coal transportation, miners' kitchen, 'people in chain', collective memory, identity of local communities, Sawahlunto, World Heritage sites, Indonesia

1. Introduction

The construction of heritage museums in former mining areas reflects a trend seen in various mining areas that have lost their productive function. In addition to preserving the heritage of mining activities [Hashimoto and Telfer: 2017], these museums also reintroduce their history to present-day communities, preventing it from disappearing from the next generation's memory [Ballesteros and Ramírez: 2007]. Museums are deemed capable of reintroducing something considered valuable by one group of people to the next generation, including storing various historical memories [Smith and Smith: 2018]. Because a museum constructs and reconstructs traces of historical events, it can shape and reshape collective memory about community events [Ivanova: 2015].

Building a mining heritage museum to preserve and reintroduce ancestral heritage was an option for the development of mining heritage tourism in Sawahlunto, a province of West Sumatra, Indonesia. In the 20th century, Sawahlunto was a well-known coal-mining city in South-east Asia, but it suffered from the decline of the industry and was in danger of becoming a ghost town when the mining industry ended in 1998-2001. In an attempt to revive the city's productivity and preserve its history, urban stakeholders redirected urban development efforts to the tourism sector by recycling various mines as sites for heritage tourism [Martokusumo: 2010]. They established mining heritage museums at three important sites, namely, the former public kitchen used by miners, an abandoned mine shaft and a railway station used for transporting coal.

The three mining museums are the Goedang Ransoem Museum, the Hole Mine Site Museum Mbah Soero and Sawahlunto Railway Museum. All are key mining heritage attractions in Sawahlunto, established not merely for commercial purposes, but also to preserve Sawahlunto's history and to prevent it from being forgotten. All three museums also preserve the community's knowledge of the city's history and its origins. A mining heritage museum provides a medium for learning about a city's forgotten history and its origins.

The purpose of this paper is to explain how the heritage and history of mining has been preserved and constructed as community knowledge through the three museums established following the demise of coal mining in Sawahlunto.

Researchers from various countries have done numerous studies of heritage tourism and museums; most of these are related to issues of heritage preservation [Xie: 2006] such as the formation of collective memory [Miles: 2017], museums as a medium for learning about heritage [Wu and Wall: 2016], historical museums and tourism [Smith and Smith: 2018] and museums and the heritage of colonialism [Nguyen: 2017]. These issues reveal how museums represent past events to generate knowledge and important heritage information to their present-day communities.

Despite the great number of studies of heritage tourism and museums, there are very few that discuss museums that deal with the heritage of coal-mining, particularly in the South-east Asia region, and specifically in Indonesia. This discussion provides a new look at studies of mining industry heritage tourism and museums. Considering that coal mining in Indonesia is closely related to the country's Dutch colonial heritage, building a coal-mining museum also represents the heritage of colonialism. Its memories represent the pinnacle of life in a coal-mining community, despite the oppression of its past, as a source of pride and identity for Sawahlunto's present-day communities. Discussing the mining heritage of Sawahlunto is particularly appropriate because the coal-mining heritage of Sawahlunto was included on UNESCO's *World Heritage List* in 2019.

2. Literature review

In the past, the mining industry has been known to leave numerous negative impacts on a region such as environmental damage, neglected old buildings and abandoned mines [Alexander: 2010]. In several cases, mining areas have become deserted and abandoned places, dubbed ghost towns [Delyser: 1999]. However, not all former mining cities are neglected and abandoned. Many of them have chosen to rebuild former mining areas by recycling and preserving mine sites as tourist destinations [Conlin and Jolliffe: 2010].

Mining heritage tourism is a type of tourism that provides an opportunity for visitors to visit various

former mine sites and experience past mining activities [Conlin and Jolliffe: 2010], as well as the socio-cultural life of local communities [Ballesteros and Ramírez: 2007]. The recycling of the mining industry into mining heritage tourism generates many benefits. Studies by Denise Cole [2004] and Gert-Jan Hospers [2010] revealed that the management of former mining locations as tourist attractions is part of sustainable development and contributes positively to overcoming economic depression. Meanwhile, Robert Summerby-Murray [2002] states that transforming mining locations into tourist attractions actually performs additional functions; for example, in addition to saving the environment from further damage, it also preserves the historical value of mine sites. That is because heritage tourism allows visitors to tour in the present while enjoying learning about the history of the past [Jonsen-Verbeke: 1999; Irandu and Shah: 2016].

In addition to overcoming economic issues and preserving the historical value of mine sites, heritage tourism development in former mining areas also preserves local culture, because development is typically inseparable from the utilisation of local communities' culture [Cole: 2007; Halewood: 2001; Jamal and Hill: 2007; Shepherd: 2002; Wirth and Freestone: 2003; Handapangoda, Bandara and Anura, 2019]. This allows a new cultural identity to establish itself [Yang: 2013; Abrahams: 2015]. It indicates that the development of heritage tourism in former industrial areas provides new energy for the region, and may even be a basis for transformation in the region's future.

One way to preserve mining heritage is to construct a mining heritage museum. These can have different purposes. In addition to preserving mining heritage, they serve as a medium for internalising the history of mining for their current communities. They can do this because mining does not merely leave physical objects, but also non-physical assets, such as history, culture, activities, and stories about buildings and mine shafts [Xie: 2006]. Museums can display this variety of heritage, preventing it from being forgotten. Museums can reintroduce valuable memories to groups of people in the next generation [Trinh and Ryan: 2015], and can store a variety of historical memories related to certain phenomena on local, national, and international scales [Smith and Smith: 2018].

Heritage preservation in museums aims to reawaken the memories of the past [Zalut: 2018] and become the basis for current action [Moore and Whelan: 2007]. According to Emile Durkheim, in addition to being able to introduce present communities to their origins, the display of past memories can also result in the formation of collective memory. Collective memory is a shared memory of past events, characters, stories, places or traditions that constitute the present community's history [Halbwachs: 1992]. Collective memory does not occur automatically, but rather it is formed socially through the continuous construction and internalisation of knowledge [Berger and Luckmann: 1979]. Internalisation of the communities' mining heritage constructs (or reconstructs) knowledge of nearly-forgotten city history and shared memories, and forms the basis of a shared awareness that unites the people into one community. The formation of collective memory is not only a reminder of the community's history, but also a foundation for social cohesion [Misztal: 2003].

3. Research methodology

This study was conducted at three mining heritage museums in Sawahlunto. We applied a qualitative method and collected data through observation, in-depth interviews, and secondary data analysis. The study was conducted between January 2018 and December 2018 by mingling with local communities around the museum to observe and explore information about mining heritage preservation and the knowledge gained from visiting the museums. Interviews were conducted for 20 to 90 minutes with 30 informants from the communities; visitors were of both genders and ranged in age from 17 to 65 years old. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various archives in the form of old documents, photos, videos, novels, books, reports and newspapers that provided information about Sawahlunto's history as a coal-mining city. The combination of these three data collection techniques strengthens the validity of the study's findings. The results of the interviews were adjusted to reflect the observations and secondary data, prior to being analysed using the relevant literature [Denzin and Lincoln: 2009].

4. Findings

4.1. The history of Sawahlunto as a coal-mining city

Sawahlunto is located in the Province of West Sumatra in Indonesia. It is a city that formed around coal mining at the end of the 19th century. Significantly, coal mining in this city is synonymous with Dutch colonialism, since coal was discovered and managed directly by the Dutch government until the late 1930s. In the early 20th century, this city was famous in South-east Asia for its coal industry; it became one of the largest cities for exporting coal to European countries to meet the demands of their industrial societies [Erman: 2005].

The coal mining industry flourished in Sawahlunto for over a hundred years, from 1891 to 2001. However, in mid-2001, the monetary crisis in Indonesia began to disrupt the city's stability. Sawahlunto encountered a severe problem when the coal-mining industry was declared closed, resulting in the stagnation of the local economy. This was exacerbated by a high rate of migration and the environmental damage left by the mining sector. At that time, Sawahlunto was experiencing the threat of becoming a dead city [Miko: 2006].

Sawahlunto's citizens began to abandon the city, leading to a decline in population. In 1995, the population of the city was 55,090, compared to only 51,533 at the end of 2002. In just seven years, the total population of Sawahlunto had declined by 3,557 people or 6.46% [BPS Sawahlunto: 2003]. Another challenge was the fluctuation in poverty levels between 1996 and 2005. In 1996, 4.5% of the total population of Sawahlunto was deemed to be living in poverty. However, by 1999, that rose to 14.9%, an increase of 10.4% in only three years [BAPPEDA Kota Sawahluno: 2006].

The years from 1998 to 2001 were a particularly difficult period for Sawahlunto. In addition to population and economic crises, Sawahlunto was also faced with ecological damage. The end of the mining industry left neglected old buildings and damaged mine shafts. Sawahlunto was becoming a ghost town.

2001 was transformative. It marked the end of Sawahlunto's history as a coal-mining city and the beginning of its journey as a mining tourism city. The vision for this transformation was legislated in Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2001; namely, 'Sawahlunto to be a Cultural Mining Tourism City in 2020' [LPPM ITB: 2001]. Due to the strong commitment of urban stakeholders, it was possible to rebuild post-mining Sawahlunto and still save the coal-mining heritage that had been the city's identity for more than a century and represented the pride of Sawahlunto's communities. The mining heritage museums were established at three historic sites to preserve this heritage and store the diverse memories of coal mining in Sawahlunto, not only for tourism purposes, but also to reintroduce the city's history and the struggles of the community's ancestors.

4.2. Coal-mining heritage museums in Sawahlunto: heritage preservation and knowledge construction

Goedang Ransoem Museum

Goedang Ransoem Museum was established to preserve the various cooking utensils that had been used by the Ombilin Coal Mine Company (PTBO) since the days of Dutch colonialism. It was inaugurated as a tourist attraction on December 17, 2005. The museum was built out of the former public kitchen of PTBO, set up in 1918 to feed 6,000 employees and workers. The size of this public kitchen represents the success of coal mining in Sawahlunto in the early 20th century. However, the kitchen's existence ended, along with Dutch control over the management of PTBO, in 1930. By 1950, the kitchen was completely closed and became an employee residence prior to being taken over as a museum.

As a public kitchen for more than 70 years, numerous stories could be told about it from the heyday of the coal-mining era in Sawahlunto. However, the kitchen was almost unrecognisable following its change in function. In response to the decision to develop mining heritage tourism, this former public kitchen was reborn as Goedang Ransoem Museum. Instead of a place to cook or live in, it was conserved as a place for retelling past stories to contemporary generations.

As its name implies, this museum displays a variety of cooking utensils used to make meals for the 6,000 PTBO employees and workers, starting with pots for cooking rice, cauldrons, steam stoves and other utensils used for processing food (Plate 1). The



Plate 1
'Original utensils used to cook for 6000 miners during the Dutch colonial period'.
Source: Authors, August 2018.

museum did not undergo major renovation, offering visitors the experience of seeing an authentic public mining company kitchen in the heyday of PTBO. Visitors are invited to observe how various utensils were used to cook meals for the miners, as well as the types of meals served and the stories behind typical mining activities in the days of Dutch colonialism.

Apart from cooking utensils, the museum also has other kitchen utensils such as spoons, pans and plates. There are currently 427 items in the collection, 400 of which are original while the rest are replicas (Plate 2a). Various items were collected from the homes of residents who had taken them to use in their own kitchens. In addition to utensils and tableware, the museum also displays the types of meals miners typically consumed during Dutch colonialism (Plate 2b).

Visitors are able to observe first-hand the success of the mining industry by viewing the modern and sophisticated cooking utensils the kitchen used, such as steam stoves and electricity, at a time when most of the surrounding areas had no electricity and people were forced to cook using much simpler technologies.

Various photos portraying activities in the public kitchen are presented in the museum, along with the



Plate 2a
Tableware displayed at the museum.
Source: Authors, August 2018.



Plate 2b
Types of meals served for miners displayed at the museum.
Source: Authors, August 2018.

miners' stories. Visitors are accompanied by a museum guide who provides information about each collection's function and narrates the story of coal-mining in the past. Prior to touring the museum, the visitors are shown a documentary video that tells the history of mining in Sawahlunto, including kitchen activities and the history behind the construction of the museum. Visiting Goedang Ransoem Museum is a unique experience. Each month, more than 20,000 visitors from the general public and students from various regions in Indonesia observe first-hand how Goedang Ransoem Museum represents the pinnacle of coal-mining in Sawahlunto, something about which they have previously only read in newspapers and school textbooks.

Hole Mine Site Museum Mbah Soero

Built in 1898, Soegar Hole is the oldest mine shaft in Sawahlunto; it closed in 1932 due to high water seepage. The closure left a pit that the surrounding communities believed was haunted and they claimed to have experienced numerous mystical events after it closed. Soegar Hole's history is significant in that it describes the prisoners who came from all corners of Indonesia to work as miners. They carried out their sentences as enchained unpaid miners in torturous conditions and were known as 'people in chain'. Their history and the story of their struggle was one of the factors that inspired the government and stakeholders of Sawahlunto to open the Soegar Hole as a museum and tourist attraction.

The Soegar Hole was renovated between June 27, 2007 and December 2007 and inaugurated as a tourist attraction on April 23, 2008; this occasion was marked by changing its name to the Hole Mine Site Museum Mbah Soero. Mbah Soero was a famous overseer who worked at the mine and was known to be tenacious, friendly and hard-working.

First, the water flooding the 185-metre-long tunnel-shaped hole had to be drained. Then lighting was installed, the drainage was repaired and air conditioning was introduced. The museum tells the story of the struggle experienced by the 'people in chain' in the form of stories, sculptures, miniatures, and photographs. (Plate 3b). There is an information booth and a gallery that provides information about the museum's history, the story of mining in Sawahlunto (Plate 4), information about the original equipment used to dig coal, miners' stories of working with the 'people in chain', as well as of the history of the miners' arrival, as it is closely related to Sawahlunto's current culture.

The 'people in chain' were prisoners brought in from various Indonesian islands to work as unpaid miners as a form of punishment for their wrongdoings. They were not actually criminals, in fact most of them were political prisoners, men who had rebelled against the Dutch colonists. Their name derived from the fact that they worked with their feet chained to prevent them from escaping. Their identities were never



Plate 3a
Sculptures of miners (people in chain) under the supervision of the Dutch overseer.
Source: Authors, July 2018.



Plate 3b
Hole Mine Site Museum
Source: Authors, July 2018.



Plate 4
Visitors looking at old mining equipment at the Hole Mine Site Museum Mbah Soero and the photo gallery of mining activities in the period.
Source: Authors, July 2018.

revealed, they were known only by the numbers tattooed on their bodies; they were unpaid, exploited, intimidated and treated inhumanely.

When the management of the coal-mining industry was transferred to the Indonesian government, the situation changed. This coincided with the proclamation of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia. All the political prisoners of the Dutch government were released, including the 'people in chain.' It was the beginning of a new life for those who had survived working in the mine, and many of them continued to live in Sawahlunto, married, and had children. They were the ancestors of Sawahlunto's present-day inhabitants, with the result that Sawahlunto grew into a multi-ethnic city populated by diverse Indonesian groups such as Javanese, Batak, Sundanese, Madurese and Minangkabau, the regions from which the 'people in chain' originally came.

Although they are the ancestors of Sawahlunto's present-day communities, their history appears to have been forgotten. Their struggles, sacrifices and service were obscured by the stereotype that they were prisoners and exiles, though in fact, these 'people in chain' were heroes who made a great contribution to Sawahlunto's heyday as an important mining city. The success of the museum is that it tells their story through collected community knowledge and has rehabilitated their reputation through sculptures, photos, videos, and stories (Plate 3a) and commemorates their struggles and life stories; their original photos and tombstones are also stored and displayed in the museum (Plate 5).



Plate 5
Original tombstones and photos of miners (people in chain) in the museum.
Source: Authors, December 2018.

Sawahlunto Railway Museum

Sawahlunto Railway Museum is the third of the museums; it was established in December 2005 to represent the heyday of mining in the past for the modern community (Plate 6). It was originally Sawahlunto Railway Station and was active from 1912 to 2003 in transporting coal to the port of Emmahaven (Teluk Bayur) in Padang, to be exported overseas or for domestic use, but following the demise of the mining industry, the railroad activities were also discontinued. In 2003, after almost a century of heavy use, the railway buildings were abandoned, and left empty and neglected.

Considering the importance of this train station for Sawahlunto, the government of Sawahlunto decided to perpetuate the history of railway transportation and activities in a museum. This museum has since become a place to reminisce nostalgically about the history of coal transportation. The museum keeps various collections directly related to coal transportation, both in the form of objects and stories. For example, there is a complete and detailed miniature model of the original train used to transport coal to Emmahaven and old photographs showing coal transportation and the construction of the railroad between 1887 and 1894, which claimed many lives of people from the local community.

By 2018, the museum housed 106 items comprising a collection of 5 wagons, 1 steam locomotive, 2 ancient clocks, 34 signal or communication devices, 34 photographs, 9 miniature locomotives, 3 safe-deposit boxes, 5 railroad jacks, 3 factory labels, 3 ancient scales, 1 bell, and 2 locomotive batteries [Uiz: 2014].

The commitment of the government of Sawahlunto to preserving the heritage and building a collective memory of the history of mining in Sawahlunto is also evident in the reactivation of the E 1060 steam locomotive (more popularly known as Mak Itam) to promote railway tourism. Mak Itam is a steam locomotive that was used for pulling or pushing a series of wagons loaded with coal from Sawahlunto to Emmahaven (Teluk Bayur) in Padang. When mining activities ended, this locomotive was no longer needed for transporting coal and was taken to Ambarawa, Central Java as one of the 21 steam locomotives in the Ambarawa Railway Museum's collection. However, due to its historical value and importance in the history of coal transportation in Sawahlunto, Mak Itam was brought back to Sawahlunto from Ambarawa in 2008. Currently, the E 1060 steam locomotive is one of the most important items in the Sawahlunto Railway Museum collection, and is used to encourage visitors



Plate 6
Sawahlunto Railway Museum.
Source: Authors, September 2018.

to explore the coal transportation routes in Sawahlunto and to learn the stories behind coal transportation in the past.

The Railway Museum educates visitors about coal transportation, starting with the original equipment used, the tracks, and detailing the hard struggle, exploitation and loss of life experienced in constructing the 155 km railway from Sawahlunto to the port of Emmahaven. Various media displayed in this museum, including photos, miniatures, stories and videos feature the lives of the miners.

4.3. The coal-mining heritage museums of Sawahlunto and the formation of collective memory

The restoration of Sawahlunto's coal-mining history in these three mining museums has slowly revived community memories of the town's nearly-forgotten identity, while visitors from outside Sawahlunto can learn about the establishment, development and success of this mining city. Visitors are invited to not only observe history through objects, photos, sculptures and stories, but also to experience past mining activities directly, by exploring the actual tunnels, using miners tools, and even boarding the coal train. Heritage tourism provides a different experience from other types of tourist activities because it allows a visitor to travel in the present while learning and reminiscing about historical events and things of which they have only read in newspapers and textbooks.

The preservation of the city's history by the museums has had its own impact on Sawahlunto's communities. The on-going internalisation of information about Sawahlunto's history through the mining museums assists the communities in better understanding their identity and genealogy. The museums' representation of their past mining heritage fosters a collective memory of the city's history and the origin of the local communities, leading to a shared perception that the communities of Sawahlunto have similar histories, despite their different lineages and ethnic groups. The following statements from Sawahlunto people demonstrate this:

> *The development of mining tourism in this city has helped us to better understand our true ancestors. Even though they came from different regions, we understand that they came here with a similar purpose. They became Dutch labourers, working in the mines. This similarity is what unites us nowadays ...* [Interview on July 22, 2018]

One of Sawahlunto's community leaders said:

> *The museum stores the stories of the miners, the ancestors of the community of Sawahlunto that we didn't know at first, one of which is the story of people in chain. They are our ancestors who contributed to the construction of this city. At first we knew them as convicts and criminals. However, the museum helps us to understand that these people are actually the heroes of this city. It is new knowledge for us. Once, we were ashamed of them due to our bad assumptions, yet now we are proud to be their descendants.* [Interview on August 19, 2018]

The formation of collective memory is also experienced by the younger generation:

> *I've just discovered the origin of the community of Sawahlunto from the museum, including their occupation as miners in the Dutch era. In the museum, I can also see a variety of collections comprising photos and videos of the past condition of the city, including how the miners worked. The museum truly presents another side of the history of our city that I did not know previously, and thus I'm proud to be a member of the young generation of Sawahlunto.* [Interview on August 8, 2018]

The aforementioned statements prove that the mining museums present the previously-unknown history of the city and the ancestors. Even though the community realises that they are people of different origins and ethnicities, the similarity in the history of their ancestors' arrival in Sawahlunto to work as miners, and the events they experienced, create a sense of all 'being in the same boat', an emotional bond creating a collective awareness.

This is the basis of various actions taken by the community to participate in preserving its heritage. The community has established various local community groups with a similar desire to rebuild the post-mining city of Sawahlunto. Fifty-three groups have been established between 2003 and 2018, all related to heritage preservation activities and the development of mining heritage tourism in Sawahlunto. These groups started from a collective awareness, and formed to preserve the culture, traditions, arts and historical values originating from their ancestors as miners from various ethnic groups in Indonesia.

Through these communities, real actions in preserving heritage and rebuilding Sawahlunto have been accomplished. Since the beginning of the construction of the museums, the community has voluntarily donated original mining material for the museum collections. They have guarded the buildings and the mining sites from being damaged and destroyed. They have also opened their homes as places for visitors to stay, and even relearned various traditions, arts and skills that were starting to disappear from the memories of the current generation. These include *Kuda Kepang* (an Indonesian traditional artform of dances and games using items such as wooden horses, which describes the knights involved in fighting against the Dutch colonists who rode horses), *Wayang* (a puppet performance telling of the interaction between the miners and Dutch overseers), and *Randai* (a folk tradition of the Minangkabau ethnic group in Indonesia, which is a game combining music, singing, dance, drama and the martial arts) and various other forms of attractions and traditions closely related to mining activities in the past (Plate 7).

These are currently performed on certain days in front of the museum to introduce the various performances once put on by the miners to entertain Dutch officials at the weekends. For the community of Sawahlunto, the mining museum is not only a place to store collections, but also a way of reminding themselves of the lives of their ancestors.

The commitment of the community and the government of Sawahlunto to preserving their mining heritage ensures the recognition of Sawahlunto as a coal-mining heritage city of value both in Indonesia and world-wide. Since 2014, Sawahlunto Coal Mining City has been designated as Indonesian Cultural Heritage, and in July 2019, Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage of Sawahlunto was inscribed on UNESCO's *World Heritage List*.

5. Conclusion

The preservation of coal-mining heritage through museums in Sawahlunto serves various functions. In addition to preserving their heritage from the threat of extinction, it also enables the community to remember and take pride in their collective memories of the history of the lives and activities of their ancestors, and in Sawahlunto as one of the notable cities of Indonesia.

The variety of mining heritage displayed in the museums shapes the knowledge of visitors about the struggles experienced by the ancestors of the community of Sawahlunto in building a coal mine during the Dutch colonial period. Coal-mining heritage



Plate 7
Heritage art attractions performed in the museum (a) A *Wayang* performance telling the story of the miners in chains during the Dutch colonial period in Sawahlunto, (b) Performance of *Kuda Kepang*.
Source: Authors, November 2018.

museums in Sawahlunto describe in various ways how Sawahlunto became a notable city at the end of the 19th century, and how this achievement is inseparable from the struggle of the community to develop the city while under the control of the Dutch government.

Even though the museums frame the struggles as a narrative of exploitation, knowledge of their heritage has strengthened the community's sense of identity and increased their pride and sense of belonging [Moore and Whelan: 2007]. The community of Sawahlunto increasingly understands its origins, people are united by sharing a history despite their different backgrounds and ethnicities. In this regard, the museum serves to represent the identity of the community [McLean, 2007].

The formation of collective memory in the communities of Sawahlunto as a result of its reintroduced history and identity has strengthened fading memory into nostalgia that will be remembered by successive generations. Collective memory does not automatically exist in each individual, but rather is formed socially through continuous construction and the internalisation of knowledge [Halbwachs, 1992]. Museums that preserve memories of the past allow for the formation of new collective memories.

This collective memory is the basis for the present communities' actions. According to Emile Durkheim, the collective memory of history is a medium of social cohesion that unites communities. Collective awareness will form when communities are united by shared feelings, values and shared goals, ultimately generating social solidarity to jointly build social life [Misztal: 2003]. This is what has happened in Sawahlunto.

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