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FROM ARCHIVES TO PUBLIC MEMORY: COLLABORATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL HISTORY IN GALERI BUMI PARAWIRA, INDONESIA

Abstract

Purpose: *This research examines the transformation of static historical archives into dynamic public collective memory through collaborative curatorial and artistic practices at Galeri Bumi Parawira in Bogor, Indonesia. It explores how government agencies, archivists, librarians, local history communities, and artists negotiate authority to co-construct local historical knowledge.*

Method/approach: *Utilizing a qualitative case study design, the research applies reflexive thematic analysis to data collected from institutional documents, semi-structured interviews, and participant observations across multi-stakeholder groups, including government agencies, librarians, archivists, local history communities, and artists.*

Results: *The findings demonstrate that public memory within the gallery is not a passive reproduction of raw administrative records, but an interpretive narrative of local leadership history. This narrative is co-constructed through multi-stakeholder negotiations, field and historical validation, visual artistic representations, and active community participation.*

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Conclusions/findings: *The exhibition functions beyond a static archival repository, serving as a living center for public knowledge creation. These results validate the paradigm of "doing history with the public" and reinforce the conceptualization of heritage as an ongoing, dynamic social process.*

Keywords: *public history, collective memory, archives, collaborative governance, gallery, GLAM*

1 INTRODUCTION

Public memory is an evolving and discursive process in which communities interpret their shared perceptions of history to comprehend the present and prepare for the future (McDermott & Anderson, 2022). GLAM institutions have spearheaded efforts to preserve memories of the past. However, they are currently evolving into interactive places that engage not only with visitors/users but also with communities and other institutions (Majidah et al., 2025). This clearly indicates that preserving knowledge as paper-based documentation or tangible objects alone is insufficient to ensure long-term sustainability and relevance (Foster et al., 2024, 10).

This practice of public history within the institution is now understood as public history, which is telling history to the community rather than making history for the community (Cauvin & Dalal, 2025). Academic historians have interpretive authority over non-academic historians and the community to tell history (McDermott & Anderson, 2022). In practice, however, authority is ethically problematic as communities are authorities in their own experience (Day & Pendharkar, 2024). Furthermore, community participation should strike the right balance among participation, cooperation, and co-creation (Cauvin & Dalal, 2025). Community participation can be hindered by bureaucracy, institutional capability, and divergent interest groups (Giglitto et al., 2024; Jagodzińska, 2023). Therefore, the necessity to demonstrate cooperation between the institutions, appreciate the value of such cooperation, and define the form of cooperation (bureaucratic or co-optation) (Giglitto et al., 2024).

GBP (Galeri Bumi Parawira) in Bogor City Library and Gallery is an empirical case through which we can explore these issues and their relevance in the Indonesian context. GBP was developed as a local government initiative to revitalize the public library and to make it an engaging place to learn about local history. It is a combination of library, archival, and gallery functions within a single GLAM ecosystem. It has been planned and developed by local government officials, librarians, archivists, academics, local historians, artists, and creative communities. At GBP, the history and leadership of Bogor City are not just kept as official government records, but, in a sense, as an archive of the people, the area, and the country. They are identified, investigated during field research, verified, curated,

and turned into interpretive forms. These include narrative paintings, artifact replicas, thematic exhibitions, historical theatre performances, and the publication of a book on the history of Bogor City.

Even when the collaboration seems harmonious, the epistemic authority of the actors in the process remains a significant concern. Questions still remain about who has the authority to determine the themes through which local leadership is represented, to verify historical claims, to select visual forms, and to approve the final narrative. These decisions are fundamental to the development of public history as they define which versions of the past are recognized as historical and accessible. So, they need to be researched in great depth.

Archival processes, in terms of memory, become part of public memory through the sociological notion of collective memory. According to Halbwachs (1992), memory is created in relation to contemporary society. Collective memory is built by social reconstruction and depends on the interests, values, and relations of contemporary society (McDermott & Anderson, 2022). An archive has its meaning and significance in social history only when it becomes reactivated through social processes (Foster et al., 2024; Ketelaar, 2014).

The same logic is present in Nora's (1989) definition of lieu de mémoire, in which cultural galleries serve as material sites for collective memory and its connection to the needs of contemporary communities regarding identity. A similar approach to heritage studies holds that heritage is not an unchanging historical value but a process that unfolds socially and culturally, mediated through participation to foster attachment and identity (Smith, 2006). The GBP has examples of such an approach in massive historical paintings and reproductions that are beautiful but also work as mnemonic markers and stimulate debates about history among citizens themselves (Marsili, 2026; Noy, 2017).

Nevertheless, community involvement in the process of creating public memory within institutional GLAM organizations remains difficult. Research has demonstrated that heritage-based social innovation projects face obstacles such as institutional bureaucratic problems, lack of financial resources, uneven access to information, and poor community relations, which may deteriorate once the project becomes institutionalized (Giglitto et al., 2024; Jagodzińska, 2023). In archival institutions, there may be an emphasis on national master narratives that

favor the political and social elite, disregarding the memories and voices of the local community (Dudman, 2019; Rydén, 2023).

For example, visual and photographic archives are often seen as neutral representations of reality, even though we do not consider the ideological and curatorial beliefs and concerns of the creators and archivists who produced them (Barromi Perlman, 2011; Trouillot, 2015). Worldwide scholarship on public history, collective memory, and GLAM governance has been expanding, but little has been done in Indonesia to examine how administrative archives are transformed into public memory through the interrelation of historical and artistic actors. Most of the studies on Indonesian cultural heritage have focused on physical and archaeological preservation, tourism development, or institutional management. The epistemic mechanisms in which public historical knowledge is made, verified, visualized, and circulated have received minimal academic attention.

Galeri Bumi Parawira provides an interesting case to bridge that research gap. It highlights how a gallery can be more than just a static exhibition space, but an active forum for the production of public knowledge. In this space, scholarly legitimacy, derived from archival and historical knowledge, and social legitimacy, generated through community engagement, are also cultivated through art and artistic expression. The gallery thus provides a context for considering how archival evidence, institutional authority, community knowledge, and artistic interpretation intersect to build a local, meaningful public history.

This article investigates the transformation of archives into public memory through the collaborative construction of local history in the development of GBP in Bogor City. It argues that the public memory produced within the gallery is not a linear factual representation from archival records. Rather, it is a negotiated social and artistic construction by several actors through processes of selection, verification, visualization, and public activation.

The study contributes theoretically by integrating public history, collective memory, heritage, and collaborative governance into a common analysis of local historical knowledge. Empirically, it adds to our knowledge that institutions in Indonesian GLAM are working cooperatively. It also shows that curatorial work, artistic translation, and negotiation are central to the production of public historical knowledge.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THE TRANSFORMATION OF ARCHIVES INTO PUBLIC HISTORY

Public history is, in part, a revolt against the academically centered and exclusionary lens of traditional historiography. Cauvin and Dalal (2025, 14) define public history as an effort to "do history with the public," rather than merely to broadcast historical knowledge to passive audiences. History is no longer viewed from this perspective as a set-in-motion narrative available only in the academic world. It is also seen as a living and dynamic process through which various social actors interpret the past (Kelley, 1978, 16).

This move from academic history to public history demands a revisiting of the classical custodial paradigm, which treats archives as stationary, neutral, and objective objects to be preserved as administrative evidence (Saffady, 2021). Archival postmodernism also challenges this view of neutrality. Terry Cook points out that archivists and archival institutions are not passive or impartial custodians but active agents in the production, selection, organizing, and preservation of collective memory (Paliienko, 2023, 20). As a result, archival institutions play a significant role in determining which aspects of history are remembered and which are silenced in history's stories.

This archival power is also closely related to the idea of silences in the process of producing history, as offered by Michel-Rolph Trouillot. According to Trouillot (1995, 26), there are four key stages in which silences can emerge in the process of history-making: the making of sources, the archiving process, the making of narratives, and the retrospective making of history. Such structural silencing is generally more privileged, and local community histories remain unremembered. Public history becomes a form of democracy that resists silence to enable the creation of new public space for marginal voices (Dudman, 2019, 22). The use of oral history methodology and bottom-up stories will help build collective memory by drawing on local tacit knowledge and community members' memories (Dudman, 2019, 25; Mazidah, 2018, 10). The archiving process becomes an instrument not for storing the institutionalized narratives but for recovering, narrating, and disseminating community history.

2.2 RECONCEPTUALISING ARCHIVES, GALLERIES, AND PUBLIC MEMORY

Public memory is not merely a passive record of historical events, but rather a socially constructed process in which shared historical understanding is constantly being created, negotiated, and re-created in relation to current issues (McDermott & Anderson, 2022, Article 102257). Memory always occurs in social settings according to Halbwachs (1992, 40).

In the digital age, this is evident in "archives in motion" (Røssaak, 2010, 11) and "archives in action" (Opgenhaffen, 2022, Article e00231). These notions represent archives as working as social agents to activate them. Ketelaar (2014, 233) develops a related notion of "archival activations" in which every interaction, interrogation, and interpretation of a user constitutes an activation. Archives move from their "space of latency" (Assmann, 2008a, 103) to a space of connectivity, performativity, and cultural regeneration (Marsili, 2026, 12).

In the present public history ecosystem, libraries, galleries, and museums have emerged as lieux de mémoire, or sites of memory, where collective memory crystallizes as its original social environments, or milieux de mémoire, begin to disappear (Nora, 1989, 7). When exhibits in galleries turn administrative archives into public exhibition spaces, the records are culturalized and translated into emotional triggers or touchstones of memory for visitors (Millar, 2006, 114). The memory created through this process may thus shift from a formalized "sought memory" to a "created memory" negotiated with the public (McDermott & Anderson, 2022, Article 102257).

Visual representation, however, is never neutral. It is embedded in ideology and may be a tool of social control (Sekula, 2011, 2). Images displayed in galleries could reinforce the political hegemony by idealizing the public image of elite leaders (Barromi Perlman, 2011, 4). Historically visualized images, however, when produced collaboratively, can be seen as counter-hegemonic interventions that break out of the monolithic state narrative and restore representational agency back to a local community (Pasternak, 2021, 262). When it comes to the transfer of archives into gallery displays, we need to see the archive as an interpretive and political process to negotiate historical meaning, authority, and public legitimacy.

2.3 THE COLLABORATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY IN THE GLAM ECOSYSTEM.

The convergence of GLAM has become a new trend in heritage management and knowledge transfer (Given & McTavish, 2010, 7; Majidah et al., 2025, 11). Libraries promote inclusive literacy, archives contain credible sources of information, and galleries and museums offer visualization through exhibitions (Bohumelova & Hvorecky, 2016, 371; Wakimoto & Bruce, 2015, 183). Convergence in GLAM is an indication of a change in paradigm from the traditional collection-oriented institutions to visitor-oriented institutions (Logan & Liew, 2023, 1014).

Simon (2010, ii) distinguishes four kinds of community involvement in cultural institutions: contributory, collaborative, co-creative, and hosted. For participation to be genuine collaboration, academic, archival, and community partnerships must be based on reciprocity and mutual benefit, which Day and Pendharkar (2024, 416) refer to as a "reciprocity ring." This collaboration is more than just curatorial work in the physical world; it is storytelling, collective learning, and institutionalization of new knowledge (Foster et al., 2024, 73).

As Ansell & Gash (2008, 543) have emphasized, collaborative governance needs to be based on personal interaction, trust-building, commitment, mutual understanding, and small wins. On the other hand, the involvement of grassroots movements and social energy from below into the system of government creates tension due to bureaucratization (Jagodzińska, 2023, 467).

As Jagodzińska (2023, 468) pointed out, community participatory agency will decline once a cultural institution is established and participation is institutionalized and formalized. Lack of autonomy in interpretive and epistemic judgment, as well as bureaucracy, are also obstacles to collaboration (Giglitto et al., 2023, 78; Sokka et al., 2021, 4). The central challenge in GLAM is managing bureaucracy to ensure good archival governance, transparency, and equity in curatorial relations. This equilibrium is vital to establish transparency and democratic control over the collaborative management of collective historical memory (Dikopoulou & Mihiotis, 2012, 125).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND INTERPRETIVE CASE STUDY APPROACH

In this research, a qualitative, interpretative, single-case approach was employed to investigate the processes by which archival resources were selected, validated, interpreted, and constructed as collective memories at Galeri Bumi Parawira (GBP) in Bogor, Indonesia. Rather than mere representations of a single objective reality, archives, historical accounts, and collective memories were considered socially constructed and discursively produced by specific actors within a particular institutional setting.

The design was inspired by Yin (2018), who considers case studies a useful way to examine contemporary phenomena in real-world settings. Qualitative methods should be employed to examine the experiences, motivations, and relationships of information professionals, curators, and the communities responsible for managing, communicating, and protecting our cultural heritage (Wakimoto & Bruce, 2015).

GBP, opened in late 2023, combines a public library, a regional archival institution, and a visual gallery of local history. It reflects the convergence of GLAM and the shift from collection-centered to visitor-centered institutions, as well as the need to encourage participation and community learning (Cobo-Serrano et al., 2022; Logan & Liew, 2023; Majidah et al., 2025). GBP is a "GLAM laboratory" where regional archives become public history through collaboration. Historical records are used to analyze, depict and communicate with the public beyond their administrative function. The case allows us to understand how cultural institutions navigate historical preservation and the public in the context of public knowledge (Cobo-Serrano et al., 2022; Marsili, 2026).

3.2 PURPOSIVE PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Participants were selected to obtain data from those with experience, authority, and direct involvement in GBP. This method offered different perspectives in the process and provided theoretically rich descriptions (Saffady, 2021; Wakimoto & Bruce, 2015). For participation in GBP to be useful, participants need to be involved in GBP's establishment, the collection of historical data, archival verification, visual curation, exhibition planning, and daily management.

To explore various dimensions of the collaboration process, key stakeholders from institutional and community sectors were included in the research. These include (1) officials from the Bogor City Archives and Library Office having formal authority in this regard; (2) librarians and gallery managers, having access to both information and space; (3) regional archivists, who evaluated and suggested the archives that would be of permanent value; (4) researchers, academics, and historians, who could comment on the source and evaluate it through field experience; (5) local artists who were capable of converting historical narratives into paintings; and (6) local historical communities, such as the Bogor Historia Community, who provided some information through oral traditions. In total, 12 participants were included in the study.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND TRIANGULATION

Three methods of qualitative data collection include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis of institutions (Jagodzińska, 2023; Mazidah, 2018; McDermott & Anderson, 2022). This strategy was used in order to develop a complete and contextually informed understanding of how archival documents are integrated into collective memory.

1. Semi-structured in-depth interviews

   The interview guide's flexibility facilitated communication and reduced the power hierarchy, as per an anti-oppressive oral history study (Dudman, 2019). The interview involved a discussion of the GBP's nine-month development, verification of the historical sources (the Batutulis Inscription and its connection to King Purnawarman), and the negotiation of meaning among the actors. These interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim (Saffady, 2021; Wakimoto & Bruce, 2015).

2. Participant observation

   Observations of the gallery layout, exhibition flow, paintings depicting Bogor's political leadership, curatorial panels, artifact replicas, and hands-on learning activities were conducted. These observations helped to describe how archival materials were formally communicated and collectively reconstructed from the public's point of view (Jagodzińska, 2023; Majidah et al., 2025).

3. Institutional document analysis

Documents were reviewed to contextualize the findings from the interviews and observations. These included the Mayor's Decree establishing the gallery, coordination meeting minutes, the curatorial manuscript, exhibition catalogs and the 2023 Bogor Mayoral Regulation on the Srikandi archival information system, historical research manuscripts, and documentation of Bogor City's history (Mazidah, 2018).

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) developed by Braun and Clarke (2023). RTA is well suited for interpretive qualitative research in the context of "Big Q" methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Unlike post-positivist "small q" coding, RTA treats researcher subjectivity as a creative analytical resource rather than a bias that needed to be eliminated (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Varpio et al., 2021). The analysis was in line with Braun and Clarke's (2023) six recursive phases and McDermott and Anderson's (2022) work on public memory. The phases were not linear, but researchers moved iteratively between data, codes, themes, and theory.

(1) Phase 1: Familiarization with the data

The researchers read the interview transcripts, field notes, and institutional documents over and over again. Early insights and reflections were noted.

(2) Phase 2: Creating codes

The data were broken down into units that could be classified according to the research question. Codes focused on the archiving process, negotiation of historical significance, confirmation of sources, visual evidence, and social validity.

(3) Phase 3: Theme development

The related codes were sorted out by themes. Similar to the RTA case study, themes were interpreted as insights rather than mere topics (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

(4) Phase 4: Reviewing and refining themes

Themes were compared against coded excerpts and the complete dataset to determine their ability to interpret information from participants, institutional documents, and observations.

(5) Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

The analytical focus and conceptual boundaries of each theme were clarified. Subthemes were created when appropriate, and appropriate names were given to communicate each theme's central organizing idea.

(6) Phase 6: Thematic Narrative

Thematic analysis was used to interpret data from interviews, observations, and documents, thereby identifying themes including authority, lieu de mémoire, and collaborative governance (Braun & Clarke, 2023; McDermott & Anderson, 2022).

3.5 RESEARCH CREDIBILITY, TRIANGULATION, AND REFLEXIVITY

Credibility was supported by source and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation compared the opinions of government officials, historians, archivists, artists, and community members. Methodological triangulation dealt with relationships, convergences, and tensions among interview, observational, and documentary data (Denkin, 2010; Mazidah, 2018). Triangulation did not aim to arrive at a single objective reality but to analyze the phenomena from many different angles to develop a deeper understanding of how historical meaning was negotiated.

Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the study to encourage transparency and situated knowing (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The researchers viewed their position as that of library and archival studies academics with extensive experience in knowledge management. This made them a source of knowledge and professionals in research and knowledge management, as they were insiders with access to disciplinary practices and outsiders distant from municipal policies and institutional interests (McDermott & Anderson, 2022; Tracy, 2019). Several participants reflected on preliminary thematic interpretations. This process increased contextual and theoretical nuance rather than seeking positivist consensus among participants (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Smith & McGannon, 2018).

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis of the interview data, field observations, and policy documents proved to be a reflexive process, indicating that the transition of archives to public memory at GBP was not limited to the static preservation of records. The role of

GBP was that of an active archive wherein local history was recreated and actualized through the collaboration of multiple agents. Five major interrelated themes have been identified through the analysis: (1) identification and validation of historical sources; (2) visual embodiment through painting and the reproduction of artifacts; (3) governance and the sharing of power; (4) socioeconomic actualization; and (5) the codification of knowledge through the publication of „History of Bogor City."

4.1 IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL SOURCES THROUGH COLLABORATIVE VERIFICATION

The reconstruction of the region's history using the GBP method began with identifying and sourcing historical documents from various institutions. This is in line with the process Trouillot (1995) calls the moment of fact assembly, in which available historical traces are identified and used to reconstruct history. In contrast to identifying the usual set of historical documents that are stored, the GBP method initiated a process in which scholars, the historical community, and archivists were involved in addressing the silence in the archive resulting from the absence of documentation of Bogor's classical era. In the Bogor City Archives and Library Office, there was a structural problem:

> *„The archives were initially in the care of the State Secretariat and Ministry of Information since that was the way the institutional system worked. If we are looking for pre-autonomy archives, we do not have them available. They may be in the possession of the West Java provincial administration or even ANRI itself."* (Ani, interview, 2026)

This case demonstrates how the archives were relocated both geographically and institutionally from the place in which the community's history is rooted. To address these gaps, the municipal government and research team conducted a collaborative search across institutions, including repositories in the Netherlands. Adi, the former Head of the Bogor City Archives and Library Office who oversaw the establishment of GBP, described how a study visit to Leiden University Library became an important moment in developing a vision for the city's archives:

> *"I saw materials from the Dutch archival institute at that time, which included the map of Bogor. It was clear that the Dutch had actually planned the city right from the start, as Buitenzorg was designed in such a way that there would be no cross-roads to avoid traffic jams."* (Adi, interview, 2026)

With the inclusion of the colonial maps and planning documents from *Buitenzorg*, the researchers were able to link the historical documents kept elsewhere to the modern city they pertained to. In doing so, documents that had been physically and institutionally separated were used for educational purposes in Bogor. Field-based verification was also undertaken to examine narratives relating to the Pajajaran Kingdom and King Prabu Siliwangi, for which limited written evidence remained in Bogor. Because much of the material heritage of the Pajajaran Kingdom was destroyed following its collapse, with the Batutulis Inscription constituting one of its most prominent surviving traces, the research team visited other centers associated with the Sunda-Galuh kingdoms. A member of the Reka Bogor community described the process:

> *"Our colleagues were part of the research group. They looked for information up to Ciamis and Sumedang to learn the history. We all were from Bogor, including the artists."* (Doni, interview, 2026)

The team also consulted experts and local knowledge holders in eastern Sundanese regions:

> *"The experts were interviewed from the area of Ciamis, Galuh. One of the lecturers from Galuh University who had been working there had once been the rector of that university. In addition to this, we visited the school and collected their story as well."* (Doni, Interview, 2026)

By way of the process of triangulation of these sources, which linked the inscriptions of the local area, the documents in Sumedang, maps of the colonial era in the Netherlands, and oral history as passed down through customary elders, GBP was able to transform unprocessed archival information into an authentic public historical narrative.

4.2 VISUALISING ARCHIVES THROUGH HISTORICAL PAINTINGS AND ARTEFACT REPLICAS

One of the key problems in the area of public history concerns the transformation of the language of the written archive into more visual forms that are both communicative and personal. At GBP, this process was realized through 35 historical paintings and 10 reproductions of artifacts, laid out chronologically across five stages of leadership, from the Pajajaran period to the Reform period.

This approach is in line with the shift in how we view archives, from viewing them as just documents to viewing them as cultural assets (Marsili, 2026; Schwartz & Cook, 2002). The historical paintings did not come from the unrestrained imagination of individual artists. The artists‘ work was always in discussion with the historical research team, who carefully curated it to establish a defensible relationship between visual representations and historical facts. As one of the participants of the community said:

> *„The entire process was quite interesting. The researchers narrated the story of past events to the painters. They asked for the meaning of the story, drew sketches and discussed them with the researchers.“* (Doni, interview, 2026)

This is an example of converging curatorial authority. For the creation of the painting The Coronation of Prabu Siliwangi, no visual resources or real paintings of the king‘s face existed. The artists aimed to create a portrait of a classical Sundanese face through a series of discussions. Details such as whether the king would have a mustache were constantly revised in light of the archival researchers‘ comments. It is clear that the formation of visual material in this case is more about reconstructing history than physically restoring it (Conrad, 2012). Through these large-scale paintings, GBP was able to form a “visual storybook.” An informant from the community stated that:

> *“Bumi Parawira is a visual storybook wherein all paintings have stories to tell. This is what gives Bogor its identity in paintings.”* (Doni, interview, 2026)

The painting had a curatorial caption that explained the historical context. The relationship between image and text was important, as the paintings were not just facts to be known but were presented as matters of interpretation. Barromi Perlman (2011) points out that visual media in archival exhibitions can never be neutral. They are structured representations that affect ideological awareness and collective identity. At GBP, the translation of inscriptions and historical manuscripts into dramatic visual displays broadened access to historical knowledge that would otherwise have required specialist knowledge of Sanskrit or Old Sundanese.

4.3 COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AND SHARED AUTHORITY

GBP is an example of cooperative governance built on the political commitment of municipal leaders (Ansell & Gash, 2008). The Bogor municipal government

served as the primary facilitator of social and financial resources beyond the regional government budget (Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Daerah, APBD). Adi explained how philanthropic donations and corporate social responsibility funding could fund the project:

> *"When we received the task, there was no budget at all. It was quite an ambitious idea, but there were few resources. We managed to present the project to the philanthropists and sponsors. In general, back then our budget was about IDR 31 billion."* (Adi, interview, 2026)

According to the interview results, non-APBD funding from an independent foundation called Reka Bogor gave the artists and community members more room for action. However, the collaboration process was designed around an almost hierarchical interaction between all the players involved. Community members, researchers, and artists were bringing their knowledge and work to this project, yet it was left to the mayor to decide on the exhibition idea. This point has been acknowledged by Adi himself:

> *„The decision maker in this case was the mayor. It is all the drafts prepared by the external group but the decision had not been made by the mayor yet."* (Adi, interview, 2026)

The exhibition's focus on leadership was highly influenced by the background and interests of the mayor at the time, Bima Arya, an academic trained in political science in Australia. This was because the public memory built at GBP was not independent of the political priorities through which the formal government authority sought to define the city's identity. It also aligns with Bhebhe and Ngoepe's (2021) analysis of how public history programs can become entangled in political legitimation.

GBP therefore complicates the ideal of shared authority. Interpretive authority was shared among several people for research, verification, artistic production, and community programming. But the main theme of the gallery and final institutional decisions were in the hands of the municipal leadership. Participation increased but did not entirely share decision-making power.

With the change in municipal leadership in 2024, this tension was even more evident. The new administration proposed transferring GBP to the Pajajaran Museum, which is run by the Tourism and Culture Office. The archival and artistic

communities, who felt that cultural ownership of GBP was the people‘s and their work, not just the municipal bureaucracy‘s, were vehemently opposed. Doni explained the conflict:

> *„Of course, the new mayor was a deputy of Bima. But just at the start of the year, he suddenly stated that, ‚I wish that Galeri Bumi Parawira should be transferred to the Pajajaran Museum.‘ That raised a lot of issues within the community members. They got disappointed, and they challenged the mayor.”* (Doni, interview, 2026)

The situation described above resonates with Jagodzińska‘s (2023) comment on the institutional vulnerability of participatory cultural projects. The social energy of grassroots communities may dissipate or get repressed when a cultural institution becomes part of a new round of political struggle and bureaucracy. In GBP, however, the diversity of people behind the project ensured collective management of the situation.

> *“Thus, whoever takes over as the regional leader in the future and wishes to alter the concept of Bumi Parawira, he or she must seek permission from the communities that have constructed it, from the artists who created the paintings, and from the donors as well. Bumi Parawira is not safeguarded merely by the leader of the government office.”* (Doni, interview, 2026)

The fact that these stakeholders resisted shows that collaborative production can build ownership that extends beyond the project itself. This ownership may be a non-institutional means of protecting individuals from policy changes. However, the fact that it depends on social connections indicates the weakness of the institutions involved. In the absence of participatory decision-making institutions, community control will depend on political considerations.

4.4 ACTIVATING HISTORY THROUGH COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE, PUBLIC LEARNING, AND GLAM PROGRAMMING

GBP did not develop as a quiet archive where archives were separated from daily social interactions. On the contrary, it was used as a space with social, educational, and economic components. Indeed, this follows the trend among modern GLAM organizations, which are transforming from collection-centered to visitor-centered (Logan & Liew, 2023; Majidah et al., 2025). According to the inter-

view data, the administration of Bogor City handed over management of GBP to the Reka Bogor community foundation under a regional asset utilization contract called Kerja Sama Pemanfaatan (KSP). This gave the organization the power to collect fees from the visitors. The reason was stated by Doni as follows:

> *„We did not have any funds after the opening of the gallery for maintaining it. So, we thought about the asset utilization policy of the regional government. It was the first time when it was used."* (Interview with Doni, 2026)

To reduce dependence on the municipal budget, this governance arrangement created new opportunities for the cultural community to generate income for the gallery. Public memory at GBP was further activated with performing arts and participatory educational projects. Local theatre groups regularly staged 30-minute historical acts based on the stories depicted in the gallery's paintings, attracting thousands of schoolchildren and turning visual narratives into memories. GBP also had children's storytelling programs organized by the Patah Hujan Storytelling Community and an interactive program called Dolan Bumi, featuring a treasure hunt at the archive:

> *„They went to Bumi Parawira, and they should be seeking things like in a treasure hunt. They had to answer the questions, they painted heroes, and they wore the crowns."* (Ani, interview, 2026)

All this resulted in turning the library and galleries into a place where learning through direct participation could happen, learning history not by heart but by doing it (Bohumelova & Hvorecky, 2016). In addition, the GBP was organizing historical walks in Bogor and pairing gallery exhibitions with colonial buildings, historically significant locations, and popular restaurants, such as Kopi Liong and Kopi Basimpin in the Empang region. These actions made it possible to relate the galleries' narratives to the city's historical narrative in the contemporary setting. The close relationship between cultural memory and local entrepreneurship suggests that preserving local historical data could foster the city's identity development.

4.5 CODIFYING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE HISTORY OF BOGOR CITY

A significant outcome of the collaborative work undertaken at GBP was the codification of oral knowledge and visual documentation through the publication

of the History of Bogor City. The book was collectively prepared by historians, academics from Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, archivists, and librarians. Its preparation drew on primary archival sources to provide a scholarly foundation for the historical narratives visualized within the gallery. Heru, the Head of the Bogor City Archives and Library Office, explained:

> *"We wanted to encourage younger figures to produce a work in the form of knowledge, namely a history book about Bogor. We encouraged artists and cultural practitioners to participate in preparing it because knowledge cannot develop without research."* (Heru, interview, 2026)

This process is in line with what Trouillot (1995) calls "the subsequent phases of history-making," where fluid experiences, oral testimonies, and facts are turned into a relatively stable text. Written codification was regarded by the participants as important to the continuity of public memory because historical knowledge in Indonesia has often been transmitted through oral traditions. Ani explained that the limited availability of written evidence frequently generated competing historical interpretations:

> *"We are accustomed to telling stories. Indonesian society relies heavily on oral transmission rather than writing. Very little can be used as written evidence, which leaves considerable room for historians to imagine."*(Ani, interview, 2026)

Such a notion brings into focus the fact that historically recorded knowledge becomes very fragile without document-based proof of oral accounts. The publication of the History of Bogor City aimed to connect various forms of archives, oral tradition, fieldwork, and visual storytelling exhibited at GBP. Thus, it created a more secure and traceable knowledge source for future generations.

5 CONCLUSIONS

As this study shows, the transformation of archives into public memory at Galeri Bumi Parawira (GBP) in Bogor is not a mechanical process of moving administrative records into an exhibition space. The archival material that had not been available in government archives became active resources for the creation of public memory through the cooperation of municipal authorities, historians, archivists, librarians, cultural communities, and local artists.

GBP is no longer bound by the institutional tradition based on collection but has evolved into a visitor-based, community-centered space for the creation and dissemination of knowledge (Bohumelova & Hvorecky, 2016; Majidah et al., 2025). Using 35 pieces of paintings from history and 10 replicas of artifacts, the formalized history was rendered into mnemonic media. This was done to challenge residents about the historical roots of Bogor's identity and its evolving traditions of leadership.

The transformation was enabled by a negotiated form of common authority in which academic historians and local historical communities brought written documentary evidence into dialogue with community oral traditions (Dudman, 2019). This process made public knowledge more credible through archival history and social legitimacy by bringing together the communities whose memories were to be recalled (and, in turn, their histories).

GBP also connected historical records from the Pajajaran period to contemporary forms of cultural expression, such as theatre performances, children's storytelling, interactive educational activities, and historical walking tours. Such practices help in understanding heritage as a dynamic and continually negotiated social process, not a single collection of objects inherited from the past (Smith, 2006). The theory and practice of researchers, information professionals, artists, and communities also resembled the "reciprocity ring" (Day and Pendharkar, 2024), as actors brought a variety of knowledge and resources to the community to address the limitations of the local archival collection and build public historical literacy.

Conflict situations may arise from such research, affecting the sustainability of this collaborative ecosystem. If the local history project, developed through flexible social energy in the community, is extended to the city level, bureaucratization will limit the community's ability (Jagodzińska, 2023). The dispute over the proposed relocation of GBP shows that collaborative production can lead to good collective stewardship but also shows how vulnerable public memory is to political succession and administrative change. And the future inclusiveness of GBP will be built on governance structures that institutionalize fair dialogue, provide clarity on the rights and responsibilities of all parties to the dialogue and those of the community, and do not leave the community to a single administrative decision. Public memory is not only to be maintained; it is to be maintained through the participatory relationships by which its content is valued and legitimized.

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POVZETEK

Prispevek obravnava preoblikovanje arhivskega gradiva v javni kolektivni spomin na primeru galerije Galeri Bumi Parawira v mestu Bogor v Indoneziji. Raziskuje, kako predstavniki mestnih oblasti, arhivisti, knjižničarji, zgodovinarji, lokalne skupnosti in umetniki sodelujejo pri oblikovanju ter posredovanju lokalnega zgodovinskega znanja. Teoretično izhaja iz konceptov javne zgodovine, kolektivnega spomina, kulturne dediščine in sodelovalnega upravljanja, pri čemer poudarja dejavno vlogo kulturnih ustanov pri interpretaciji preteklosti.

Raziskava temelji na kvalitativni interpretativni študiji primera. Podatki so bili pridobljeni s polstrukturiranimi intervjuji z dvanajstimi namensko izbranimi udeleženci, opazovanjem z udeležbo in analizo institucionalnih dokumentov. Z refleksivno tematsko analizo je bilo opredeljenih pet povezanih področij: prepoznavanje in preverjanje zgodovinskih virov, vizualna predstavitev zgodovine, sodelovalno upravljanje in delitev pristojnosti, družbeno in gospodarsko oživljanje zgodovinskih vsebin ter sistematizacija znanja z izdajo knjige o zgodovini mesta Bogor.

Ugotovitve kažejo, da javni spomin v galeriji nastaja skozi izbor, preverjanje in interpretacijo virov ter usklajevanje različnih pogledov. Zaradi vrzeli v lokalnem arhivskem gradivu so sodelujoči iskali vire v drugih ustanovah, tudi na Nizozemskem, ter povezovali pisne dokumente, zgodovinske zemljevide, napise, te-

rensko raziskovanje in ustno izročilo. Zgodovinsko znanje je bilo predstavljeno s petintridesetimi slikami in desetimi replikami predmetov, ki prikazujejo pet obdobij političnega vodstva. Umetniške upodobitve so nastajale v dialogu z raziskovalci, spremljajoča pojasnila pa so obiskovalcem omogočala razumevanje njihovega zgodovinskega konteksta in interpretativne narave.

Galerija povezuje arhivske, knjižnične in razstavne dejavnosti ter deluje kot prostor izobraževanja in sodelovanja skupnosti. Gledališke uprizoritve, pripovedovanje zgodb, interaktivne dejavnosti za otroke in zgodovinski sprehodi povezujejo razstavljene vsebine z mestnim prostorom in vsakdanjim življenjem. Izdaja knjige o zgodovini Bogorja dodatno utrjuje in ohranja znanje, pridobljeno s skupnim raziskovalnim delom.

Sodelovanje različnih akterjev kljub temu ni zagotovilo enakomerne porazdelitve odločevalske moči. Končne odločitve o zasnovi galerije so ostale v pristojnosti mestnega vodstva, predlog njene premestitve po menjavi oblasti pa je razkril ranljivost projekta za politične in upravne spremembe. Nasprotovanje skupnosti je hkrati pokazalo močan občutek skupne odgovornosti za ustvarjeno dediščino.

Prispevek zaključuje, da arhivsko gradivo postaja vir javnega spomina skozi sodelovalne družbene in umetniške procese. Za dolgoročno vzdržnost takšnih pobud so potrebne upravljavske strukture, ki zagotavljajo vključujoč dialog, jasno določene odgovornosti in trajno sodelovanje skupnosti pri odločanju.