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DOES RAWABOGO VILLAGE'S CONSERVATION COMMITMENT GROW FROM LOCAL VALUES?

Mutia Raudatul Jannah[1*], Muhamad Ramdani Pamungkas[2]

[1] *Urban and Regional Planning Department, Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia*
[2]*Tourism Department, Sahid University, Indonesia*

[*]*Corresponding author. Email: mutiaraudatuljnn@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore whether the conservation efforts in the village of Rawabogo result from an awareness of local values or occur coincidentally alongside the heritage of local wisdom. The village is rich in local knowledge reflected in the concept of "Tri Tangtu", forming the philosophical foundation of the community's life, connecting the relationships between humans, God, and nature as the basis of their existence. Additionally, the local proverb "Tungku tilu, jangka opat, papat kalima pancer" serves as a symbol of this wisdom and plays a crucial role as a guiding principle in daily life. The research findings indicate that the conservation of natural resources in Rawabogo with local values, but for bigger communities the local values not conscious adopted. Employing a case study method, this research delves into the dynamics of the intersection between conservation efforts and local values in Rawabogo. The study provides profound insights into the relationship between environmental conservation and local values, emphasizing that environmental sustainability can occur organically or coincidentally in conjunction with cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Conservation, Community Based Conservation, Local Wisdom, Local Values.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation is a major specter in environmental problems. Humans, as the apex of the food chain in the modern era, hold a central role in environmental intervention and the exploitation of natural resources. Environmental degradation is often driven by the urgency to fulfill human needs; this aligns with [1], who argue that environmental damage is largely caused by excessive human intervention in environmental balance. Conservation efforts undertaken by humans are therefore required to maintain this balance. One form of conservation that can be implemented is community-based conservation that utilizes local wisdom [2], [3]. Local wisdom is defined as positive human behavior in interacting with the environment and the surrounding nature, derived from proverbs or customary values to adapt to local environmental conditions [4], [5]. Local wisdom, as a guide for controlling human behavior, functions as a primary reference in facing modern life, alongside an emphasis on ecological values that encourage human awareness in environmental management [6], [7].

One community group that continues to practice local values in settlement patterns is the traditional Sundanese community in Rawabogo Village[8]. The traditional life of the Sundanese community is oriented toward interaction in three dimensions, self, God, and nature, commonly referred to as *Tri Tangtu*. This *Tri Tangtu* concept serves as the axis of balance in Sundanese life. Rawabogo Village also embraces a philosophy known as Tungku Tilu Jangka Opat Papat Kalima Pancer, which refers to relationships between humans and custom, religion, and culture. Rawabogo Village has the potential to become a tourism village and was designated by the local government as one of the tourism villages in Bandung Regency in 2011. Tourism development efforts can potentially lead to environmental degradation, especially since Rawabogo Village, particularly Ciwidey District, is part of the Bandung–Soreang groundwater basin (CAT), thereby serving a hydrological function for the broader downstream area. This condition constitutes a primary urgency for nature conservation efforts. Local

cultural values that have been implemented across generations are believed to play a role in nature conservation, manifested through community rules such as the *Miasih Bumi* traditional ritual—a celebration of rice harvests or through values upheld by the traditional community in Rawabogo Village, such as prohibitions on constructing buildings around springs, among others. Based on this context, this study aims to examine whether nature conservation efforts in Rawabogo Village emerge coincidentally, and whether the conservation practices applied by the community are aligned with the local cultural values they uphold.

Several studies have examined nature conservation based on local wisdom [9]–[11]. However, none have specifically investigated nature conservation through local culture in Rawabogo Village. This study not only aims to identify conservation efforts undertaken by the community but also to explore the extent to which Sundanese cultural values serve as the main drivers of the sustainability of nature conservation. Moreover, by employing a case study approach, this research provides in-depth and contextual insights into the interaction between nature conservation and local cultural values at the village level, particularly in assessing community awareness of local culture and nature conservation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Local Wisdom as a Foundation for Environmental Conservation

Local wisdom has been widely recognized as a socio-cultural framework that regulates human interaction with the environment. Rather than functioning merely as inherited tradition, local wisdom operates as an informal governance system that shapes norms, restrictions, and collective responsibilities in natural resource management [4], [5]. Sudiasmo and Muspita [3] identify four principal functions of local wisdom: conservation and preservation of natural resources, human resource development, cultural and knowledge transmission, and the reinforcement of advice, beliefs, rules, and prohibitions. These functions demonstrate that local wisdom contains embedded ecological logic that supports sustainability.

Environmental degradation is often driven by excessive human intervention in natural systems, which disrupts ecological balance [1]. In response, community-based conservation grounded in customary norms has emerged as an alternative approach that integrates ecological awareness with cultural values [2], [12]. Such systems illustrate that conservation does not solely depend on formal policy instruments but can also be sustained through internalized social norms and collective ethical commitments. In many traditional societies, prohibitions, spatial restrictions, and ritual obligations act as preventive mechanisms that regulate land use and reduce environmental risk.

Although numerous studies have examined conservation based on local wisdom [9], [10], [13], most focus on identifying practices rather than analyzing the deeper cosmological structures that shape those practices. Therefore, understanding conservation requires not only documenting activities but also examining the value systems that generate and legitimize them.

2.2 Tri Tangtu Cosmology, Spatial Order, and Ritual-Based Environmental Ethics

Within Sundanese culture, the *Tri Tangtu* cosmology provides a moral and spatial framework that structures relationships among humans, nature, and the divine. The division into *Buana Luhur*, *Buana Tengah*, and *Buana Handap* reflects an implicit ecological zoning system that regulates spatial organization and human intervention (Verdiana & Indratno, 2021). This cosmological order aligns with land classifications found in the ancient manuscript *Siksa Kandang Karesian*, which identifies certain areas, such as *jaman larangan*, as protected or non-utilization zones [14]. Such classifications demonstrate that conservation principles are embedded within traditional cosmology rather than imposed externally.

Ritual practices further reinforce this ecological order. Annual ceremonies such as *Miasih Bumi* function not only as expressions of gratitude but also as mechanisms for transmitting environmental ethics across generations. Yuliana [15] interpret these rituals as forms of respect toward ancestral teachings, while Jannah and Indratno [16] emphasize their role in maintaining awareness of water fertility and natural resource sustainability. Through repeated collective participation, rituals contribute to the internalization of conservation norms and strengthen communal attachment to ecological balance.

However, while the relationship between local wisdom and conservation has been acknowledged, limited research has examined how Sundanese cosmological concepts such as *Tri Tangtu* operate as an integrated conservation framework, particularly within the context of tourism villages where environmental pressures may intensify. This gap underscores the need to analyze conservation in Rawabogo Village not merely as cultural practice, but as a structured system of environmental governance rooted in cosmology, ritual, and spatial ethics.

3. METHOD

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. A case study focuses on a particular object that is examined in depth to explore the realities underlying the observed phenomena [17], [18]. This study adopts a case study method with Rawabogo Village as the main case, selected based on specific criteria, including the existence of nature conservation practices and the continued development of local wisdom values upheld by part of the community. The selection of the case study method is considered appropriate for exploring in depth the conservation case

in Rawabogo Village through the perspective of local values that form the foundation of community practices.

The objectives of this study are aligned with the characteristics of case study research, namely identifying distinctive features and uniqueness within the context of the case being examined [19]. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with community leaders, policymakers, and traditional community figures. This approach was integrated with direct observation of rituals and community activities, enabling the researcher to obtain a holistic understanding of the conservation context and the local values upheld by the community. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively to identify local wisdom values, nature conservation practices, and the impacts of ritual implementation on environmental awareness. The results of this analysis were subsequently generalized to conclude how local wisdom values influence nature conservation practices in Rawabogo Village.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Local community culture is highly interesting to examine in depth, as it contains the dynamics and habitual practices through which communities care for environmental resources based on custom and culture [4], [5], [20]. The functions of local wisdom are described in four points: conservation and preservation of natural resources, development of human resources, development of culture and knowledge, and the transmission of advice, beliefs, rules, and prohibitions [3]. In the context of Rawabogo Village, not all values or functions of local wisdom are fully practiced by the entire village community. Some community members only preserve traditional arts and traditional foods, while others not only preserve the arts but also engage in cultural activities and continue to uphold local values, rules, philosophies, and customary traditions passed down through generations; these people can be referred to as traditional community groups.

Traditional community groups in Rawabogo Village live communally and have a center of activities in a padepokan called Padepokan Giri Padang, commonly referred to as the cultural house. One legacy of local values that is still practiced among traditional community groups is the value system of *Tungku tilu, jangka opat, papat kalima pancer*. This value refers to the concept that life is supported by three pillars—*welas asih, rohman rohim, and silihwangi*—has four steps or directions reflected in jangka opat, and views *kanagaraan* as the center, which is carried out through *silih asah, silih asih, and silih asuh.* This value system originates from the *Tri Tangtu* concept of the Sundanese community and culminates in patterns of human behavior toward God, fellow humans, and the universe, serving as a hereditary proverb that becomes a basic guideline for behaving justly and wisely, especially toward nature. [21] state that the social values of *Tungku tilu, jangka opat, papat kalima pancer* function as symbols that guide the lives of the traditional community of Rawabogo Village. **Figure 1** explains the basic concept of *Tri Tangtu*.

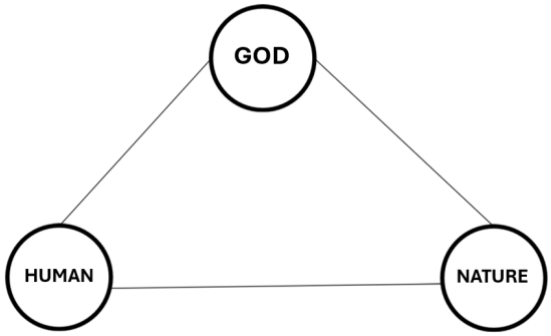


Figure 1. *Tri Tangtu* Concept

These social values are closely related to the norms prevailing within the community, particularly norms associated with the conservation of natural resources and the environment. One norm commonly applied in communities is the prohibition against constructing buildings near water bodies due to their potential to cause sedimentation. This is also reflected in the conservation policies adhered to by the community, especially within Sundanese local wisdom, which prohibits the construction of houses in areas surrounding water sources, classifying them as *jaman larangan (malaning lemah)* or forbidden land. In simple terms, *jaman larangan* refers to areas that are unsuitable for intervention, based on considerations such as soil type, slope, and contour.

This principle is also cited in the ancient manuscript *Siksa Kandang Karesian*, in part as an orientation toward *Buana Luhur* and in part as an orientation toward *Buana Handap* within the *Tri Tangtu* cosmology of the world. Utilization of areas around *jaman larangan* can lead to degradation and potentially disrupt natural balance and human safety. This is supported by Jannah and Indratno [14], who state that according to land classification in the *Siksa Kandang Karesian* manuscript, *jaman larangan* falls into the category of discarded land or land that must not be used to support human activities. The development of such local rules and norms serves as a form of assurance for the sustainability of life, not only for the current generation but also for future generations, by preventing potential disasters that may arise from inappropriate land use. **Figure 2** more clearly illustrates the position of conservation areas within the *Tri Tangtu* concept.

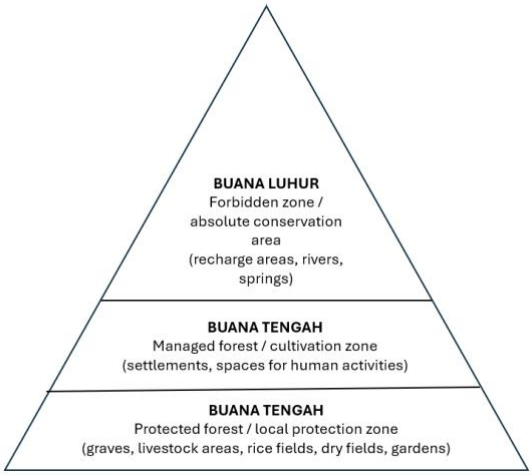


Figure 2. The Position of Conservation Zones within the *Tri Tangtu* Cosmology

As a tourism village with strong cultural and natural potential, a key attraction in Rawabogo Village is the Nagara Padang Site. For traditional community groups, Nagara Padang is regarded as a sacred ancestral heritage. Visitors are expected to approach the site with a pure mind and heart, free from worldly intentions that may lead to improper behavior. Violating these norms is believed to invite misfortune. These rules function not merely as social control but as preventive measures, aimed at avoiding behaviors that could damage the site and its surrounding ecosystem. This perspective aligns with Jannah and Indratno [14], who argue that such rules carry not only spiritual meaning but also serve as conservation principles. This is particularly important as the site is located within a forest area that forms an integral part of Rawabogo's identity. This view is reinforced by the Sundanese phrase "leuweung ruksak, cai beak, rakyat balangsak," which emphasizes the necessity of harmony between humans and nature. Given Rawabogo's position within the Bandung–Soreang Groundwater Basin, Nagara Padang plays a vital role in conservation within the *Tri Tangtu* cosmological framework.

As part of village integration, annual rituals such as *Miasih Bumi* and Hajat Lembur are routinely performed. These rituals express gratitude to God and the universe and honor ancestral teachings on environmental stewardship [14], [15], [22]. The *Miasih Bumi* ritual begins with communal prayers at the padepokan, followed by a procession to Nagara Padang accompanied by traditional music and offerings of agricultural produce. At the summit, participants pray, receive ancestral advice, and share consecrated food as a symbol of gratitude. The ritual concludes with traditional performances and collective site cleaning, reflecting responsibility toward nature. Hajat Lembur similarly symbolizes gratitude for life's blessings through communal sacrifice and shared meals, reflecting the rarity of meat consumption in earlier generations.

The importance of *Miasih Bumi* is reinforced by the local maxim "asih ka bumi, ngarawat lemah cai, ngaguar budaya Sunda, ngagelarkeun kabudayaan," which emphasizes caring for land and water, integrating culture with religion, and preserving Sundanese heritage. Hajat Lembur carries a similar meaning, focusing on gratitude for agricultural abundance and respect for ancestors, comparable to the philosophy of *tumpek wariga* (Maridi, 2015). Both rituals demonstrate that environmental conservation can be sustained through simple, interconnected practices that foster collective responsibility.

Although these rituals involve broader community participation, their full symbolic meaning is primarily internalized by traditional community groups. Other villagers often participate due to their agricultural livelihoods or view the rituals as cultural preservation events, while some perceive offerings as conflicting with religious norms. In contrast, traditional communities interpret offerings as expressions of gratitude rather than acts of worship. These differing perceptions indicate a shared but unevenly internalized collective awareness of local heritage. This is encapsulated in the phrase *"Hirup na ti Alloh hurip di luhur bumi,"* which links agricultural fertility, divine providence, and human well-being, reinforcing the integration of religion, culture, and conservation.

Overall, nature conservation in Rawabogo Village is not accidental but reflects a deep-rooted harmony between humans and nature. Practices such as prohibiting construction near water sources and observing customary rules represent conscious conservation efforts grounded in local wisdom, including the *Tri Tangtu* concept and ancestral philosophies. Rituals like *Miasih Bumi* and Hajat Lembur, originally expressions of gratitude, have become pillars of environmental sustainability. Through inherited local wisdom practiced in daily life, conservation awareness in Rawabogo is embedded, continuous, and central to maintaining balance between humans and the natural environment. These social values are closely related to the norms prevailing within the community, particularly norms associated with the conservation of natural resources and the environment. One norm commonly applied in communities is the prohibition against constructing buildings near water bodies due to their potential to cause sedimentation. This is also reflected in the conservation policies adhered to by the community, especially within Sundanese local wisdom, which prohibits the construction of houses in areas surrounding water sources, classifying them as *jaman larangan (malaning lemah)* or forbidden land. In simple terms, *jaman larangan* refers to areas that are unsuitable for intervention, based on considerations such as soil type, slope, and contour.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Nature conservation efforts in Rawabogo Village are not merely the result of awareness of local values, but rather a manifestation of a deep attachment to harmony

between humans and nature. Local wisdom—particularly embodied in the *Tri Tangtu* concept, traditional phrases, and annual rituals—shapes community habits and behavioral patterns that consistently support environmental conservation. These conservation practices do not emerge by coincidence; instead, they are embedded in the cultural values upheld by the people of Rawabogo Village. Environmental preservation is not solely the responsibility of traditional community groups, but has permeated the daily lives of the broader community, becoming the core of sustainability and human–nature harmony in Rawabogo. Conservation practices, such as prohibitions on constructing buildings near water sources, reflect not only awareness of local values but also alignment with firmly held cultural norms. Therefore, conservation efforts in Rawabogo Village are not incidental outcomes, but deliberate expressions of commitment to environmental sustainability that are consistent with the local values and cultural traditions embraced by the community.

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