Revitalization and Transformation of the Ruwatan Ageung Gunung Manglayang Tradition in Cibiru Wetan Village, 2019–2024

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Abstract

This article examines the revitalization and transformation of the Ruwatan Ageung Gunung Manglayang tradition in Cibiru Wetan Village, Bandung Regency, through 31 October 2024. It focuses on accounts of an earlier interruption and the documented public events from 2019 onward, changes in its performance, the involvement of various actors, and the continuity of its values amid growing tourism, ecological pressures, and negotiation between Sundanese custom and Islamic understandings. The study uses the historical method, encompassing heuristics, external and internal source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Primary sources consist of interviews with customary figures, the kuncen, residents, a religious leader, and village officials, field documentation, audiovisual sources, and institutional publications. The documentary evidence available by the cutoff is compared with books and articles published by that date; later interviews and publications require temporal verification. The findings distinguish an older Ruwatan Leuweung tradition from public activities described around 2019–2024; a continuous hiatus in 2005–2018 is not established by the surviving contemporary evidence. Perhutani's 2020 record documents participation by forest managers, LMDH, village representatives, cultural groups, customary figures, and residents; later testimony describes further mediation by a religious leader. Accounts of the ritual describe the procession, sanduk-sanduk, rajah, kidung, pamali, ngarekes, sajen, and balakecrakan, alongside Islamic prayers, shared consumption of the meat, conservation activities, and a public cultural program. The timing of individual adaptations cannot be fixed from the available records. The study's contribution is a source-critical chronology of the documented events and an analysis of how religious, ecological, and institutional meanings intersect, subject to verification of the retrospective testimony.

Keywords: Ruwatan Ageung, Mount Manglayang, revitalization, social change, local history

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Introduction

Customary rituals are one way communities organize memory, identity, and social relationships. For communities living near forests and mountains, rituals can also regulate human relationships with the ecological spaces that sustain them. Rituals should therefore be understood as more than repeated symbolic actions. They need to be situated within social change that determines who can interpret tradition, how practices are carried out, and which values are preserved when communities confront religion, the state, tourism, and environmental degradation.[1]

Ruwatan traditions in the Sundanese region have diverse forms and purposes. Ngaruwat bumi in Banceuy, for example, relates to gratitude for the harvest, hopes for fertility, and respect for ancestors.[2] Around Mount Manglayang, ruwatan has a different context because the mountain is treated simultaneously as a source of water, an economic space, a tourist area, a cultural space, and an environment to protect. For its supporting community, the t*erm ru*watan is linked to *rawata*n or n*garawat*. This interpretation makes the customary event a reminder to care for the forest, water, soil, plants, animals, and human conduct itself.

The tradition's social setting is Cibiru Wetan Village, Cileunyi District, Bandung Regency. The village lies at the foot and on the slopes of Mount Manglayang, directly borders the mountain area to the north, and has hilly terrain. The cited 2024 statistical volume cannot establish the following figures for a manuscript dated September 2024: its area is approximately 295 hectares, with dry fields or cultivated land as the largest land use, 153.5 hectares, approximately 52.03 percent of the stated 295 hectares, while rice fields occupy only about 2 hectares.[3] This geographical proximity makes the mountain part of everyday life, not merely a backdrop. At the same time, Cibiru Wetan is close to Bandung City and has developed as a tourism village. A reported 2020 tourism-village designation may have strengthened connections among natural attractions, cultural arts, the service economy, digital promotion, and visitors.[4]

Tourism development brings both opportunities and pressures. Wana Wisata Batu Kuda, the main site of Ruwatan Ageung, covers approximately 20 hectares and is managed by Perum Perhutani. Before the ruwatan's revitalization, visitor numbers fluctuated: 1,400 in 2009, 1,070 in 2010, 1,327 in 2011, 1,934 in 2012, and 1,513 in 2013.[5]

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[1]Siti Nurbaya, "Transformasi Makna Ritual dalam Masyarakat Modern: Analisis Sosiologis dan Budaya," Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam 3, no. 1. 18–19; Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[2]Haryaniti Amelia, "Upacara Adat Ngaruwat Bumi sebagai Kajian Nilai Budaya Masyarakat Adat Banceuy dalam Melestarikan Lingkungan," Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan 5, no. 2 (2018), 161.

[3]Erna Herlinawati, Syam Gunawan, Dina Yulia Wijaya, Arie Hendra Saputro, and Rama Chandra Jaya, "Kader Wisata Berbasis Digital di Desa Cibiru Wetan Kecamatan Cileunyi Kabupaten Bandung Provinsi Jawa Barat," Jurnal Abdimas Pariwisata 5, no. 1 (2024), 32.

[4]Syam Gunawan, Erna Herlinawati, Dina Yulia Wijaya, and Mochammad Mukti Ali, "Smart Digital Desa Wisata Cibiru Wetan Kecamatan Cileunyi Kabupaten Bandung Provinsi Jawa Barat," Abdimas Galuh 7, no. 1, 307–313.

[5]Marini Eko Putri and Nova Eviana, "Potensi Wana Wisata Alam Batu Kuda Ujungberung Bandung," Panorama Nusantara 10, no. 2 (2015), 1–2.

Hiking, camping, mountain biking, picnicking, and other activities create economic opportunities for residents, but can also increase waste, damage plants, and intensify use of the area. Research on Manglayang's southern slopes records declining groundwater quality and a clean-water crisis resulting from residential and infrastructure development.[6] Another study identifies values of environmental education, harmony, and ecological balance in the ruwatan, expressed through ritual messages, litter collection, tree planting, and attention to water sources.[7]

These conditions form an important historical context. Retrospective accounts describe an interruption after 2004 amid religious disagreement and changes in the use of the tourist area. Yet a 2021 study describes annual Ruwatan Leuweung in the Manglayang area, and Perhutani called the 2020 Batu Kuda event an annual routine. The claimed uninterrupted absence in 2005–2018 therefore remains unverified and may refer to a particular local format rather than all Manglayang ruwatan. Some considered elements of the ritual polytheistic or forbidden.[8] Later interviews date discussions between Abah Enjum and Abah Unang to 2018 and link a reported landslide in early 2019 to renewed organization. A 2021 study refers to ritual activity around February 2019, while Perhutani directly documents a public Batu Kuda event in February 2020. These sources support activity by 2019–2020, but do not establish an absolute beginning or a single uninterrupted sequence.[9]

Several studies discuss Ruwatan Gunung Manglayang but ask different questions. Elsi Halimatus Sya'adah and Udin Juhrodin assess the tradition through t*he c*oncept of 'urf and regard it as an acceptable custom insofar as it does not conflict with Islamic law and serves the common good.[10] Riyandi and Yeti Mulyati focus on ecological values in a ruwatan examined at Sanggar Reak Tibelat in Cibiru, Bandung City; the different field site limits direct comparison with Batu Kuda.[11] Deni Miharja and Sigit Fitro Prasetyo describe the ceremonial system and the encounter between Islamic teachings and Sundanese culture in Ruwatan Leuweung Babakti Mandala Manglayang.[12] Meanwhile, Indah Lestari's research examines the evolution of the *ruwatan* tradition in the Cibedug traditional village—a location and community distinct from those in Cibiru Wetan.[13]

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[6]Joko Wiratmo, Dasapta Erwin Irawan, and Endah Sulistyawati, "Rintisan Kawasan Binaan di Lereng Selatan Gunung Manglayang Jawa Barat," Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bangsa 2, no. 8 (2024), 3237–3238.

[7]Riyandi Riyan and Yeti Mulyati, "Nilai Ekologis dalam Upacara Adat Ruwatan Gunung Manglayang," Jurnal Binagogik 10, no. 2 (2023), 271–282, https://doi.org/10.61290/pgsd.v10i2.463.

[8]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi.

[9]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi. Abah Unang, interview, 12 October 2024, Abah Unang's residence.

[10]Elsi Halimatus Sya'adah and Udin Juhrodin, "Tradisi Ngaruwat Gunung Manglayang Perspektif 'Urf," JIMMI 2, no. 2 (2021).

[11]Riyandi Riyan and Yeti Mulyati, "Nilai Ekologis dalam Upacara Adat Ruwatan Gunung Manglayang," Jurnal Binagogik 10, no. 2 (2023), 271–282, https://doi.org/10.61290/pgsd.v10i2.463.

[12]Deni Miharja and Sigit Fitro Prasetyo, "The Value of Islamic Teaching and Sundanese Culture in the Ruwatan Leuweung Babakti Mandala Manglayang," Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama 11, no. 2 (2021), 228–247.

[13]Indah Lestari, "Perkembangan Tradisi Ruwatan di Kampung Adat Cibedug Desa Cikole Kabupaten Bandung Barat Tahun 2010–2020" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023).

These studies provide normative, ecological, and anthropological foundations, but have not diachronically reconstructed the period of suspension, revitalization, changing configuration of actors, and the documented public activity around Batu Kuda through 31 October 2024. Research focused on a single event tends to see the ritual as an already established structure, leaving less visible the social processes through which a tradition can be reinterpreted and publicly organized, while the claimed period of cessation still requires dated evidence. This is the arti*cle's resea*rch gap: how continuity is formed through change, and how customary figures, the kuncen, religious leaders, residents, Perhutani, LMDH, cultural communities, and village government share agency in that process.

This article aims to explain the historical background and process of revitalizing Ruwatan Ageung Gunung Manglayang, describe its development and performance in 2019–2024, and analyze continuity and change in the tradition's values. Its novelty is not a claim that ruwatan or its ecological values have never been studied. A more precise contribution is a critical chronology of the claimed interruption and the documented activities through 2024 and an analysis of the relationship among reported interruption, religious adaptation, broader participation, conservation action, and developing village support; a formal annual village budget is not established by pre-cutoff evidence. From this perspective, tradition is understood as the outcome of historical negotiation, not a fixed cultural object.

Method

This article was compiled using the historical method, which encompasses four primary stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography.[14] In the heuristic stage, sources were gathered through fieldwork and literature research. This research was conducted at Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi, the Batu Api Library, the library of the State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, the Batu Kuda site, and the Cibiru Wetan Village Office. Oral data were obtained through interviews with Abah Enjum—a cultural practitioner and the *pupuhu* (leader) of Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi—Abah Unang, the *kuncen* (custodian) of Mount Manglayang; Asep, a local resident near Batu Kuda; Hadian Supriatna, the Head of Cibiru Wetan Village; and Hamid Abdul Majid, a hamlet head who also serves as a religious leader.

Sources published by 31 October 2024 include the Perhutani report of the 2020 event, earlier audiovisual records, and the February 2024 video.

External criticism examined interviewees' identities and roles, interview times and locations, their involvement in events, the origins of photographs or videos, publication dates, and publishing institutions. This matters because oral sources come from different social positions. Abah Enjum and Abah Unang possess internal knowledge of custom and the site, village officials explain institutional support, the religious leader describes changing interpretations, and residents provide a picture of

[14]Nina Herlina, Metode Sejarah (Bandung: Satya Historika, 2020), 31, 58, 68–73; Kuntowijoyo, Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018), 75.

social reception. The Perhutani publication is used to check the date, location, type of activity, and network of actors in the public event of 2020.[15]

Internal criticism assessed the consistency of testimony and corroborated it with other sources. The claim of a 2019 restart needs qualification: Miharja and Prasetyo (2021) describe ritual activity around February 2019, and Perhutani documents a public Batu Kuda event on 27 February 2020 while calling it an annual routine. Neither source independently confirms that all ruwatan ceased throughout 2005–2018. The 2020 report establishes public participation and tree planting, while formal scheduling or budget adoption requires separate dated records. Information on the procession is compared across interviews, audiovisual records, academic articles, and media reports. Source criticism also applies to bibliographic identity. The arti*cle Nilai Ekologis dalam Upacara Adat Ruwatan Gunung Mangl*ayang, There is an inconsistency in attribution in several parts of the study, was verified through the journal website as a work by Riyandi Riyan and Yeti Mulyati in Ju*rnal Binagogik,* volume 10, number 2, pages 271–282.[16]

At the interpretation stage, verified facts are connected using Soerjono Soekanto's theory of social change and the concept of *local genius*. Social change is used to read changes in actors, values, behavioral patterns, and the tradition's institutional form.[17] Local g*enius helps* explain a community's capacity to filter outside influences, retain fundamental values, and rework cultural forms so they can continue to function.[18] The historiographical stage presents the findings chronologically and thematically, from the context before revitalization and changes in 2018–2019 to developments in 2020–2024, the procession's structure, and the negotiation of values and institutions.

Results

Cibiru Wetan, Batu Kuda, and Memory of Ruwatan Leuweung

Ruwatan Ageung reemerged in a changing community. Cibiru Wetan still has strong ties to fields, forests, springs, sites, and Sundanese arts, but livelihoods have shifted toward trade, services, government employment, construction work, arts activities, and tourism.[19] The village's proximity to Bandung City accelerates mobility and broadens economic orientation. Mutual cooperation has not vanished, but exists

[15]Perum Perhutani, "Perhutani Gelar Penanaman Ratusan Bibit di Gunung Manglayang Bandung," 28 February 2020, https://www.perhutani.co.id/perhutani-gelar-penanaman-ratusan-bibit-di-gunung-manglayang-bandung/.

[16]Riyandi Riyan and Yeti Mulyati, "Nilai Ekologis dalam Upacara Adat Ruwatan Gunung Manglayang," Jurnal Binagogik 10, no. 2 (2023), 271–282, https://doi.org/10.61290/pgsd.v10i2.463.

[17]Soerjono Soekanto, Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1990), 266–272.

[18]Koentjaraningrat, Kebudayaan, Mentalitas dan Pembangunan (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), 102.

[19]Erna Herlinawati, Syam Gunawan, Dina Yulia Wijaya, Arie Hendra Saputro, and Rama Chandra Jaya, "Kader Wisata Berbasis Digital di Desa Cibiru Wetan Kecamatan Cileunyi Kabupaten Bandung Provinsi Jawa Barat," Jurnal Abdimas Pariwisata 5, no. 1 (2024), 31–37; Syam Gunawan, Erna Herlinawati, Dina Yulia Wijaya, and Mochammad Mukti Ali, "Smart Digital Desa Wisata Cibiru Wetan Kecamatan Cileunyi Kabupaten Bandung Provinsi Jawa Barat," Abdimas Galuh 7, no. 1 (2024), 307–313.

alongside business competition and tourism interests. Tradition therefore does not confront a static "traditional" society. It operates in a transitional community combining hillside life, a service economy, village administration, digital media, and interaction with visitors.

The Batu Kuda site brings these changes together. Physically, it is a recreational forest with mixed vegetation and various leisure activities. Culturally, the site and its surroundings are linked to local memory of Mount Manglayang. Sanduk-sanduk and rajah mention places such as Batu Kuda, Batu Karaton, Batu Kursi, Batu Tumpeng, and Batu Lawang. These names indicate that the mountain is understood as a meaningful landscape, not an empty space measured only by its tourism function.

According to Abah Enjum's later testimony, a form of Ruwatan Leuweung had been performed before 2004.[20] This matters because it limits claims about the tradition's "emergence." The activities described around 2019 should not be treated as the invention of a tradition without precursors; their exact relationship to earlier practice needs further dated evidence. The claimed cessation during 2005–2018 and its link to religious objections are retrospective accounts. They cannot be generalized to every Manglayang ruwatan without reconciling Perhutani's 2020 description of an annual routine and Miharja and Prasetyo's 2021 study of ritual continuity.[21] In the same period, Batu Kuda developed primarily as a natural attraction. A 2015 study even noted the absence of traditional attractions such as dance or music for visitors.[22]

The disputed account of suspension nevertheless raises a question about how cultural continuity is maintained. A tradition requires space, actors, and legitimacy. Later interviews suggest that religious criticism and tourism affected one group's ability to organize the ritual; contemporary evidence does not establish a complete regional halt. Cultural figures, the kuncen, and residents appear in records of the public activities by 2020.

Accounts of Ecological Concern and Renewal, 2018–2019

Retrospective testimony places renewed planning in 2018 through conversations between Abah Enjum and Abah Unang. They connected increased tourism activity to a need to remind visitors and residents not to damage the area. Their concern was not intended to reject tourism, but to balance economic benefits with the forest's ecological functions. Mount Manglayang helps prevent erosion, stores rainwater, and provides springs during the dry season. Damage to the area therefore directly affects community life.[23]

A landslide in early January 2019 was described retrospectively as a trigger for renewed activity; a dated disaster record was not supplied. According to Abah

[20]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi.

[21]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi.

[22]Marini Eko Putri and Nova Eviana, "Potensi Wana Wisata Alam Batu Kuda Ujungberung Bandung," Panorama Nusantara 10, no. 2 (2015), 6–8.

[23]Marini Eko Putri and Nova Eviana, "Potensi Wana Wisata Alam Batu Kuda Ujungberung Bandung," Panorama Nusantara 10, no. 2 (2015), 5–6; Joko Wiratmo, Dasapta Erwin Irawan, and Endah Sulistyawati, "Rintisan Kawasan Binaan di Lereng Selatan Gunung Manglayang Jawa Barat," Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bangsa 2, no. 8 (2024), 3237–3243.

Enjum's later interview, it occurred at an elevation of approximately 1,700 meters and worried Perhutani and LMDH. He was then asked to help organize the ruwatan.[24] The ritual, however, was not simply repeated mechanically. Abah Enjum examined literature and old texts, including A*manat Galunggung* and *Sasana Mahaguru*, seeking a foundation that could be explained to the community.[25]

The later testimony interprets the process as a conceptual shift. Ruwatan was interpreted as *rawata*n or n*garawat*. The threat was located not only in forces beyond humans, but also in human actions that damage mountains, forests, water, plants, and social relationships. This interpretation gave the tradition a new language of conservation, education, and responsibility. The name Ruwatan Ageung Gunung Manglayang appeared in the later public framing of the activity; a formal renaming date is not established. The w*ord ag*eung signaled a broader scope, from a limited event to a shared agenda involving residents, forest managers, government, cultural communities, and visitors.[26]

The sources document ritual discussion or activity around 2019 and an institutionally reported Batu Kuda event in 2020. The alleged 2018–2019 planning sequence and scope of earlier discontinuity depend on later recollection. The difference between these kinds of evidence can be summarized as follows.

Period	Principal change	Source basis
Before 2005	Earlier Ruwatan Leuweung is described in later testimony	Testimony of a cultural practitioner
2005–2018	A complete cessation is claimed retrospectively but disputed by published accounts	Later interviews; compare Perhutani 2020 and Miharja–Prasetyo 2021
2018–2019	Reported discussions and landslide; published study describes ritual around 2019	Later interviews; Miharja–Prasetyo 2021
2020	Public event, planting of 400 seedlings, and expansion of the institutional network	Perhutani publication and audiovisual documentation
2024	A February 2024 video documents a Manglayang ruwatan; site and organizer continuity need verification	Swarga TV Cibiru Wetan, February 2024 video

Institutionalization and Broader Participation, 2020–2024

On 27 February 2020, Perhutani KPH North Bandung and LMDH Manglayang Lestari organized an event at Wana Wisata Batu Kuda. It included a ruwatan ceremony, cultural attractions, and the planting of 400 seedlings across 0.5 hectares. The seedlings comprised red shoots, Ugandan mahogany, eucalyptus, and puspa.[27] The event was supported by the West Java Provincial Forestry Office, Bandung

[24]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi.
[25]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi.
[26]Abah Enjum, interview, 4 October 2024, Padepokan Bumi Ageung Saketi.
[27]Perum Perhutani, "Perhutani Gelar Penanaman Ratusan Bibit di Gunung Manglayang Bandung," 28 February 2020, https://www.perhutani.co.id/perhutani-gelar-penanaman-ratusan-bibit-di-gunung-manglayang-bandung/.

Regency Government, youth communities, the TNI, police, community figures, and residents. The head of Cibiru Wetan Village at the time expressed an intention to include the event on the official village agenda.[28]

The 2020 event reveals two developments. First, its ecological message was translated into material action through tree planting. Second, social ownership of the tradition widened. Customary figures and the kuncen retained authority over oral expression and ritual order, but organizing the event depended on an institutional network. Perhutani provided legitimacy for management of the area, LMDH linked communities with the forest, the village government coordinated administrative support, and cultural communities provided performances and organizers.

The 2020 event involved both public institutions and customary figures, with their precise distribution of responsibilities requiring further evidence. Customary custodians led the ritual order and oral traditions. Earlier scholarship describes Islamic prayers within the ceremony; the later interview describes a religious leader's mediation. The village government expressed support and the possibility of adding the event to its agenda. Perhutani and LMDH linked it to conservation of the area. Residents participated in preparations, attendance, food provision, performances, and the communal meal.

The Procession's Structure and the Function of Each Stage

Ruwatan Ageung centers on the Batu Kuda area. Before the procession, organizers prepare the site, materials, food, and division of tasks. Participants then proceed together toward the site carrying ritual items and agricultural produce. Dogdog d*rumming* accompanies the journey and marks a transition from everyday space into ceremonial space. At the site, white cloth marks off certain areas. This boundary does not close Batu Kuda completely, but identifies an area to be respected during the procession.

The opening stage is san*duk-sanduk, an* oral request for permission and expression of respect before the main activities. Through it, practitioners state their intentions to God, ancestors, and nature and name parts of the Manglayang landscape. Rajah is then rec*ited* and Kidung Manglayang sung. Rajah asks for safety and expresses respect for the place, while the kidung combines prayer, language, and Sundanese musical expression. Both preserve oral tradition as a means of transmitting knowledge.

The next stage conveys pa*mali*. Customary prohibitions are expressed, among others, in t*he phrases gunung teu meunang dilebur, lebak teu meunang diruksak, larangan teu meunang direm*pak a*nd mipit kudu amit, ngala kudu ménta*. These messages establish moral limits: the mountain must not be destroyed, valleys must not be damaged, prohibitions must not be broken, and permission must precede taking natural resources. Pamali is followed by nga*rekes, a* contemplation that names elements of the

[28]Perum Perhutani, "Perhutani Gelar Penanaman Ratusan Bibit di Gunung Manglayang Bandung," 28 February 2020, https://www.perhutani.co.id/perhutani-gelar-penanaman-ratusan-bibit-di-gunung-manglayang-bandung/.

earth, soil, water, wood, and stone. This sequence moves the conservation message from general prohibitions to reflection on the concrete elements sustaining life.

A goat is slaughtered after the activities at the site. The religious leader's 2024 testimony retrospectively interprets this practice; a 2021 study already describes distribution of most meat to residents. The animal is not regarded as an offering to anyone other than God, slaughter follows Islamic requirements, and the meat is used for a communal meal. According to the interviewee, the bones may be buried as part of sedekah bumi for creatures in the soil. These sources support a communal use of meat by 2021, while the date and extent of any change in its religious explanation remain unresolved.

After the central procession, participants descend to the lower area and watch Sundanese arts, including Benjang Helaran and other performances. The event ends with lun*gsur sajen a*nd b*alakecrakan*. Food and produce previously used as ritual items are then enjoyed together. The move from ritual to shared eating connects sacred space with social life. Customary figures, village officials, religious leaders, artists, and residents share the same space for eating. Balakecrakan is thus not a ceremonial add-on, but a mechanism for building solidarity.

Religious Adaptation, Social Responses, and Traditional Values

The later account of religious opposition suggests a possible constraint on one ritual format, while published descriptions from 2021 show that Manglayang ruwatan with Islamic elements continued. A complete 2005–2018 cessation is not established. The 2021 study records Islamic elements; later interviews describe tawasul, blessings upon the Prophet, and prayers as part of the ritual. The religious leader distinguished between using cultural objects and believing in their power. Incense, flowers, and sajen were explained as cultural materials, while supplications remained directed to God. The timing and breadth of acceptance of this interpretation remain to be verified.

Five clusters of values remain visible through these changes. Religious values appear in prayer, gratitude, tawasul, and awareness of human responsibility toward creation. Ecological values appear in pamali, cleaning the area, planting trees, attention to water, and opposition to forest destruction. Social values are formed through deliberation, cooperation across institutions, performances, and balakecrakan. Cultural values persist through rajah, kidung, sanduk-sanduk, sajen, arts, and knowledge of the sites. Educational values are conveyed through direct youth participation and public explanation of the tradition's reasons and meanings.[29]

[29]Riyandi Riyan and Yeti Mulyati, "Nilai Ekologis dalam Upacara Adat Ruwatan Gunung Manglayang," Jurnal Binagogik 10, no. 2 (2023), 271–282, https://doi.org/10.61290/pgsd.v10i2.463; Deni Miharja and Sigit Fitro Prasetyo, "The Value of Islamic Teaching and Sundanese Culture in the Ruwatan Leuweung Babakti Mandala Manglayang," Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama 11, no. 2 (2021), 228–247.

Discussion

Revitalization as Continuity through Change

The findings show that revitalizing Ruwatan Ageung did not mean restoring Ruwatan Leuweung in its entirety. Older elements were selected, given new meanings, and placed within a changing social structure. Continuity is evident in the use of Batu Kuda, the authority of the kuncen and customary figures, rajah, kidung, pamali, sajen, animal slaughter, and communal eating. Change appears in the name a*geung,* openness to participants, involvement of state institutions, added Islamic prayers, distribution of meat, tree planting, public performances, and its organization as a village program.

Within Soerjono Soekanto's framework of social change, these changes were gradual and affected relationships among institutions and the orientation of community action.[30] The ritual did not change all at once. Change took place through a sequence of pressures and responses: reported opposition may have affected one local format, tourism intensified ecological concerns, a reported landslide may have accelerated action, customary figures sought cultural legitimacy, the religious leader negotiated the acceptability of practices, and Perhutani and village representatives supported the 2020 public event; formal program adoption remains unverified. The configuration of actors and legitimacy changed substantially, although the ritual's symbolic core remained.

This case challenges the assumption that a tradition's "authenticity" resides in its lack of change. If every older form had been kept without negotiation, the tradition might again have lost acceptance. Conversely, if all ritual elements were replaced by a tourism festival, it would lose the knowledge and moral discipline that distinguish it from entertainment. The available records suggest a negotiated space between these two risks. Its continuity may rest on the ability to choose what can change and what must be retained.

Distributed Agency and the Institutionalization of Tradition

Revitalization was not the work of one person. Abah Enjum was important in interpreting ruwatan as ng*arawat,* examining texts, and organizing activities. Abah Unang supplied authority as kuncen and knowledge of the landscape. Yet both worked within a network encompassing Perhutani, LMDH, the village government, religious figures, cultural communities, artists, residents, and visitors. Agency was therefore distributed.

Perhutani and LMDH provided access and a conservation framework for activities in the forest. The village government expressed support in 2020 and considered putting ruwatan on its official agenda; pre-cutoff records supplied here do not confirm subsequent funding. Later testimony attributes theological mediation to a religious leader; its timing needs corroboration. Arts communities brought the

[30]Soerjono Soekanto, Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1990), 266–272; Lorentius Goa, "Perubahan Sosial dalam Kehidupan Bermasyarakat," SAPA: Jurnal Kateketik dan Pastoral 2, no. 2 (2017), 53–67.

tradition into public space, while residents lent legitimacy through participation. No single actor could sustain the event alone. Even customary authority needed administrative and social recognition when the ritual took place in a tourist area managed by a state institution.

The public events and institutional participation brought greater visibility; predictable scheduling and resources require further documentation. This visibility may also have changed the structure of power. Government and site managers could determine access, financing, security, and event format. The position of customary custodians therefore needs continued recognition so the tradition is not reduced to an annual program stripped of local knowledge authority. That balance has become a new historical condition for Ruwatan Ageung's continuity.

Local Genius, Ecological Ethics, and the Ambivalence of Tourism

The con*cept of local* genius helps explain why pamali and customary narratives remain relevant as the community enters a tourism economy. Local wisdom is not a fixed collection of rules, but a cultural capacity to absorb change while retaining a fundamental orientation.[31] In Ruwatan Ageung, that orientation is care for relationships among humans, God, nature, society, and cultural heritage. Modern conservation language does not replace pamali, but works alongside it.

Pamali functions as social control grounded in memory and respect. Prohibitions on damaging the mountain or taking natural resources without permission condense ecological principles into memorable expressions. Planting 400 seedlings in 2020 shows the meeting of symbolic norms and rehabilitation action. Local knowledge gains new force when connected to forest management programs, while conservation programs gain cultural legitimacy through the ritual.

The relationship between tradition and tourism is nevertheless ambivalent. Tourism increases cultural recognition, creates economic opportunities, and offers an audience for ecological messages. On the other hand, visitor numbers, waste, use of space, and the logic of performance can intensify pressures on the site. Publicity and social media can also reduce the ritual to appealing images without context. Success, therefore, cannot be measured simply by attendance. More suitable measures are protection of the area, understanding of pamali, residents' participation, and the continued authority of local knowledge.

This view accords with Seyyed Hossein Nasr's critique of the modern tendency to treat nature only as a material object.[32] In Ruwatan Ageung, nature has an ethical and spiritual dimension. The mountain not only supplies water or tourism revenue, but also demands limits on conduct. Although this understanding cannot replace environmental regulation, it gives the community cultural reasons to observe and care for the environment.

[31]Koentjaraningrat, Kebudayaan, Mentalitas dan Pembangunan (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), 102.

[32]Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 17–18.

Negotiating Islam and Custom as a Mechanism of Continuity

Sya'adah and Juhrodin regard ruwatan as 'urf sha*hih if it*s practices do not conflict with Islamic law and bring benefit.[33] Miharja and Prasetyo identify an encounter between Islamic values and Sundanese culture in the Manglayang ceremonial system.[34] This article extends both studies by situating the encounter between religion and culture in a sequence of time. The adaptation was described in earlier scholarship, while the retrospective account of a complete suspension remains contested by the published record.

The addition of tawasul, blessings upon the Prophet, and Islamic prayers, changes to slaughter practices, use of the meat, and explanations of incense and sajen are forms of negotiation. Customary elements were not removed, but their purposes and limits were explained anew. This process shows that a religious leader is not merely an external actor evaluating tradition. He participates in producing its new form.

Negotiation still has limits. Not all residents need accept the same interpretation, and later interviews report criticism. The article therefore does not conclude that tensions between religion and custom have ended. The 2020 report and 2021 study document public participation and religious elements, but do not establish universal acceptance or the exact negotiation process. Continuity depends on openness to dialogue, not the elimination of difference.

Historiographical Position and Research Limits

In the historiography of local traditions, Ruwatan Ageung demonstrates the importance of distinguishing origins, suspension, revitalization, and institutionalization. Synchronic research can describe symbols or values in one event, but does not always explain why those symbols endured or who changed them. A critical reconstruction through October 2024 shows public ritual and conservation activities, together with competing accounts of earlier continuity. The claim that religious opposition caused a complete hiatus and that formal support later established a funded annual program still needs dated evidence.

This article complements earlier studies. Riyandi and Mulyati's ecological study explains environmental values, while this article places those values in the historical process of suspension and recovery.[35] Miharja and Prasetyo explain the encounter between Islam and Sundanese culture, while this article shows the role of religious mediation after a period of opposition. The st*udy* of 'urf provides normative grounds, while this research reconstructs how acceptance was practiced through changes in actors and event procedures. Comparison with ruwatan in Cibedug also

[33]Elsi Halimatus Sya'adah and Udin Juhrodin, "Tradisi Ngaruwat Gunung Manglayang Perspektif 'Urf," JIMMI 2, no. 2 (2021).

[34]Deni Miharja and Sigit Fitro Prasetyo, "The Value of Islamic Teaching and Sundanese Culture in the Ruwatan Leuweung Babakti Mandala Manglayang," Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama 11, no. 2 (2021), 228–247.

[35]Riyandi Riyan and Yeti Mulyati, "Nilai Ekologis dalam Upacara Adat Ruwatan Gunung Manglayang," Jurnal Binagogik 10, no. 2 (2023), 271–282, https://doi.org/10.61290/pgsd.v10i2.463.

shows that changes in tradition need to be read according to each location, community history, and institutional configuration.

Conclusion

Ruwatan Ageung Gunung Manglayang documented through 31 October 2024 is connected to earlier Ruwatan Leuweung practices, while the claimed complete suspension in 2005–2018 remains disputed. Later testimony links renewed organization to cultural memory, ecological concerns, a reported landslide in 2019, and customary figures; the dated record directly establishes a public Batu Kuda ceremony and tree planting in 2020. The 2020 report describes an annual routine with participation by Perhutani, LMDH, village representatives, cultural communities, customary figures, and residents; the religious leader's role is documented in later testimony.

The study's main finding is simultaneous continuity and change. Accounts describe continuity in the Batu Kuda setting and in ritual elements including sanduk-sanduk, rajah, kidung, pamali, ngarekes, sajen, animal slaughter, performances, lungsur sajen, and balakecrakan; their timing and provenance require closer verification. The pre-cutoff record documents Islamic elements, communal use of meat, conservation action, wider participation, and presentation as a public cultural event; the precise timing of these elements and claims of subsequent budget and calendar support require verification. These adaptations preserve religious, ecological, social, cultural, and educational values, but also demand vigilance so the tradition is not reduced to a tourist spectacle.

The article's contribution is to explain that the continuity of Ruwatan Ageung did not result from restoring an unchanging past. The available record shows intersecting religious, ecological, and institutional meanings; the proposed sequence of opposition, renewed acceptance, and formal institutionalization remains a hypothesis until supported by dated records. This qualified interpretation places Ruwatan Ageung within the historiography of changing local traditions: traditions endure because communities can determine which elements to preserve, which to adapt, and what network of actors is needed to keep them meaningful.

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