



Moral consistency of Indonesian culture: A case of “Nyangku Ritual” in Sundanese society

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Abstract

Moral consistency based upon religious teachings has been a core ethical value in almost all Eastern cultures, including Indonesia. In West Java, one of the large provinces in Indonesia, the ritual practices are performed in many cultural expressions. Due to globalization and modernization, the consistency of the value becomes decayed so that the ritual degrades into profane activities. This paper aims to analyze the moral consistency as shown in the *Nyangku* ritual in Panjalu, West Java. The description of the data is qualitative in nature and obtained from observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that there are three forms of moral consistency that can be seen from desacralized activities such as; public entertainment, the economic activity shown in the form of tourism promotion activities, and political activity represented in the form of identity politics. This paper concludes that the moral consistency in the *Nyangku* ritual has shown a shift in meaning in society, namely, from the sacred to the profane. However, in the context of moral consistency, it is important to maintain sacred values in rituals through strengthening enculturation and adapting local traditional values and the role of local governments in making policies towards preserving local culture.

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Introduction

Moral consistency in religious rituals, especially those based on Islamic teachings, is one of the important characteristics of Eastern culture because it underlines the importance of harmony between religious beliefs and daily behavior. In the Eastern culture, religious rituals are

seen not only as a form of worship but also as a way to establish and maintain morality. With moral consistency in carrying out rituals, individuals can reflect ethical and spiritual values that are upheld in their society.

Religious rituals that are morally consistent in Eastern culture, especially those based on Islam, are important because they play a central role in strengthening individual and community identity. In this context, moral consistency in carrying out rituals ensures social unity and cohesion in Eastern societies. When individuals adhere to the moral principles associated with rituals,

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they not only strengthen their relationship with God but also develop close relationships with their fellow members of society (Osmani et al., 2018).

Moral consistency in religious rituals rooted in Islamic teachings among Eastern people reflects universal values such as fairness, integrity, and empathy. Eastern cultures have a strong foundation in morality which is reflected in their religious practices. Through moral consistency in rituals, individuals respect these values and maintain harmony between their spiritual life and daily practice. Moral consistency in religious rituals strengthens personal and collective morality and plays an important role in shaping Eastern culture based on high ethical values (Saeed, 2006).

Over time, this consistency has been reduced by Western culture through globalization and modernization, which has a profane character so that a degradation of values appears in these religious rituals. Globalization and modernization pressures become one of the factors that accelerate the occurrence of desacralization in the social order of local communities (Muzakir, 2015; Saputra & Pratama, 2018). The life of globalization which is full of competition makes people seek balance through spirituality and entertainment. Spirituality and entertainment are forms of emotional expression and human psychological needs to find peace (Fridayanti, 2016).

Other studies also show that there is a cultural development in Indonesia that has experienced a reproduction of values (Abdullah, 2006). Indonesia is a rich country in cultural diversity and has a long history as a center for intercultural encounters and interactions. There is an exchange of ideas, values, and cultural practices through interactions with other cultures, whether through trade, migration, colonialism, or globalization. In this process, local culture can adopt and adapt new elements, as well as integrate them with existing cultural values and practices. The entry of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity into Indonesia has made a significant contribution to the reproduction of values and the development of culture.

Developments in technology, communication, and globalization have accelerated the exchange of culture and ideas in Indonesia. The influence of Western music, films, and lifestyles that come through the mass media and information technology has influenced the development of culture in Indonesia. Social changes, such as urbanization, industrialization, education, and awareness of global issues, can affect people's perspectives and values. A deep understanding of desacralization in the dimensions of cultural and religious rituals provides a model for solving problems that threatens local cultural heritage.

The most important reason why the authors chose this ritual as a subject of study is that *Nyangku* ritual possesses unique or distinctive characteristics as one of the popular religious performances preserved by Sundanese society. The annual events in the ritual made it easy to access research resources based on the availability of data, logical feasibility, and ease of fieldwork. Specifically, the authors aim to review how religious rituals experience a shift in meaning and desacralization in the *Nyangku* ritual tradition in Panjalu. Panjalu is a district of the Ciamis Regency in West Java that has become part of the Sundanese culture map. The term '*Nyangku*' comes from the Sundanese word, meaning lighting up life. It is seen as an embodiment of the implementation of the teachings of *Migusti*, namely, merely being an offering to God Almighty (spiritualism). The opposite of *Migusti* is *Mupusti*, namely, an attitude of life that deifies objects (materialism), where the entire basis and main goal of life is to seek worldly satisfaction. Essentially, the entire series of *Nyangku* ceremonies is not actually intended to deify heirloom objects, nor is it intended to mature a figure named Prince Sanghyang Borosngora.

In the past, there were no political or economic activities accompanying *Nyangku*'s commemoration. The series of *Nyangku* ceremonies are mystical in nature, especially since all of these ceremonies are associated with legends that are full of spiritual overtones. However, the nuances of spirituality currently have been starting to be colored by activities oriented towards materialistic aspects of life. This study aims to review how religious rituals experience a shift in meaning and desacralization, which can threaten local wisdom values and social relations of the community as shown in the *Nyangku* ritual tradition in Panjalu, Ciamis, West Java. The shift in meaning in the *Nyangku* ritual is experienced by young people in Panjalu village who are affected by the development of globalization. Previous studies have tended to examine the relationship between the meaning and function of the rituals and myths of the *Nyangku* ritual. The meaning and function of the ritual is to reinforce local values and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, this study looks at the practices and factors as well as the implications of the value degradation that occurs in the current *Nyangku* ritual.

Literature Review

Value Degradation as a Form of Moral Declination

Value degradation can be considered as a form of decline in morality marked by changes in behavior and

goals because it involves a shift from good and corrects ethical principles to actions or attitudes that are less moral or even violate values that are considered important in a society. It is a form of decreasing morality that is marked by changes in behavior and goals (Samiyono, 2013). This degradation of values often leads to a decline in morality and can have disastrous consequences for individuals and society as a whole. This can include decreased trust, damaged social relationships, interpersonal conflicts, and a general decrease in quality of life.

The emergence of value degradation has threatened community social relations in preserving local cultural values (Lathifah, 2019; Parmadie et al., 2018) and threatened the social relations of the community in maintaining the preservation of local cultural values due to the following impacts. The degradation of values can result in the breakdown of social solidarity in society. When the local cultural values that bind and unite the community begin to erode, strong and mutually supportive social relations can be disrupted.

Sacredness as a Core of Ritual Practices

The main goal in the practice of religious and cultural rituals is to maintain sacredness in accordance with procedures (Abdullah, 2006). Sacredness is the core of every ritual process that focuses on belief and the reception of teachings that are expressed in the ritual form (Paramitha & Salura, 2020). Sacredness in rituals is also an indication of strengthening human relations with nature and God (Ahmad, 2019; Maulidah, 2018). This relationship encourages human spirituality to show how they maintain harmony with nature and God. The need for human spirituality is expressed in the form of religious and cultural rituals by visiting graves and reading “*tawasul*” (a practice of reciting certain words in order to connect spiritually with the prophet or ancestors), prayers, and offerings (Matrokhim, 2020; Roshanbahar, 2016). Thus, the dimension of sacredness is formed through strong belief and appreciation of local wisdom values and has a dimension of spirituality as a strengthening of human relations with God and nature (Ahmad, 2021).

There is an allegation that the ritual dimension which is considered full of sacredness has shifted to profane matters. This conjecture is supported by research conducted by Jauhari (2018); Saputra and Pratama (2018), which observed a shift in the dimension of religious rituals from the sacred to the more profane. They analyzed changes in people’s values and perceptions of religious rituals and found a shift in the way people understand and carry out religious rituals.

Desacralization as a Precedent of Moral Decay

Desacralization tends to emerge amidst strong currents of modernization which are marked by people acting more pragmatically and rationally (Giri, 2021). Rationality is the basis of modern human life which causes individualism and a decline in social solidarity. Social solidarity in religious communities is formed through social integration and religious spirituality (Hefni & Ahmadi, 2019). Desacralization shows strong evidence of the weakening of faith and spirituality built in local communities. Myths and religious rituals based on spirituality have lost their meaning and essence in local community traditions. The existence of rational actions tends to eliminate ritual sacredness and is replaced by rituals that are profane (Zainal, 2014).

The important thing in religious and cultural rituals is strengthening the values of local wisdom and sacredness that are believed by the perpetrators (Lessa & Vogt, 1989). However, the cultural rituals no longer highlight sacredness but tend to profanity (Muzakir, 2015). They have lost their essence to convey messages of morality to society so that the expression of euphoria and group interest reduces the sacredness of the ritual. The occurrence of this desacralization is a precedent of cultural decay which was raised through political and economic interests.

Methodology

Participants

This study took the main data through the determination of five informants consisting of various elements of the profession and social status. The informants taken were traditional leaders aged 20–50 years who lived in a transitional period of modernity. This is due to disinformation from the upper and younger classes. They are considered competent in providing comprehensive information regarding the *Nyangku* ritual. Those who are directly involved in the direct implementation of the ritual, have the following professions; Government officials, Panjalu village officials, traditional leaders from the Prabu Borosngora Foundation, *Nyangku* committee, Panjalu people, and guests who attended the *Nyangku* event. The selection of informants is intended to obtain accurate and objective interview data.

Data Collection

This research is qualitative in nature and carried out through field studies. A field study focuses on forms of desacralization and shifts in community meaning towards the *Nyangku* ritual in Panjalu. The data sought in this study are in the form of information characteristics in the form of meaning, values, performances, and activities that contain elements of degradation and desacralization. Primary data consist of information collected through interviews, while secondary data consist of letters, videos, photographs, audio recordings, and ritual guidebooks collected through observation.

The primary data collection process begins with a desk review to map informants to obtain more structured information. The interviews with informants were conducted directly to obtain accurate information. Secondary data collection begins with a desk review to map written materials that support the research process. The observations were made to map out the schedule for interviews with informants and take pictures and video recordings. The interviews were conducted in 2 stages, namely, structured interviews with a questionnaire and free interviews using an interview guide.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed following the stages of Huberman and Milles (2000) starting from data reduction, data display, and ending with data verification. Data reduction was carried out by referring to the themes from the interviews. At the same time, the research questions serve as the basis for structuring the data. Data display is done in a way that is through tabulation and restatement of interview data. Verification of data as a process of inference is done by interpretation. Then an interpretation is done by way of restatement of interview data.

Results and Discussion

Entertainment Dimension in Religious Rituals

An interview with AD (45) on November 3, 2022, recorded a reply as follows:

“There are differences between the Nyangku rituals then and now. In the past, the Nyangku ritual was only a very sacred Nyangku ritual activity. There were no night markets, children’s games,

or entertainment; but now we deliberately provide entertainment and games for children, even inviting regional officials to attract local people and visitors to attend the Nyangku ritual”

(AD (45), Interview, November 3, 2022)

The *Nyangku* ritual is considered as a form of effort to preserve local culture and at the same time to strengthen social relations in the Panjalu community. It provides an opportunity for the community not only to participate culturally but also socially. Community participation in cultural forms is shown in their participation in cultural performances, such as *Wayang Landung*, *Debus*, and giant-puppet arts. Meanwhile, community participation in social form is shown in various activities, such as their involvement in competitions, large recitations in the village, and their presence in the main events.

Debus performance is one of the typical arts of the Sundanese people which has been passed down from generation to generation. It does not only display a demonstration of the strength of processing the body so that it is immune to sharp objects but also displays the aesthetic value that arises in the interactions between *debus* actors. This art is always performed in every *Nyangku* ritual so that people see that *Debus* is part of an ancestral tradition that must be preserved since it encourages the younger generation to get involved in the activities. The *Debus* show has great appeal and is eagerly awaited by the people of Panjalu, as stated by AK (24);

“What I like about the Nyangku ritual is the Debus performance. This debus amazed me with their physical strength which is immune to sharp objects such as demonstrations of cutting body parts, necks, arms, legs, etc. If I have the chance, I want to be a Debus player.”

(AK (24), Interview, September 23, 2022)

The data explain that the *Debus* art attracts the attention of the people present in the *Nyangku* ritual. It is very entertaining for visitors and also gives an aesthetic impression of the Sundanese art tradition which has been passed down from generation to generation. On the other hand, this Sundanese performance also proves that the people of Panjalu have inherited the knowledge of their ancestors. Thus, the *Debus* art makes the atmosphere of the *Nyangku* celebration more cheerful and entertains the people who attend the *Nyangku* ritual.

The *Nyangku* festivals and rituals cannot be separated from the introduction of culture to children as cultural heirs. The committee introduces the ritual to children

through the provision of amusement rides and children's games. Children's amusement rides are indicated by children's games, such as playing on electric trains, water waves, and ball bathing rides. The provision of children's games is expected to encourage children to get to know and be interested in the ritual. The children's playground is a stimulus to attract the children segment to be involved in the ceremony. The *Nyangku* celebration committee pointed out that the children's segment received special attention as an effort to instill cultural values in the younger generation through a children's entertainment approach.

The entertainment of children's games is part of the ritual procession which aims to introduce the younger generation to love and preserve Sundanese cultural heritage. The entertainment dimension for children in the *Nyangku* ritual was delivered by RM (32), a resident of Cimendong Hamlet;

"During the Nyangku event, my children and I never miss seeing the night market and children's games in the afternoon. The events are always awaited by the children because there are many games for them, such as the boat-like and electric trains, which are only available just before the ritual event. So, we took the time to find an atmosphere of entertainment for children."

(RM (32), Interview, September 25, 2022)

The data explain that children are very interested in attending the event as shown in Figure 1. Their presence in the program aims to seek entertainment. Parents introduce *Nyangku* to their children through games that can entertain them, so they are interested in looking forward to the event every year. Children tend to like adrenaline-challenging games such as real coasters and tidal wave games.



Figure 1 Children game activities in Nyangku event

Economic Dimensions in Religious Rituals

The *Nyangku* ritual as a tourist icon in Ciamis Regency contributes greatly to regional income that encourages the promotion of tourism as a national and international tourist destination. Every year, it has invited tourists to attend to see the ritual procession. Indirectly, their presence has increased the income of the surrounding community and village income from visits. It has economic appeal as a tourist icon in Ciamis district. The potential of ritual besides attracting local tourists is also able to attract foreign tourists. Moreover, it has been designated by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage, so the performance of the ritual has been increasingly attractive to tourists who attend to see the event. This is as stated by Mr. Tatang (52) the regional secretary of Ciamis;

"This Nyangku is a tourism icon in Ciamis district after Pangandaran became a district. Tourism assets in Panjalu village are the top priority for local government development that must be developed. Villages that increase regional income. The Nyangku and cultural festivals are tourism potentials that must be developed and introduced to foreign tourists. When tourists come to Panjalu, Village and regional governments automatically receive retribution income and use of public facilities. Of course, this will have an impact on improving the economy and welfare of the people of Panjalu Village."

(Mr. Tatang (52), Interview, September 21, 2022).

The data explain that *Nyangku* is a tourism icon in the Ciamis district which has enormous tourism potential. The focus of Ciamis district tourism development is the North Ciamis area, specifically in the Panjalu sub-district, after the Ciamis regional autonomy was divided into two parts, Ciamis Regency and Pangandaran Regency. Of course, the local government prioritizes the development of the North Ciamis region as a tourism destination. Priority as a tourist destination is not only supported by public facilities, supporting facilities, and infrastructure but also tourism promotion based on digital marketing to domestic and foreign tourists.

The ritual has tourism potential which will have an impact on increasing regional income as well as the income of the people around Panjalu. The advantage of Panjalu village is that apart from having the oldest cultural history, it also has exotic natural beauty surrounded by mountains and a lake. These two potentials

have made the Ciamis Regency government prioritize Panjalu as a tourism destination and icon in Ciamis. Many artifacts and relics of the Panjalu kingdom that are hundreds of years old are in the Bumi Alit museum. One of the most important artifacts is the “Dzulfikar sword” left by Prabu Borosngora. Meanwhile, the natural beauty of Panjalu Village further strengthens the potential of Panjalu Village as a leading tourism destination in Ciamis Regency. The historical cultural potential and natural beauty of Panjalu village further strengthen the development of tourism potential which has an impact on increasing the welfare of the Panjalu people.



Figure 2 Indigenous people's weapons purification activities across the lake

Source: Personal documentation (2022)

The bazaar not only has social value but has economic value which impacts the income of the village and the foundation. It is a new series on the agenda for the ritual process. It is not only an activity to enliven the series of events but also aims to increase village income and community mobility. The committee indirectly created a bazaar area as a vehicle to accommodate sellers and entrepreneurs who wish to promote and sell goods directly. Bazaar activities provide economic space for sellers by taking advantage of the tourists who attend the event. In addition to market activities, bazaar activities have an economic value that is able to generate large revenues for the organizing committee amidst the large crowd of visitors from an economic perspective. The local people of Panjalu are also interested in dating and shopping during the bazaar activities.

The *Nyangku* ritual encourages business plans to be carried out by entrepreneurs to support the holding of the ritual. In the eye of the people of Panjalu, the ritual every year has become a tradition of celebrations similar to the commemoration of National Independence Day. This event encouraged entrepreneurs to invest in Panjalu village. Entrepreneurs consider the ritual to be a crowded event. In this crowd, they see the potential for a business-oriented business plan, such as; food houses, lodging, and selling location rentals. These five aspects are the top priority for entrepreneurs to invest in the Panjalu region. The ritual as a symbol of crowds makes entrepreneurs establish restaurants, minimarkets, lodging, selling stalls, and providing public facilities so that there are Padang restaurants, Rocket Chicken, Indomart, Alfamart, and Yogya Minimarket around the square currently. All of these investments support crowds that bring village income levies.

Political Dimension

The *Nyangku* ritual reflects the symbol of Sundanese culture in Panjalu and received recognition from UNESCO as one of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This acknowledgment further strengthens the implementation of the ritual as an effort to preserve Sundanese culture carried out by the Prabu Borosngora Foundation. Identity politics is shown by the people of Panjalu as having a complete cultural heritage compared to other villages. The existence of the Panjalu community outside Panjalu has formed small communities in Bandung, Bogor, and Jakarta. Panjalu native people are called to be involved morally and materially.



Figure 3 Visitors in Bazaar of *Nyangku*

Source: Personal documentation (2022)

The attitude of identity politics is shown by SS (45);

“Panjalu has a uniqueness that is not found in other regions. Besides having an old history in Sundanese land, Panjalu has many sacred things. Like there are relics of objects that are hundreds of years old in the Bumi Alit museum, there is an inheritance of noble values from the ancestors which are written in papagon and there is a memorial that is believed to bring blessings in the middle of the Lengkon.”

(SS (45), Interview, July 28, 2022).

The data explain that Panjalu’s potential includes three basic elements that make Panjalu an exceptional place from other places. This specific attitude has made Panjalu Village receive special attention from the Ciamis Regional Government. This specificity is demonstrated by the government with the construction of facilities and infrastructure, public facilities, and road improvements to Panjalu. The Ciamis Regency Government gives the authority or right to restore history as a form of cultural preservation. The historical restoration given to the village community is used as a basis in addition to preserving culture as well as a form of an independent authority to determine the direction of Panjalu village development.

The *Nyangku* ritual is a moment where there is a patron-client relationship between the local government and the village government. The administration of *Nyangku* is the authority of the Prabu Borosngora Foundation, but there are mutual relationships built by the village and regional governments. The ritual is used as a means of meeting to create a harmonious relationship. It is also a symbol of a joint project to increase the Ciamis District Revenue Budget and the Panjalu village government. The cooperative relationship between the village and district governments is increasingly strengthening to maintain ancestral traditions. This attitude was shown by the presence of the Governor of West Java, the Regent and his staff, and members of the Ciamis Regency People’s Legislative Council present in the *Nyangku* procession. The presence of local government officials was welcomed by giving welcoming speeches and eating together. Thus, the ritual further strengthens the political relations of the three elements, namely, the Panjalu village government, Ciamis Regency, and the Borosngora Foundation. These three institutions indicate a circle of interest that runs together.

The *Nyangku* ritual as a religious and cultural ritual has represented local wisdom values. It presents the sacredness and doctrine of ancestral teachings which are considered to influence the social institutions of the Panjalu people. This contribution received great support from the national government. On this basis, the Indonesian government proposed the legitimacy of the Panjalu ritual as an Intangible Cultural Heritage to UNESCO. Finally, the submission came to fruition in 2017 when the *Nyangku* ritual was designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. It can be said that it is a form of political negotiation to gain public legitimacy. Public legitimacy drives the popularity and preservation of the ritual. Strengthening public legitimacy is in line with Tatang’s statement as follows;

“The government always encourages the development of Panjalu Village and gives top priority as a village that has the right to restore history. This is a privilege given to the village of Panjalu because it has the oldest cultural traditions and national tourism potential. Moreover, the Unesco’s recognition of the Nyangku ritual as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is the responsibility of the entire Ciamis community to preserve the ritual. However, we must know that aspects of cultural heritage and natural beauty must be protected from interest groups.”

(Tatang, Interview, September 23, 2022).



Figure 4 Former Governor of West Java, Dede Yusuf (2008–2013) attended the 2013 *Nyangku* ritual
Source: Purba (2020)

The data explain that the government of Ciamis Regency has invited all local communities to preserve the *Nyangku* ritual. The existence of public legitimacy shows that the ritual has great potential for the tourism sector in Ciamis district. Thus, public legitimacy increasingly encourages people to maintain the ritual so that it is still passed down from generation to generation. Public acknowledgment further confirms that the rituals of *Nyangku* are the pride of Panjalu residents as a cultural heritage and national tourist destination.

The *Nyangku* ritual tends to display sacredness in the process that is built as a core of the program. The value of sacredness in the ritual is degraded due to changes in the paradigm of the people who are preoccupied with the festivals. Desacralization tends to display symbols of festivity and luxury which are marked by the large number of visitors who attend the ritual. This festive symbol has shifted the substance of ritual events where people no longer attend the events with the aim of participating in sacred rituals, but tend to only see crowds. The form of the crowd was marked by the presence of entertainment that made the public and tourists come to see the event. In other words, the entertainment presented in the form of art shows is a big attraction that can grab the attention of visitors. Thus, the art performance in the ritual emphasizes the degradation of Panjalu community values regarding the meaning and function of the ritual.

The implementation of the *Nyangku* ritual presents a performance that displays spiritual and entertainment values. Spiritual values are constructed in the ritual which is full of nuances of sacredness performed by traditional and religious leaders. On the other hand, the ritual also features entertaining events through art performances, *Debus*, and children's games. The presentation of entertainment in a sacred ritual shows a process of individual and social adaptation to adjust to current trends. Entertainment is also an individual human need as a social being. Individual needs cannot be separated from internal human psychological factors that need entertainment.

Religious and cultural rituals are no longer fully nuanced with the sacred but tend to display a profane atmosphere. The appearance of the sacred and profane in cultural rituals shows that there is an adaptation process that looks at aspects of social change in society caused by globalization and modernism (Cartono, 2019; Iqbal, 2016). In its development, local traditions cannot run alone, but local and modern traditions tend to walk together.

Having entertainment for children in the *Nyangku* ritual is part of optimizing economic potential.

The presence of the *Nyangku* ritual is not only celebrated by adults, but also the presence of children is an important concern that can generate income from providing children's amusement rides. In addition to amusement rides, children's toy and clothing traders are also one of the attractions for visitors to attend the ritual as well as a form of optimizing economic potential. The entertainment vehicles and sellers of food and clothing in the *Nyangku* ritual are a form of optimization effort to improve the economic cycle, social marketing and community micro-enterprises (Inshakova et al., 2021).

Economic pressure encourages people to look for space to increase productivity or mode of production (Abdullah, 2006). Human needs also encourage creativity to find opportunities that generate income. The *Nyangku* ritual as an open space besides carrying out sacred rituals, is also a place to earn income. Economic encouragement has made the government and people of Panjalu create business opportunities that can improve their welfare from the *Nyangku* ritual activities. This form of activity based on group interests is a form of commodification to increase economic income (Pratiwi, 2019). Thus, the *Nyangku* ritual is not only a religious spiritual expression but also an economic spiritual expression to increase the productivity of the middle class (Rudnyckyj, 2020).

The *Nyangku* ritual has high economic potential. In a crowd of festivals, there is an economic space that can be optimized. Guests and tourists who visit the *Nyangku* event certainly need a place, eating, and cleaning facilities. The concept of comfort is the main value in creating a tourism destination. The ritual has also encouraged the community and village government to think creatively to strengthen the economic aspects of small communities and tourism (Asiah & Amalina, 2022). Kaplan and Manners (1967) emphasized that the process of cultural development of local communities tends to run very dynamically in accordance with space and time (Barnes, 1970). Thus, the highly dynamic cultural development cannot be separated from the ritual practice space and the economic space.

Economic potential tends to encourage the contestation of political interests between individuals or groups. The emergence of identity politics basically works by reproducing narratives that lead to public legitimacy. Identity politics is usually used for legitimizing ethnic groups for the benefit of groups characterized by contestation of values or religion. Contesting the values that are built as part of strengthening identity (Maknun, 2020; Safitri, 2017). The *Nyangku* ritual is a form of

contestation space among interest groups to gain sympathy or imagery. In addition, the ritual is used as an event to accumulate support from the figures present at the event. They carry out political negotiations to capture political power in regional elections. Thus, identity politics encourages people to tend to reproduce narratives to strengthen cultural identity. Identity politics is played by interest groups through the reproduction of verbal and digital narratives that function to influence public opinion.

Cultural rituals no longer highlight sacredness but tend to profanity (Muzakir, 2015). They have lost their essence to convey messages of morality to society. The function of cultural rituals has begun to fade in people's lives where the main role of cultural values is and provides a compass in people's lives. Implicitly, culture has failed to educate and transform values in a homogeneous society. Society tends to see culture as a means of expressing joy and interest. The important thing in religious and cultural rituals is strengthening the values of local wisdom and sacredness that are believed by the perpetrators (Lessa & Vogt, 1989). However, the expression of euphoria and group interest reduces the sacredness of the ritual. The occurrence of this desacrality is a precedent of cultural decay which was raised through political and economic interests (Hancock, 2020).

Conclusion

It turns out that the degradation of values in the *Nyangku* ritual has threatened the cultural system of the local community in Panjalu. The degradation of values is an early precedent for the emergence of desacrality which makes the Panjalu people shift from the orientation of holding the ritual. The *Nyangku* ritual, which is considered a sacred ceremony, has experienced a shift in meaning, which has caused people to experience disorientation in following the ritual. People tend to ignore the sacredness of the ritual and get carried away with the crowds of profane activities. The degradation of values from the sacred to the profane is represented by the people of Panjalu in the form of perceptions of the meaning of the *Nyangku* ritual, namely; entertainment meaning, economic meaning, and political meaning. The shift in meaning is implemented in the form of activities, *Wayang Landung* art performances, *Debus*, Bazaars, tourism promotion, business plans, and public legitimacy. Thus, the value degradation in the ritual is a precedent of the emergence of desacrality that threatens local traditions where the cultural identity of local people experiences cultural decay.

Today the *Nyangku* ritual has undergone a value adaptation. The adaptation process requires support from all parties, namely, the Ciamis Regional government, village government, traditional leaders, and the Panjalu community to maintain the sacredness of the ritual. The role of the regional and sub-district governments is to make policies that encourage people not to deviate from the main purpose of the ritual. The village government must encourage the people of Panjalu through cultural coaching and cultural education so that the sacredness of the *Nyangku* ritual is maintained. Thus, value degradation will not occur if individual and collective awareness emerges to maintain the sacredness of the *Nyangku* ritual.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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