

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELIEF SYSTEM AND TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE KUTA INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CIAMIS, WEST JAVA

Ahmad Ali Nurdin

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Jl. A.H. Nasution 105 Cibiru Bandung Jawa Barat 40614, Indonesia

E-mail address: ali.nurdin@uinsgd.ac.id

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1914-3939>

Adon Nasrullah Jamaludin

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung,

Jl. A.H. Nasution 105 Cibiru Bandung Jawa Barat 40614, Indonesia

E-mail address: adon270372@uinsgd.ac.id

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8237-9098>

ABSTRACT

Aim. The purpose of this article is to examine the traditional ecological knowledge (environment) of the Kuta indigenous people in Ciamis, West Java. Nature, for them, is an inseparable part and a source of life. They are meticulous and maintain to remain sustainable.

Method. This paper's depiction of Kuta village is more of an ethnographic framework. The paper tries to answer whether the ecological knowledge of the Kuta indigenous people is built from their religious awareness (belief system) or not.

Results. The results show a relationship between belief systems and traditional ecological knowledge. The Kuta people's worldview about their natural surroundings is holistic-ecocentric. Their view is based on a belief system that constructs cultural ethics about their environment.

Conclusion. The concept of the unity of humans and nature, which is part of their belief system, results in an intersubjective relationship in which all subjects in the

universe are not related in a hierarchical context but are equal and mutually exclusive. They respect, care for, influence, share, and need one another.

Keywords: ecology, religion, Indigenous people, belief system, environmental, traditional, human nature

INTRODUCTION

Based on the annual report of the Environmental Performance Index on environmental damage, at the world level, Indonesia is ranked 133 out of 178 countries (Wendlin et al., 2018). While at the national level, West Java Province is ranked 32 out of 34 provinces in Indonesia. This data shows that West Java is a low environmental conservation province because almost every area in West Java has the potential for disasters. About 19 out of 27 districts/cities in West Java are categorised as disaster-prone. One of the causes of West Java being a disaster-prone province is environmental damage.

The data above shows that environmental problems are serious because of neglecting to take care of the environment. “The issue of environmental damage has entered the Anthropocene era” said Paul Crutzen (Steffen et al., 2007, p. 614). The assumption is that science, technological progress, industrialisation, and political domination trigger this ecological problem. More specifically, according to some experts, the ecological problems that occur are caused by the failure of science to answer environmental problems (Suteja, 2009). Many scholars have begun to look at the role of religion. The terms in the literature relating to religious and environmental movements are religious environmentalism (Tomalin, 2009), greener faith (Gottlieb, 2006), eco-theology (Dalton & Simmons, 2010), deep ecology (Barnhill & Gottlieb, 2001), and sacred ecology (Berkes, 2008).

Lynn White Jr. says that the exploitation of science and technology on the environment is rooted in religion. Specifically, White Jr. blames Judeo-Christian dogma as the cause of the ecological crisis (White Jr., 1967). In 1986, the Assisi Declaration appeared in Italy, which is an important document containing statements of religions (Catholic, Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist) in response to environmental problems. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) initiated the Assisi Declaration as an international institution that pays attention to environmental issues and the balance of nature (Mangunjaya, 2015). This declaration is necessary because it is the first to express religious response to environmental degradation.

Further studies from various conferences and declarations on the environment are ethnic studies on the practice of indigenous peoples in protecting the environment (Grim, 2019). Scholars have begun to examine the role of indigenous peoples who have always actively safeguarded the environment (Berkes et al., 2000). Many scholars analysed indigenous peoples’ practice of environmental conservation as a reference in environmental conservation. The emerging term regarding the knowledge and prac-

tice of environmental conservation carried out by indigenous peoples is Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) (Vliet et. Al 2018), although some call it Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK).

Based on the above thought, one of the indigenous peoples in Indonesia, who demonstrates environmental conservation based on “traditional ecological knowledge,” are the people of Kuta Village. The question is whether the traditional ecological knowledge rooted in the Kuta indigenous people influenced or generated by the belief system they adhere to?

LITERATURE REVIEW: TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE KUTA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CIAMIS, WEST JAVA

Among experts, the term used are Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) and Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK). In this paper, the author uses the term TEK. TEK, with the term ‘traditional,’ means knowledge that is passed from generation to generation continuously, and the development of traditional ecological knowledge occurs over a long period.

According to Fikret Berkes, TEK is a cumulative collection of knowledge, practices, and beliefs developed through adaptive processes, passed down from generation to generation through cultural transmission, regarding the relationship of living things (including humans) to one another to their environment (Berkes, 2008). In a nutshell, Berkes explains the concept of ‘knowledge-practice-belief’ in traditional societies. The ‘traditional ecological knowledge’ consists of a collection of knowledge about the land and natural resources typical of traditional communities; natural resource and land management practices; social institutions in the form of a set of rules, norms, customs, and worldview of an indigenous community that houses other elements. In this case, worldview is in the form of perspective and giving meaning to the environment.

Berkes believes that there is no universal definition accepted and agreed upon by experts regarding traditional ecological knowledge. The terms “traditional,” “knowledge,” and “ecology” have ambiguous meanings. The notion of “traditional” indicates a continuously transmitted culture (cultural continuity). While on the other hand, over time, society continues to adopt new practices and technologies, so it is difficult to define how much and what kind of changes can affect the labelling of practice as “traditional.” So some scholars avoid mentioning the word “traditional,” replacing it with “indigenous” (IEK), which means native. However, Berkes stated that traditional ecological knowledge originates from ethnoscience and human ecology. Ethnoscience discusses folk taxonomy (classification system based on society), ethnobotany and ethnozoological classification, plants, and animals. Meanwhile, human ecology discusses understanding

natural processes, including human relationships with animals, plants, and various environmental and sometimes supernatural factors.

The traditional village of Kuta is one of the six hamlets in Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, Ciamis Regency, West Java. Geographically, Kuta Village is located in a basin surrounded by cliffs (Kuta) with a sharp slope. Topographically, Kuta Village is located at an altitude of approximately 500 meters above sea level with an average temperature of 23-26 degrees Celsius. The air is quite cool because around it there are many hills with dense forests and a variety of plants. The hills by the residents of Kuta Village and the surrounding community have sacred things called *ancepan* (site) as relics of the Galuh kingdom, namely: Mount Semen, Mount Kapur, Mount Pandai Domas, Mount Barang, and many other sites.

Approximately 185.195 ha make up Kuta Village, of which 44.395 ha are rice fields and wetlands, 81.831 ha are land, 2.184 ha are sites, 0.385 ha are swamps, 41.086 ha are sacred forest, settlements occupy 9.733 ha, and 5,581 ha are others. Until now, there is no accurate scientific data about the history of its establishment and the process of the establishment of Kuta Village. The origins of Kuta Village, however, have long been linked to two distinct versions of the Galuh and Cirebon kingdoms.

The location of Kuta Village is directly adjacent to Central Java (generally speaking Javanese), so many local people use mixed languages, Sundanese and Javanese. For example, the names of *pranatamangsa* (determination of time in farming) in Kuta village are *kasa*, *karo*, *katiga*, *kapat*, *kalima*, *kanem*, *kapitu*, *kawolu*, *kasanga*, *kasabelas*, and *kaduabelas*.

The people of Kuta Village consistently use simple and traditional tools or equipment for living, all from natural resources. For instance, the Kuta Village people utilise a wood-burning stove to create the fire needed for cooking in their kitchen. The utensils in the kitchen are also still traditional such as *tetenong* (a tool for storing cooked food/ side dishes), *sumbul* (a tool to store rice such as *boboko/bakul*), *ceceting* (a small basket), *pane* (a tool to cool rice using fan), *pangarih* (a tool for stirring rice so that it cooks evenly), *hihid* (a fan for cooling rice), *boboko* (rice basket), *sangku* (rice bowl), *batok* (a drink place made of coconut shell).

Apart from farming and gardening, the livelihoods of the residents of Kuta Village are mostly palm sugar farmers. Residents use the abundant palm trees in the Kuta Village area to make palm sugar. In the process of managing sap water into sugar, farmers use traditional agricultural tools. Traditional tools related to tap water sap are *lodong*, *peso sadap*, *tatah sadap*, *katel*, *guguis*, *ebeg*, *citakan*, *cucutik*, *ember*.

The people of Kuta Village obtain knowledge systems from natural and animal signs. For example, an indication that the rainy season will occur for the people of Kuta Village is when the purple flower (*Lagerstroemia*) is blooming. Meanwhile, if the flowers of the *tongtolo* tree (*Pterocymbium tinctorium*), a type of forest wood, have flown indicates that a dry season will occur. On the other hand, if the *tongtolo* has fruited

and the fruit is falling (*ngarayah*), it will enter the rainy season. In terms of weather, when entering the dry season, the air is usually very cold.

The belief system of the Kuta people originates from the Islamic religion they adopted. It also comes from their ancestral traditions. Even though they adhere to Islam, they infuse it with ancestor traditions. Historically, Aki Bumi was the first to introduce Islam to Kuta. As a result, they consider him to be their ancestor. He came as an envoy from the Cirebon Kingdom assigned to guard Kuta Village.

As adherents of Islam, the residents of Kuta Village try to be obedient in carrying out religious laws, always do what Allah commands, and stay away from what He forbids. The Jami Mosque, a place of prayer accessible to the community, is located closer to Hamlet Hall. Even though there is only a mosque as a means of worship, it does not mean that the implementation of religious worship for the people of Kuta Village is low.

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this research is the relationship between religion and environment in the context of daily life people of Kuta Village. We used a descriptive-qualitative method to uncover factual conditions of people of Kuta. This paper's depiction of Kuta village is more of an ethnographic framework. Koentjaraningrat (2009) explained that ethnographic descriptions include cultural elements such as language, technology system, livelihood system, social organisation, knowledge system, art, and religious system.

In addition, for the analytical framework, we use Berkes's theory as a model for studying traditional ecological knowledge, known as the knowledge-practice-belief complex. According to him, traditional ecological knowledge consists of four analysis levels. It is the development of a complex 'knowledge-practice-belief' system. (a) The first analysis level is local knowledge about land, various animals and plants, and the relationship between species and their physical environment. This knowledge is not just information or not only "known," but it is an empirical process or way of understanding. It is not obtained through reading but must be experienced, limited in space and time; (b) The first analysis level is applied to the second level— practice. For example, land and resource management includes practices, tools, and techniques; (c). Furthermore, the third analysis level is social institutions, which include rules, norms, customs, and cultures that influence the second analysis level; (d). The last, a world view and religious philosophy include a perspective and giving meaning to the environment. It is the umbrella for all other levels of analysis.

CASE STUDY

The Reality of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Belief System of the Kuta Indigenous Peoples

This discussion begins with how the traditional ecological knowledge of the Kuta indigenous peoples. It is to prove that they already have a good knowledge system, especially regarding the maintenance of their environment. Then it will end with the belief system of the Kuta indigenous people Ciamis, West Java.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge of the Kuta Indigenous Peoples

The Kuta Indigenous Peoples generally live their livelihoods in agriculture, plantations, and fisheries. It means that they are used to processing it as a daily job. Because it is the source of their livelihood, it automatically maintains it so they can continuously use it for everyday life. Knowledge about the environment arises from real behaviour and is passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors who have the same profession as farmers. There are at least three things theoretically to discuss in managing natural resources: water, forest, and land management. And the Kuta Indigenous people struggle with these three jobs every day.

First, Water Management. The knowledge of the Kuta Indigenous people regarding water management existed before the concept of water management existed. They have used water according to their functions and needs so far. For them, water is the spirit of life. Therefore, water maintenance and treatment are essential.

Kuta Indigenous people have implemented a water management system, including: (a) Management of various springs in Kuta Village, such as *Ciasihan*, *Cinangka*, *Cibungur*, and *Cibangbara springs*; (b) Management of the Cijolang river; (c) Management of the crater in the sacred forest; (d) Management of fish ponds in residents' agricultural areas; (e) Management of palm trees, *kepayang* trees (*picung/klewek*), *cangkring* trees (*dadap*), bamboo, and banyan trees as sources of water supply.

It is forbidden to cut down the trees surrounding them to ensure the sustainability of the springs. Palm trees, *kepayang* trees (*picung*), *cangkring* trees (*dadap*), bamboo, and banyan trees are strictly prohibited (*pamali* or taboo) from being cut, especially those that grow near springs. The residents believe that these trees are trees that protect springs and prevent soil erosion.

In addition, there is also a prohibition on hunting fish either by fishing or using nets at certain times. The times that are prohibited when catching fish in the Cijolang river are on prohibited days. Those are *naptu genep* (number 6), *naptu seven* (total number 7), *naptu salapan* (total number 9), prohibition of the month (obstructed day every three months), unlucky year, *potel puseurbudak* (day when the child's umbilical cord is released), unlucky day (day of death of a parent or next of kin), and *rebo wekasan*

(last Wednesday). The management of the Cijolang river based on a ban on fishing at certain times is a strategy of Kuta's ancestors to keep the ecosystem that lives in the Cijolang river sustainable and prevent damage to the river environment.

Second, Forest Management. In the view of the people of Kuta, the forest is the heart of their life. So far, the life of the Kuta indigenous people depends greatly on the existing forest because it has various plants and animals for their lives. There is rattan, fruits, water, firewood, and animals such as chickens, rabbits, and others. The forest of the Kuta indigenous people is named *Leuweung Gede*. The area of the Leuweung Gede land around the Kuta Traditional Village is 42 ha. There are even sacred small forests called *ancepan* (site). There are 23 small forests in total.

Leuweung Gede management is closely related to environmental conservation efforts. Forest management through the presence of Leuweung Gede and 23 sites helps maintain the balance of nature, the sustainability of water sources and the life order of the people of Kuta village. The concept of Leuweung Gede and sites provides opportunities for the availability of green open space and water storage because, inside the Leuweung Gede and sites, there are large trees that have grown hundreds of years.

Third, Land Management. The land use in Kuta village are Leuweung Gede, sites, settlements, rice fields, and mixed gardens. The area of the Leuweung Gede plus some sites is almost half of the total area of the Kuta village. The land used for the settlement of Kuta residents is on a slope (slightly high ground) bordering the cliffs surrounding Kuta Village. The houses are not lined up neatly, but some are far apart. The customary rules of Kuta prohibit the number of houses lined up with three, but one building, two, or four may be allowed. The form of settlement tends to be linear. The settlement is divided by a hamlet road which becomes the main road.

The Belief System (Religion) of the Kuta Indigenous Peoples

The Kuta people adhere to Islam along with ancestral traditions. Historically, the people believe that Aki Bumi was the first to spread Islam in Kuta. Therefore, Aki Bumi is the ancestor of the Kuta people. Aki Bumi came as an envoy from the Cirebon Kingdom assigned to guard Kuta Village.

According to Soedarmo (n. d.), the entry of Islam into the south of West Java is inseparable from the process of Islamisation carried out by the Sultan of Cirebon, Sunan Gunung Jati (1479-1568), against small Hindu-style kingdoms in Southern West Java, such as the kingdoms of Kuningan, Luragung, Cibingbin, Talaga, Majalengka, Rajagaluh, Kawali, Sukapura, and Sindangkasih. Therefore, Islam may have entered Kuta Village at the end of the 15th century or early 16th century (Soedarmo, n. d.). So it is not surprising that ancestral belief systems, sacred places, sacred days, and so on as part of Kuta's Islamic religious practices. They are also obedient in carrying out the teachings of their ancestors because if they only obey the teachings of Islam, then they are afraid of *kualat* (lawlessness which results in disaster) against themselves,

their families, and society. Therefore, they believe in the existence of the spirits of their ancestors and supernatural beings from their ancestors.

In order for the spirits of their ancestors to not disturb them, they perform rituals. Some rituals are individual or family in nature, and some mass ones involve all members of the Kuta indigenous people. Individual rituals, including: (a) Sawaka/Mintoni Ritual; (b) Ngarupus Ritual; (c). The rituals of Katiluna (third day), ka Tujuhna (seventh day), ripeten (forty day), natus (hundredth day), and newu (thousandth day), Nyangkreb (copy). These rituals are at night before the rice harvest. Some offerings are separated and stored in the rice fields the people harvest before sunrise; (d) Teya Ritual. Meanwhile, mass rituals include: (a) Yuguh Ritual; (b) Sidkah Bumi Ritual; (c). Babarit Rituals; (d). Saman Ritual.

DISCUSSION: THE RELATION OF BELIEF SYSTEM (RELIGION) AND TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE KUTA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

This study seeks the relationship between traditional ecological knowledge and the religious system or belief or religion of the Kuta Indigenous people. Is traditional ecological knowledge formed or influenced by their religion or belief system? Because until now, the Kuta Indigenous people have been very concerned and upholding their natural environment. They continue to look after, maintain and preserve nature in their environment and use it in their daily lives. So it is rare for the Kuta Indigenous people to be affected by natural disasters such as landslides, water shortages, floods due to rain, and other natural disasters.

Indigenous people of Kuta strongly hold traditional customs and belief systems. So it is still difficult to distinguish between Islamic teachings and custom principles. This may be due to the development of Islamic teachings from the beginning along with the application of tradition and delivered without distinction in the form of an explanation of the differences between religious teachings and traditions. So that people find it difficult to distinguish and separate which are religious teachings and which are customs. The Kuta indigenous people firmly adhere to traditional practices and belief systems. Therefore, it remains challenging to distinguish between Islamic teachings and traditional principles.

In addition to believe in Allah, the Creator, the Kuta Indigenous People also believe in ancestors and other supernatural creatures, like *Ambu Rama Bima Raksa Kalijaga*, *Prabu Mangkurat Jaga*, *Sang Mentil Putih*, and *Kyai Bima Raksa Nagara*. They inhabit sacred places such as Leuweung Gede, Leuweung Ki Bumi, Mount Panday Domas, Mount Barang, Mount Semen, Mount Batu, and Ciasihan springs in Leuweung Gede.

The struggle between traditional customs and belief systems has shaped the worldview of the Kuta indigenous people. Knowing a community's worldview is important because starting from that view of life, it can reveal the local knowledge of a particular community (Anthwal n. d). One such local knowledge is "traditional ecological knowledge." So the traditional ecological knowledge is the local knowledge of the Kuta indigenous people. Knowledge is born and built from belief systems and traditional customs (cultural ethics) that they adhere to. The belief system has shaped the view of the Kuta indigenous people towards nature and the environment obtained from their ancestors, such as Aki Bumi and the previous kuncen of the Kuta traditional village.

The belief in the unity of man and nature (community of all beings) is an example. Their ancestors taught three things related to the unity of man and nature: (1). That nature of the earth and its contents are considered subjects, not objects that humans freely exploit. Even the Kuta people place nature or the earth subject to have wills and desires. It has characters as humans (2). Nature or the earth and everything in it is the motherland; nature and the earth are sacred because they can meet human needs where humans and their ancestors have carried out life activities and rituals (3). Both, with all their contents, are grounderdc in the human identity.. In other words, nature is the embodiment of the human self. If we destroy it, we destroy ourselves, and if we take care of it, we protect ourselves from damage.

Therefore, in the belief system of the Kuta indigenous people, they believe that the ancestors play a role in controlling the lives of the residents. Thus, there are customary rules and customary prohibitions that regulate the interaction between residents and their ancestors.

The rules and prohibitions in the Kuta indigenous people's belief system are regulated in social institutions. In simple terms, in the context of indigenous peoples, social institutions are customary rules, and customary prohibitions (taboo) passed down from generation to generation from their ancestors. All indigenous people must obey them.

Customary rules and customary prohibitions that traditional elders often transmit are about environmental conservation. It aims to remind and build awareness of the Kuta indigenous people about the importance of preserving the natural surroundings as a source of livelihood for the community. As Shen et al (2012) argued, the involvement of cultural institutions and institutions of knowledge in conservation education has stimulated community participation in gathering knowledge and protecting biodiversity.

Of the many customary rules and prohibitions in the belief system of the Kuta indigenous people, traditional elders often transmit the term pamali (taboo). This word becomes the ultimate weapon to subdue the memory as well as public awareness of the existence of the surrounding natural environment. Pamali, which stands for *poma manusa ulah lali itungan, aturan jeung iman, amanah undang-undang* (humans should not forget the count, rules and faith, trust and laws). In simple terms, pamali are taboos or prohibitions based on calculations, rules, and ancestral trusts.

Kuta village is known as *sarebu pamali* (a thousand taboos) village because indigenous people should not violate many customary prohibitions. The word *pamali*, which has a deep meaning for the villagers of Kuta, is ultimately responsible for the traditional village's success in maintaining nature, the environment, and the forest. For the Kuta indigenous people, the word *pamali* is not only part of their belief system. It is also a mandate from their ancestors. They cannot continue the ancestral mandate if they no longer respect it. The term *pamali* is the most powerful knowledge and represents the strength and direction of life in the Kuta indigenous people because humans are responsible for all destruction in the world—including landslides and floods—because they have ignored the word *pamali*.

The Kuta indigenous people believe in *pamali*. If they have abandoned or ignored it, three things will happen, including:

First, there will be “*jati kasilih ku junti*”. The literal meaning of the expression is “the original is defeated by the imitation” or “the natives are eliminated by the immigrants”. This expression can also be interpreted as the loss of indigenous identity, the loss of indigenous customs and manners, and the loss of indigenous hospitality due to defeat by the customs and culture of immigrants who have replaced indigenous customs and cultures with immigrant cultures.

Second, there will be “*leuweung kasilih ku rema*” (the forest loses to the garden). Literally, it means that now many forests have been cleared to become plantations or even housing without paying attention to the preservation of nature. However, this expression can also be interpreted broadly, namely that the work ability of the natives has been lost or defeated by outsiders' work ability. In other words, if there are many foreign companies in our country, while we are only the workers, our nation has lost to other nations, or the natives have lost to guests.

Third. There will be *taktak ngaluhuran sirah* (shoulders are higher than head). It means the world is turned upside down. *Budak teu nurut deui ka kolot, kadang aya budak nu maehan bapa* (children are disobedient to their parents, sometimes even children kill their parents). This expression also means that many arrogant people feel that they are the strongest, most powerful, smartest, richest, and most capable, even though there must be a sky above the sky.

Therefore, applying the word *pamali* to the Kuta indigenous people becomes a rule and a prohibition. The people will follow and obey the rules of the traditional elders regarding the natural environment. Likewise, if it becomes a prohibition, they will not do things traditional elders have prohibited. If you violate it, there will be a disaster for yourself, your family, and the surrounding community.

However, if there is a disaster outside of the rules and prohibitions made by traditional elders, for example, an earthquake, an outbreak of the corona disease (covid-19) as it is today, or others, so in the belief system (religion) of the Kuta indigenous people, they do it through rituals. Some examples of rituals for disasters come from outside and within the Kuta traditional village community are *babarit* and *sawen*.

Residents of Kuta conduct *babarit* ritual when a disaster appears, such as an earthquake or other, in Kuta Village or outside. The traditional elders respond through its ritual. So, in response to the disaster and to prevent it, they held a *babarit* ritual by collecting *sawen* (some plants to ward off evil). The traditional elders determine what must be contained in the form of *sawen* based on *wangsit* (guidance) received from the ancestors. After each resident's *sawen* is charmed by traditional elders, the *sawen* is brought to their respective homes and usually stored above the house's front door. The *babarit* ritual is carried out to ward off reinforcements so that disasters or calamities in other places do not occur in Kuta Village. This ritual is an interpretation and response of the Kuta indigenous peoples to events that occur in their lives of the Kuta people.

When there was an outbreak of the Corona disease (Covid-19), which recently hit the community. The residents of the Kuta Indigenous village held a *babarit* ritual by providing ritual requirements in the form of a scapegoat, chicken, flowers, *sawen* tools, and so on. Then the traditional elders perform special rituals on scapegoats and chickens. The traditional elders slaughter them as a ritual requirement. Furthermore, after all the needs are complete, all residents of Kuta Village come to follow the ritual led by traditional elders. They carried out this ritual on April 20, 2020, at 17.00 Monday, Kliwon. Then, the mutton and chicken are distributed equally to all residents.

Likewise, when performing rituals, ancestral spirits are always greeted (called) and even like to be given offerings. For the people of Kuta, supernatural beings and ancestral spirits are "*mesing teu katingali tapi karasa*" (even though they cannot be seen but their presence is felt). As a form of respect for the Kuta indigenous peoples for nature, the earth, or the land they inhabit and make a source of livelihood, they hold a traditional ceremony of *sidkah bumi*. *Sidkah Bumi* is a ritual intended for *meruwat*, *ngarajah*, *marepehan taneuh bumi* (earth) to get blessings.

Thus, the people of Kuta's worldview toward nature has implications for ecological conservation in Kuta Village. The worldview in the form of a diverse belief system becomes a big umbrella covering cultural ethics related to environmental conservation, natural resource management practices, and local knowledge typical of Kuta village. For instance, the belief in supernatural beings in Leuweung Gede is the basis for protecting Leuweung Gede with various flora and fauna, and the belief in Nyai Pohaci is the foundation for environmentally friendly rice farming practices in rice fields and the belief in sites makes green open adequate space available.

CONCLUSION

The worldview or way of life of the Kuta indigenous people Ciamis shows their traditional ecological knowledge. It means that talking about the natural surroundings begins with studying the typical cosmology of Kuta residents. The worldview of Kuta residents about their natural surroundings is holistic-ecocentric. Their holistic-eco-

centric view is based on a belief system that constructs cultural ethics about their environment. The concept of the unity of humans and nature (community of all beings), which is part of their belief system, results in an intersubjective relationship in which all subjects in the universe are not related in a hierarchical context but are equal and mutually exclusive. They respect, care for, influence, share, and need one another.

To realise the preservation of nature above, the Kuta indigenous people create non-formal social institutions manifest in customary rules and prohibitions. Customary rules and customary prohibitions (pamali) are the village ancestors' teachings, passed down from generation to generation with spoken language. The so abundant term pamali has implications for the conservation of various richness of flora and fauna, conservation of water sources (hydraulic function), healthy environmental sanitation, disaster mitigation, and the availability of green open space. Those customary prohibition links with Leuweung Gede and sites protected from logging, clearing of rice fields, settlement development, and environmental destruction while maintaining the diversity of flora and fauna that live in it. Besides that, it also supports the micro-climate. It preserves water sources (hydrological functions) which are the needs of the residents of Kuta Village, where large trees become water catchment barriers.

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