Santoso et al. (2023). IAS Journal of Localities, 1(2), 123-137
https://doi.org/10.62033/iasjol.v1i2.16
ISSN (Online): 3026-2879

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Political interest of religious ritual: The Sundanese Nyangku ritual in Indonesia

Try Riduwan Santoso*[1], Rizqi Rahayu[2], Adi Robith Setiana[3]

Received:
6 December 2021
Accepted:
2 December 2023

***Corresponding author**:
Try Riduwan Santoso.
Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAI Latifah Mubarokiyah.
Indonesia
E-mail:
tryriduwan165@gmail.com

Abstract: Nyangku ritual is considered not only as an amplifier solidarity and friendship for Panjalu people, however it is also as an arena for political investment by political elites. This paper aims to analyze the political elites forms and factors of interest that involved in Nyangku ritual. This research is descriptive qualitative where the data obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. This study results indicate that there are three forms of political interest in rituals that appear to be carried out by political elite in Panjalu village from various activities such as; moral support shown by banners and posters and attendance, material support shown by providing financial assistance and action support by being directly involved in the process of Nyangku ritual event. The elite interests of community leaders and regional officials are a precedent for a shift in meaning marked by political activity in Nyangku ritual, which has implications for the ritual sacred values degradation. I argue that political interest in Nyangku ritual has shown a shift in meaning in society, namely from the sacred to the profane.
Keywords: Political interest, Degradation, Religious rituals, Local tradition

Abstrak: *Ritual Nyangku dianggap tidak hanya sebagai penguat solidaritas dan silaturahmi bagi masyarakat Panjalu, tetapi juga sebagai ajang investasi politik oleh para elit politik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk-bentuk kepentingan elit politik dan faktor-faktor kepentingan yang terlibat dalam ritual Nyangku. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dimana data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga bentuk kepentingan politik dalam ritual yang tampak dilakukan oleh elit politik di Desa Panjalu dari berbagai kegiatan seperti; dukungan moral yang ditunjukkan dengan spanduk dan poster serta kehadiran, dukungan material yang ditunjukkan dengan memberikan bantuan dana dan dukungan tindakan dengan terlibat secara langsung dalam proses acara ritual Nyangku. Kepentingan elit tokoh masyarakat dan pejabat daerah menjadi preseden terjadinya pergeseran makna yang ditandai dengan aktivitas politik dalam ritual Nyangku yang berimplikasi pada degradasi nilai sakralitas ritual tersebut. Saya berargumen bahwa kepentingan politik dalam ritual Nyangku telah menunjukkan adanya pergeseran makna dalam masyarakat, yaitu dari yang sakral menjadi profan.*
Kata kunci: *Kepentingan politik, Degradasi, Ritual keagamaan, Tradisi lokal*

About Author
Try Riduwan Santoso, Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAI Latifah Mubarokiyah, Indonesia; Rizqi Rahayu, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada; Adi Robith Setiana, STIE Latifah Mubarokiyah, Indonesia.

To cite this article: Try Riduwan Santoso, Rizqi Rahayu & Adi Robith Setiana. (2023). Political interest of religious ritual: The Sundanese Nyangku ritual in Indonesia. *IAS Journal of Localities*, *1*(2), 123-137. DOI: 10.62033/iasjol.v1i2.16

Copyright © 2023 The Author(s). This is an open access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 international license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

1. Introduction

Religious and cultural rituals aside from being local tradition values and social relation strengthening in society, they are also tend to strengthen political relations in Indonesia. The strenghtening political relations has threatened society social relations in maintaining local cultural values preservation. Religious and cultural rituals in Sundanese people traditions and which have been named as Intangible Cultural Heritage have apparently experienced a shift in meaning. So far, religious and cultural rituals have formed dynamic social relations in Sundanese society, however over the past two decades there has been a shift in meaning in their implementation. This shift is supported by social change and community's collective awareness weakening triggered by pragmatism in community groups (Abdillah et al., 2023). Therefore, a change in meaning that tends to the realm of political interests will encourage value degradation emergence that occurs in religious rituals and can threaten the sacredness which is the core of a religious and cultural ritual.

This paper attempts to complement studies that have been conducted relate to religious and cultural rituals in Sunda region of West Java. Previous studies have tended to examine the relationship between rituals and myths meaning and function of religious and cultural rituals. The ritual meaning and function is to reinforce local values and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. Today's rituals have experienced a shift in meaning in their implementation caused by globalization and modernism (Rusydi, 2019). Local religious rituals tend to be adaptive by collaborating between rituals and interests and developments of the times (Afandi, 2018; Sonya et al., 2019). There is an allegation that ritual dimension which is considered full of sacredness has shifted to profane matters (Karasuta, 2015; Saputra & Pratama, 2018; Fernando et al., 2023b). Nyangku ritual is a religious and cultural ritual that contains local wisdom values as life foundation in social life. Religious and cultural rituals are believed not only to preserve ancestral heritage, but also to have economic value that can improve the Sundanese people welfare (Laila & Qudsy, 2021; Pratiwi, 2019; Fahmi et al., 2017). Along with time, religious and cultural rituals development, local Sundanese people used them as a means for political interests. Therefore, the studies that have been conducted tend to examine the myths and functions and implications of Nyangku ritual, while this research examines how Nyangku ritual used as a space for political interests is played by regional leaders and officials to strengthen their political investment in Sundanese society

Religious and cultural rituals in Indonesia have experienced values reproduction (Abdullah, 2006). This study aims to review how religious and cultural rituals development is reproduced in the form of activities that are more interesting in accordance with changing times. Value reproduction in ritual is no longer packaged in the form of culture, but involves economic and political aspects. Even though the cultural values quality has experienced degradation, the message essence conveyed in Nyangku ritual is more widely felt by the wider community. The tendency to the realm of political interests are able to threaten the values of local wisdom and social relations of society. The issue of political interest in religious rituals represents a form of devaluation and conflicts with ritual goals. In addition, political interests encourage degradation emergence of local wisdom values of the community. In particular, this paper describes the forms and factors that led to the political interests emergence in Sundanese society. The political interests emergence in religious and cultural rituals is shown in the form of activity and involvement of political figures and local officials in the rituals implementation.

This paper starts with an argument that religious and cultural rituals in Indonesia experience a change in meaning which tends to indicate political interests existence being played between village leaders, people's representatives in the regions and public officials.

Political interests have become an important agenda for politicians to strengthen political investment in the region. Political investment activities through religious and cultural approaches. Indonesian people who are easily attracted to be involved in cultural interests create opportunities for politicians to gain sympathy and attention from the community. Sympathy and attention from the public is an indicator of increasing popularity as a political investment reinforcement. Religious and cultural rituals have a collective power that is able to realize personal and group interests to become a social collective.

2. Literature review

2.1. Politics of Interest

Politics is a means to achieve the goals of common good (Küçükkömürler & Özkan, 2022). Politics is synonymous with an effort and strategy to create a plan and activity based on a common interest. Politics is always synonymous with an interest, where its purpose is for the interests of the people, not personal or group interests. Political interests based on the people aspirations are efforts to form a good order of life. Conversely, politics based on individual or group interests tends to create corrupt and authoritative governments that ignore public interest. Therefore, politics becomes a means to achieve a common good and interest.

Political interests are surely different from interest politics (Bukido et al., 2019). Political interests are based on an effort and strategy to achieve common good goals through agreements and deliberation processes. Political interests have a basis from the people aspirations, not from groups or individuals who seek profit (Dostie-Goulet, 2009). Political interests are represented in a form of activity that has similarities or sharing interests (Lu et al., 2019). In other words, political interests are manifested in the form of cultural activities which are a shared responsibility to maintain and promote. Therefore, political interests will be easily realized if they have similar interests which are manifested in the form of cultural activities.

2.2. Desacralization

The main goal in religious and cultural rituals practice 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 ritual form (Paramitha & Salura, 2020; Turner, 2017). Sacredness in rituals is also an indication of strengthening human relations with nature and God (M. Ahmad, 2019; Maulidah, 2018). This relationship encourages human spirituality to show how they maintain harmony with nature and God. The necessity for human spirituality is expressed in the form of religious and cultural rituals by visiting graves and reading *tawassul*, prayers and offerings (Matrokhim, 2020; Roshanbahar, 2016). Therefore, the sacredness dimension 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.

Desacralization apperas in the midst of modernization which tends to make humans think and act rationally. Rationality is the basis of modern human life which causes individualism and a decline in social solidarity. Whereas social solidarity in religious communities is formed through social integration and religious spirituality. (Hefni & Ahmadi, 2019). Desacralization shows strong evidence of faith and spirituality weakening built in local communities. Myths and religious rituals based on spirituality have lost their meaning and essence in local communities traditions. The existence of rational actions tends to eliminate ritual sacredness and is replaced by rituals that are profane (Asliah Zainal, 2014).

2.3. Religious Rituals

Geertz (2020) defines that a ritual has similar substance as religion since there are ritual practices, and each ritual has a goal that is in line with religion. Geertz (1988) asserts that religion is; A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and longlasting moods and motivations of a general order of the existence general order and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of fatality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" Geertz's view of religion as a symbol is a form sharpening the understanding of symbols concept in a functional interpretative approach (Geertz, 2020). The interpretive approach becomes a framework for opening the symbols function as a recording device concerning concepts, norms, values, moods, motivations, all of which can be found in every ritual (Geertz, 1988). Therefore, religious and cultural rituals contain symbols, concepts and values that are meaningful in human life (Fernando, et al., 2023a).

Ritual is a series of activities that are structured through a stage from the beginning to the end. The rituals implementation is also a form of expression of beliefs that have goodness and meaning in each of the process stages (Koentraningrat, 1989). The meaning of this ritual implies that, on the one hand, ritual activity is different from ordinary activities, regardless of whether there are religious and solemn nuances. Nyangku ritual is not only a sacred routine event, but also a form of strengthening the social relations of Panjalu village community. Turner (2017) explicitly defines that ritual does not only function as an obligatory ritual, but as a symbol of what in fact happens in people's lives. Rituals have meaning and through these meanings the essence of life in society can be understood and learned (Turner, 2017). Functions and meanings in rituals provide space for humans to perceive them as individual and collective experiences (Jauhari, 2018). Therefore Nyangku ritual as a cultural and religious ritual has meaning and function not only as an annual mandatory ritual, but as an individual and collective experience (S. Ahmad, 2021).

3. Method

This study has been carried out in Panjalu village, Ciamis, West Java from the beginning of February 2021 to the end of December 2022 where Nyangku ritual is carried out every Hijriyah year in the month of Rabiul Awal as an annual ritual in Panjalu village. Panjalu Village is one of the cultural centers in Sundanese land which holds ancient cultural heritage and has great tourism potential in Ciamis regency. The political interests inclusion of the village elite in Nyangku ritual has influenced social dynamics and ritual processions. This ritual has great potential to attract not only tourists but also village elites, Ciamis regency and West Java province. Village elites were involved in Nyangku ritual procession as a form of participation in the success of the ritual which was held in Panjalu village square. Therefore, this research unit focuses on Nyangku ritual which shows political interests played by village, district and provincial politicians.

This is a qualitative research that carried out through field studies. The selected field studies are forms of political interest in Nyangku ritual implementation in Panjalu. The data sought in this study are in the form of information characteristics in the form of speeches, actions and narratives as well as activities that contain elements of political interest. Primary data consists of information collected through interviews, while secondary data consists of video documents, photographs, audio recordings and ritual guidebooks collected through observation.

This study took the main data through 5 (five) informants appointment consisting of various professional elements and social status. Informants taken were Panjalu people aged 17-40 years where they have political rights to convey aspirations and be involved in the

election of village heads, regional heads and people's representatives in the Regional Parliament. In addition, interviews were conducted with political figures within the scope of the village and district. They are considered competent in providing comprehensive information on the practice of political interests in Nyangku ritual. Those who are directly involved in the direct implementation of Nyangku ritual, have the following professions; Village government officials, Panjalu Village Officials, traditional figures from Prabu Borosngora Foundation, Nyangku committee, Panjalu people and guests who attended Nyangku event. The informants selection is intended to obtain accurate and objective interview data.

The primary data collection process begins with a desk review to map informants in order to obtain more structured information. Later on, 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. Later, observations were made to map out the schedule for interviews with informants and taking pictures and video recordings. The interviews were conducted in 2 stages, namely structured interviews with a questionnaire and free interviews using an interview guide.

The research data were analyzed following the stages of Hubermas and Milles (2000) which started from data reduction, data display and ended 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 carried out in a way that is through tabulation and restatement of interview data. Data verification as a process of inference is performed by interpretation. Later, interpretation is carried out by way of restatement interview data.

4. Result

4.1. Politicians' moral support

Nyangku ritual provides an opportunity for the community not only to participate in the form of moral support individually but also collectively. Nyangku ritual is considered as a form of effort to preserve local culture and at the same time strengthens social relations in Panjalu community. Community participation in individual form is shown in their participation in providing moral support in every Nyangku implementation agenda. Community social participation is shown in the form of community participation in various Nyangku ritual activities. Their form of moral support is to actively participate in the success of Nyangku event. Other forms of social participation are their involvement in a series of ritual events, competitions, village recitations, and their presence in the main Nyangku events. Therefore, community moral support is part of participation which is very important for the success of Nyangku ritual.

The moral support provided by politicians is part of their responsibility as Sundanese people in helping to preserve one of the oldest ancestral legacies in the land of West Java. Moral support is also manifested by politicians as a form of a sense of belonging to Sundanese wealth and cultural heritage from generation to generation. The cultural heritage of Nyangku ritual does not exist anywhere else and has become the cultural identity of the Sundanese people to this day. The Sundanese people identity still exists today due to cultural heritage, one of which is Nyangku ritual. Therefore, this ritual requires moral support from the community and village and regional politicians to build and maintain the preservation of ancestral cultural heritage and as a reinforcement of Sundanese cultural identity. As stated by Mr. AS (44), a member of Regional House of Representative (DPRD) from a party in Ciamis Regency, said;

> "Nyangku culture is an ancestral heritage that must be preserved by younger generation. I am originally from Panjalu and proud to have Nyangku culture. We are proud that to this day Nyangku ritual is remain carried out every year in Panjalu village. Community enthusiasm was very high by attending and being directly involved in the success of Nyangku event. I usually attend and invite Panjalu people to remain compact in preserving Nyangku. (interview, 3 May 2022).[1]

The data explains that politicians who are members of Ciamis DPRD from members of one of the political parties provide moral support to the general public and particularly the younger generation as heirs to Sundanese culture in the future. Sundanese culture becomes an identity that becomes the focus of the people's representatives in DPRD which must receive important attention. Panjalu, Ciamis Regency has the oldest cultural heritage in Sunda land and is a cultural tourism destination that brings tourists from various regions in Indonesia and even foreign countries. The politicians moral support inspires and encourages the community to continue to build and work in a way that preserves local culture. Therefore, moral support is very important to be given to the community so that it is motivated to participate directly in order to succeed in holding each year's Nyangku ritual.

Table 1. Politicians support

Figure explanation	Figure
Moral support from members of DPRD Ciamis Regency	
Moral support from Head of the Village	

Source: Private Document

Nyangku ritual implementation cannot be separated various elements of village community groups support. Traditional stakeholders as owners of Nyangku culture are always synergistic with village officials in scheduling Nyangku activities six months before their implementation. This is an effort to maximize Nyangku implementation so that it is better than the previous year by looking at the situation and conditions. Moreover, Nyangku ritual implementation in 2021 is carried out during Covid 19 pandemic, people must follow the health protocol, namely social distancing and wearing masks. Finally, Nyangku implementation was carried out at the middle grave of Situ Lengkong which was attended by traditional figures, regional officials and invited guests. Therefore, as a form of moral

[1] Interview with AK, a youth from Pabuaran Panjalu village.

support, Nyangku ritual requires collective cooperation synergy by involving all stakeholders and community to be actively involved in the success of Nyangku ritual. Hence, individual and collective support is the key to the success of Nyangku ritual event, as Panjalu village elite, Mr. KK (52) conveyed;

> "The success of Nyangku event is the work of all of community elements, starting from the head of hamlet (RT), the head of the village and village officials who are involved in making Nyangku event a success which is organized by the Indigenous Stakeholders of Panjalu village. Nyangku implementation which takes a long time and is supported by sufficient logistics requires every member of the community participation to work together to make Nyangku event successful." (interview, February 6th, 2022).[2]

The data explains that Nyangku's success is a collective work of various parties, starting from RT, head of the village, and village officials. The success of Nyangku ritual also involves local government stakeholders as policy makers to strengthen and preserve Nyangku tradition and as cultural tourism. Nyangku ritual becomes a strength and spirit to develop the village through the ritual implementation.

4.2. Materials support

Tabel 2. Nyangku ritual

Figure explanation	Figure
Material support from village officials in Nyangku ritual	
Nyangku ritual	

Source: Private Document

Nyangku ritual encourages the participation not only from Panjalu people, but also from village government officials to make the event a success. The participation of village government officials is shown by providing plantation products to support the logistics of Nyangku event. The types of food provided are plantation products typical of Panjalu village, such as cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas, tubers and fish. The village administration's participation in Nyangku event is a form of concern and a sense of belonging as an institution that governs Panjalu village government. This participation is also a strengthening of the

[2] Interview with KK, a village figure of Panjalu village.

relationship between the village government and Panjalu village customary stakeholders. In this way the village officials participation is a form of social responsibility and strengthening social relations with Panjalu village traditional stakeholders through the provision of plantation products. This is as stated by Mr. Tatang (52) as the regional secretary of Ciamis explained that;

> "We as Panjalu village officials are very proud and happy to be part of Nyangku ritual procession. We also cull garden produce for the purposes of implementing Nyangku once a year. We are grateful that Nyangku ritual is a gratitude activity for the blessings given by God that the people of Panjalu village can live comfortably and prosper away from disasters." (Interview, September 21st, 2022).[3]

The data explain Nyangku ritual as a form of gratitude expression for village officials where Panjalu village has been given prosperity and wellfare to this day. Panjalu village potential is supported by tourism and beautiful nature, making it increasingly known and visited by many domestic and foreign tourists. This is a matter of pride for Panjalu village community for the grace that God has bestowed. Therefore, the gratitude of Panjalu people is proven by giving alms from plantation products for the benefit of Nyangku event as a symbol of gratitude.

Sedekah Bumi is an ancestral heritage as local wisdom for Panjalu people. It is intended as an expression of gratitude in the form of giving crops which are collected and later cooked to be enjoyed together. *Sedekah Bumi* is preserved by the village administration as a symbol of remembering the local wisdom of the Panjalu village ancestors. It is also a means of Panjalu people's bonding solidarity by gathering and establishing brotherhood relations among them. Hence the bond of brotherhood and solidarity is demonstrated through community charity activities (Indah Sari et al., 2022).

Material support has a concrete cultural value of the Sundanese people. Material presents provide visual and memorable elements to individuals. The ancestors heritage in Panjalu is in the form of relic objects which are enshrined as the legacy of King Panjalu Prabu Borosngora. At the core of the Nyangku ritual is the purification of relic objects which means that they have elements that touch the human soul. Therefore, material is a concrete element to declare expressions of gratitude, but also as a form of meaningful memories.

4.3. Action support

Nyangku ritual reflects the symbol of Sundanese culture in Panjalu. It has received recognition from UNESCO as one of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This acknowledgment further strengthens Nyangku ritual implementation as an effort to preserve culture carried out the Prabu Borosngora Foundation. Identity politics is shown by Panjalu people 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. During Nyangku implementation, native Panjalu people were called to be directly involved. The attitude of supporting the action towards Nyangku ritual was carried out by a member of Ciamis DPRD, Mr. RR (58) who stated that Nyangku was a strengthening of identity;

> "Panjalu has a uniqueness that is not found in other regions. Besides having the oldest history in Sunda land, Panjalu has many sacred things. Like there are relics of objects that are hundreds of years old in Bumi Alit museum, there is an inheritance of noble values from the ancestors which are written in papagon and there are historical landmarks which are believed to bring blessings in the middle of Situ Lengkong. Panjalu also had a kingdom that gave birth to other kingdoms, such as Galuh kingdom and Cirebon empire." (Interview July 28th, 2022).[4]

[3] Interview with Mr. Tatang (54) Regional Secretary of Ciamis Regency.
[4] Interview with Mr. SS, Head of Development Affairs of Panjalu village.

The data explains that Panjalu village has the oldest cultural heritage in Sundanese land which is indicated by the existence of relic objects and ancestral graves that are hundreds of years old. Panjalu people believe that Panjalu Kingdom has existed since the 6th century led by King Cakradewa. Cakradewa descendants spread across Java island and founded Galuh kingdom and Cirebon empire in the 16th century. Therefore, Panjalu kingdom was the origin of other kingdoms in Java and has cultural heritage in the form of artifacts and local wisdom values.

Panjalu's potential includes three basic elements that make it an exceptional place from others. This specialty has made Panjalu Village receive special attention from Ciamis Regional Government. This specialty is demonstrated by the government with facilities and infrastructure construction, public facilities and road improvements to Panjalu. 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 independent authority to determine the direction of Panjalu village development.

Nyangku ritual is a moment of prestige where there is a patron client relationship between the local government and the village government. The administration of Nyangku is the authority of Prabu Borosngora Foundation, however there are mutual relationships built by the village and regional governments. Nyangku ritual is used as a means of meeting to create a harmonious relationship. It is also a symbol of a joint project to increase Ciamis District Revenue Budget (APD) and 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 Ciamis Regency DPR present in Nyangku procession. The presence of local government officials was welcomed by giving welcoming speeches and eating together. Therefore, Nyangku ritual further strengthens the political relations of the three elements, namely Panjalu village government, Ciamis Regency, and Borosngora Foundation. These three institutions indicate a circle of interest that runs together.

Tabel 3. Action support

Figure explanation	Figure
Members of DPR West Java Province were attended to provide action support	
Regent of Ciamis Regency, Herdiat, was attended in 2021 Nyangku ritual in Panjalu	

Source: website.ciamis.com

The data explains that Nyangku ritual is attended by politicians and government officials. It gains great attention from politicians and officials as part of political investment and raises their reputation in society. Visitors who attend the ritual are not only from Panjalu village but from various regions in West Java. The presence of politicians representing the people and DPRD members in Nyangku ritual is part of a political investment to seek popularity as part of the region that has a source of votes in general elections. Therefore, Nyangku ritual is a strategic political space to negotiate related to tourism potential, investment, and political interests in general elections.

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 Panjalu people. This contribution received great support from the national government. On this basis, the Indonesian government proposed the legitimacy of Panjalu ritual as an Intangible Cultural Heritage to UNESCO. Finally, the submission came to success in 2017 Nyangku ritual was designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. Legality therefore Nyangku ritual is a form of political negotiation to gain public legitimacy. Public legitimacy drives the popularity and preservation of Nyangku ritual. Strengthening public legitimacy is in line with Tatang's statement (52) as follows;

> "The government always encourages Panjalu Village development and gives top priority as a village that has the right to restore history. This is a privilege given to Panjalu village since it has the oldest cultural traditions and national tourism potential. Plus UNESCO's recognition of Nyangku ritual as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is the responsibility of the entire Ciamis community to preserve Nyangku ritual. However, we must know that aspects of cultural heritage and natural beauty must be protected from interest groups." (Interview, September 23rd, 2022).[5]

The data explains that Ciamis Regency government invites all local communities to preserve Nyangku ritual. It is a cultural property of Panjalu people which has international recognition, namely UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage that must be preserved. The existence of public legitimacy shows that Nyangku ritual has great potential for the tourism sector in Ciamis regency. Therefore, public legitimacy increasingly encourages people to maintain Nyangku ritual so that it is still passed down from generation to generation. Public acknowledgment further confirms that Nyangku ritual is the pride of Panjalu people as a cultural heritage and national tourist destination

5. Discussion

Nyangku ritual tends to display sacredness in the process. The built sacredness is part of the core of Nyangku ritual program. The value of sacredness in Nyangku ritual is degraded due to a change in the paradigm of community leaders who tend to prioritize political interests rather than cultural and religious interests in this ritual. Political interests have damaged the sacred ritual of Nyangku. Globalization and modernization pressures are also one of the factors that accelerate the occurrence of desacralization in the social order of local communities (Muzakir, 2015; Saputra & Pratama, 2018). 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 the ritual event in which people no longer attend Nyangku events with the aim of participating in sacred rituals, but tend only to gain public sympathy from Panjalu people (Khair, 2020). This public sympathy is one of the goals of village political elites and regional representatives to increase the popularity and flexibility of their figures. The existence of political interests makes the ritual atmosphere of Nyangku prone to intervention from the local government. In other words,

[5] Interview with Tatang, Regional Secretary of Ciamis Regency.

the presence of political figures is able to grab the visitors attention. Therefore, Nyangku rituals support from party politicians and regional representatives confirms the existence of a political interest to increase popularity.

Globalization life 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). Nyangku ritual implementation presents a moment for friendship followed by political interests. Political interests are constructed in a moral support for Nyangku ritual implementation as a cultural heritage that must be preserved by Panjalu people. On the other hand, Nyangku ritual also features events that cannot be separated from the individual and social interests played by politicians to increase their popularity in public by posting photos or images of support for the event. Therefore, political interests which are implemented in the form of moral support are something that contradicts the religious and cultural rituals of Nyangku which are believed by traditional figuress to be full of sacredness. Preserving culture is not individual work, but collective work involving all elements of society from RT level to regional heads (S. Ahmad, 2021).

The contest of interests encourages politicians to find space in order to increase their popularity before the public through various activities (Upe et al., 2022). Political flexibility is a measure for politicians to advance as candidates for leaders or people's representatives in the regions. Therefore, political support from the public is needed to gain public attention as a reference for advancing to the regional elections. Nyangku ritual moment is a space for action to increase candidates popularity for village officials and people's representatives and gain public attention through moral and material support (Frenki, 2021).

Identity politics carried out by politicians basically works by reproducing narratives that lead to public legitimacy. Nyangku Panjalu ritual is one of the oldest cultural heritages in Sundanese land. Identity politics is normally used to legitimize ethnic groups for the benefit of groups characterized by values or religion contestation. Contesting the values that are built is part of strengthening identity (Lukluil Maknun, 2020; Safitri, 2017). Nyangku ritual is a form of contestation space among interest groups to gain sympathy or imagery. In addition, it is used as an event to accumulate support from the figures present at Nyangku event. They carry out political negotiations to capture political power in regional head or regional elections. Therefore, identity politics encourages politicians to tend to reproduce narratives to strengthen cultural identity (Khairani, 2020). Identity politics is played by interest groups and politicians 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). Cultural rituals have lost their essence to convey messages of morality to society. The cultural rituals function has begun to fade in community's life where the main role of cultural values is and provides a compass in their life. 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 matter in religious and cultural rituals is strengthening the values of local wisdom and sacredness that are believed by the person (Lessa, William A. and Vogt, Evon Z., 1989). Therefore, the euphoria expression and group interest reduces the ritual sacredness. This desacrality occurance is a precedent of cultural decay which was raised through political and economic interests (Hancock, 2020).

6. Conclusion

It is proven that political interests of village elite figures, people's representatives, regional officials who were shown in their activities of moral support, material support and action support for the succession of Nyangku ritual in Panjalu village had threatened its sacredness. The threat of sacredness as a result of political interests performed by the elite indicates values degradation which is an early precedent for the desacralization emergence which makes Panjalu people shift from sacred ritual activities to profane ones. Society tends to ignore Nyangku ritual sacredness and is complacent by the charms of politicians who display popularity for personal gain. Therefore, the political interest in Nyangku ritual reaffirms the existence of a threat to Nyangku ritual sacredness. Transformation in sacred activities to the profane is a result of globalization and modernization pressures in the culture of local communities.

Today, Nyangku ritual has experienced an adaptation of values as a consequence of political interests being carried out by village and regional political figures. The adaptation process requires introspection from all parties, namely Ciamis regional government, village government, traditional leaders and Panjalu community to maintain Nyangku ritual sacredness. The role of regional and sub-district governments is to make policies to care for Nyangku ritual as a sacred ritual and avoid profane matters. The village community and traditional figures must encourage political leaders and regional representatives not to have inproper intentions and trapped in matters that prioritize political interests and reduce imagery in Nyangku ritual. The community also acts as a filter to protect against politicization and deliberate elements by political figures to gain personal interests.

The political interest in Nyangku ritual is motivated by increasing political pressure to seek popularity. This ritual is a very strategic moment to increase popularity by participating in providing moral, material and gratification support to make it a success. The visitors presence in Nyangku ritual, which reaches thousands of people, is an attraction for politicians to invest in politics by attaching banners, giving success greetings and attending as performers of Nyangku ritual. Temporary material and moral support for Nyangku ritual but in fact has a big impact on Nyangku ritual sacredness which has been sidelined by personal or group interests. Therefore, politics of interest has threatened the sacredness value and Nyangku ritual continuity.

Author Contribution Statement

Contributions of the authors in this article: Try Riduwan Santoso contribute as concepts an and interpreters. Rizqi Rahayu contribute to collecting data. Adi Robith Setiana contribute as critically revising the article. All authors agree to take responsibility for all aspects of this work.

Disclosure of Interests

We have no conflict of interest to declare

Funding

No funding received

References

Abdullah, Irwan. (2006). *Konstruksi dan Reproduksi Kebudayaan*. Yogyakarta. Pustaka Pelajar. https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130282269095379584

Abdillah, M., Febriani, F., Asmita, S., & Lusiana. (2023). Transwomen and transmen from Islamic family law perspective. *IAS Journal of Localities, 1*(1), 67–80. https://doi.org/10.62033/iasjol.v1i1.13

Afandi, A. (2018). Kepercayaan Animisme-Dinamisme serta Adaptasi Kebudayaan Hindu-Budha Dengan Kebudayaan Asli Di Pulau Lombok-NTB. *Jurnal Historis: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian & Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah, 1*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.31764/historis.v1i1.202

Ahmad, M. (2019). Three sufi communities guarding the earth: A case study of mitigation and adaptation to climate change in Indonesia. *Al-Jami'ah, 57*(2), 359-396. https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2019.572.359-396

Ahmad, S. (2021). Totem, Ritual dan Kesadaran Kolektif: Kajian Teoritik Terhadap Pemikiran Keagamaan Emile Durkheim. *Al-Adyan: Journal of Religious Studies, 2*(2), 153-161. https://doi.org/10.15548/al-adyan.v2i2.3384

Asliah Zainal. (2014). Sakral dan Profan dalam Ritual Life Cycle: Memperbincangkan Fungsionalisme Emile Durkheim. *Al-IZZAH: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian, 9*(1), 61-71. https://ejournal.iainkendari.ac.id/index.php/al-izzah/article/view/178

Bukido, R., Makka, M. M., Rivai, D. M., & Hasan, F. (2019). Ilmu dan Kepentingan Politik Tinjauan Hukum Islam. *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam, 4*(1), 69-78. https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v4i1.780

Dostie-Goulet, E. (2009). Social networks and the development of political interest. *Journal of Youth Studies, 12*(4), 405-421. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260902866512

Fahmi, R. F. M., Gunardi, G., & Mahzuni, D. (2017). Fungsi Dan Mitos Upacara Adat Nyangku Di Desa Panjalu Kecamatan Panjalu Kabupaten Ciamis. *Panggung: Jurnal Seni Budaya, 27*(2), 201-216. https://doi.org/10.26742/panggung.v27i2.261

Fernando, H., Galuh Larasati, Y., & Cahyani, N. (2023). Being #wanitasalihah: Representations of salihah women on TikTok. *IAS Journal of Localities, 1*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.62033/iasjol.v1i1.8

Fernando, H., Galuh Larasati, Y., Abdullah, I., Jubba, H., Mugni, A., & Persadha P. D. (2023) The de-existence of Islamic political parties in general elections: A case study of Indonesia as a Muslim-majority country. *Cogent Social Sciences, 9*(1), https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2225838

Frenki. (2021). Analisis Politisasi Identitas dalam Kontestasi Politik pada Pemilihan Umum di Indonesia. *As-Siyasi: Journal of Constitutional Law, 1*(1), 29-49. http://dx.doi.org/10.24042/as-siyasi.v1i1.8540

Fridayanti, F. (2016). Religiusitas, Spiritualitas Dalam Kajian Psikologi dan Urgensi Perumusan Religiusitas Islam. *Psympathic : Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi, 2*(2), 199-208. https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v2i2.460

Geertz, C. (1988). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5781397/mod_resource/content/1/Geertz_ Clifford_The_Interpretation_of_Cultures_Selected_Essays%20%281%29.pdf

Geertz, C. (2020). *The interprétation of religion. On Symbolic Representation of Religion/Zur Symbolischen Repräsentation von Religion: Groninger Contributions to Theories of Symbols/Groninger Abhandlungen Zu Verschiedenen Symboltheorien*. De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783112322154

Hancock, C. (2021). Confucius, 'The Master' and Cultural Decay. In *Christianity and Confucianism: Culture, Faith and Politics* (pp. 17–46). London: T&T Clark.. https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567696403.ch-001

Hefni, W., & Ahmadi, R. (2019). Solidaritas Sosial di Era Post-Modern: Sakralitas Komunitas Salawatan Jaljalut Indonesia. *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan, 17*(1), 59-76. https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v17i1.648

Indah Sari, L. D., Markub, M., Marzuqi, I., & Rahmawati, Z. D. (2022). Nilai Budaya Sedekah Bumi Desa Turigede, Kepohbaru, Bojonegoro. *EDU-KATA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pembelajarannya, 8*(1), 29-41. https://doi.org/10.52166/kata.v8i1.2879

Jauhari, H. (2018). Makna dan Fungsi Upacara Adat Nyangku Bagi Masyarakat Panjalu. *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam, 15*(2), 197-210. https://doi.org/10.15575/al-tsaqafa.v15i2.3822

Karasuta, N. (2015). Perilaku Sakral Dan Profan Pada Upacara Adat Rebo Wekasan Di Desa Suci Kabupaten Gresik. *Jurnal Mahasiswa Sosiologi Universitas Brawijaya, 1*(1),1-29. http://jmsos.studentjournal.ub.ac.id/index.php/jmsos/article/view/56

Khair, N. (2020). Pengaruh Sikap Profan terhadap Paradigma Masyarakat Beragama Perspektif Emile Durkheim. *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama, 14*(2), 193-214. https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2020.142-14

Khairani, L. (2021). Dinamika Kontestatif Dalam Reproduksi Identitas Budaya Jawa Deli. *In Scenario (Seminar of Social Sciences Engineering and Humaniora)* (pp. 194-203). https://jurnal.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/scenario/issue/view/126

Küçükkömürler, S., & Özkan, T. (2022). Political interest across cultures: The role of uncertainty avoidance and trust. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 91*, 88-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2022.09.004

Laila, N. Q., & Qudsy, S. Z. (2021). Strategi Komodifikasi Budaya dalam Ritual Yaa Qowiyyu pada Masyarakat Jatinom, Klaten. *Satya Widya: Jurnal Studi Agama, 4*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.33363/swjsa.v4i1.676

Lu, X., Zhou, H., & Chen, S. (2019). Facilitate Knowledge Sharing by Leading Ethically: the Role of Organizational Concern and Impression Management Climate. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 34,* 539-553. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-9555-8

Lukluil Maknun, M. (2020). Kontestasi Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Kaki Pura Arga Sunya*. Harmoni, 19*(1), 28-48. https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v19i1.413

Matrokhim, M. (2020). Islamic Education Values in Ziarah Kubur Tradition of Javanese People. *Journal of Nahdlatul Ulama Studies, 1*(2), 131-161. https://doi.org/10.35672/jnus.v1i2.17

Maulidah, T. A. (2018). Reinterpretasi Relasi Tuhan dan Manusia Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. *Islamika Inside: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Humaniora, 4*(1), 74-95. https://doi.org/10.35719/islamikainside.v4i1.47

Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, dan Saldana,J. 2020. Qualitative Data Analysis, A Methods Sourcebook, Edition 3. USA: Sage Publications. Terjemahan Tjetjep Rohindi Rohidi, UI-Press. https://onesearch.id/Author/Home?author=Huberman%2C+A.+Michael

Muzakir. (2015). Dari Sakral Ke Profan: Globalisasi Dan Komodifikasi Dalam Dunia Spritual Dengan Ilustrasi Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah-Khalidiyah Babussalam (TNKB). *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam, 20*(1) 1-6. https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/akademika/article/download/430/392/

Paramitha, N. W., & Salura, P. (2020). Relasi antara sakralitas ritual peribadatan berjamaah dengan konfigurasi spasial arsitektur Masjid Sulthoni Plosokuning. *ARTEKS : Jurnal Teknik Arsitektur, 5*(2), 143-52. https://doi.org/10.30822/arteks.v5i2.103

Pratiwi, K. B. (2019). Dari Ritual Menuju Komersial: Pergeseran Tradisi Ruwahan di Kelurahan Sukorejo, Kecamatan Wonosari, Kabupaten Klaten. *Haluan Sastra Budaya, 2*(2), 204-219. https://doi.org/10.20961/hsb.v2i2.23306

Roshanbahar, N. (2016). Konstruksi Sosial Ziarah Kubur di Makam Gus Dur. *Komunitas, 5*(3), 1-15. https://journal.unair.ac.id/download-fullpapers-kmntsd6d92b82c4full.pdf

Rusydi, M. (2019). Modernitas dan Globalisasi: Tantangan Bagi Peradaban Islam. *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin dan Studi Agama,* 17(1), 91–108. https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v17i1.67

Safitri, D. (2017). Kontestasi Retorika Islam Nusantara. *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies, 11*, 235-56. https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v11i2.1948

Saputra, M. A., & Pratama, R. A. (2018). Dari Sakral Menuju Profan: Pasang-Surut Kesenian Angklung Buncis di Kabupaten Kuningan, Jawa Barat, Tahun 1980-2010. *Mimbar Pendidikan, 3*(1), 59-72. https://doi.org/10.17509/mimbardik.v3i1.10638

Sonya, E. R., Suwartapradja, O. S., & Soemarwoto, R. S. (2019). Pola Adaptasi Mayarakat Terdampak Pembangunan Waduk Jatigede setelah Penggenangan: Studi Kasus di Desa Pawenang Kecamatan Jatinunggal Kabupaten Sumedang. *PAPATUNG: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Publik, Pemerintahan Dan Politik, 2*(2), 63-76. https://doi.org/10.54783/japp.v2i2.6

Turner, V. (2017). The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure. In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315134666

Upe, A., Nur, M. J., & Suaib, E. (2022). Kontestasi Politik Kekerabatan dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa: Konteks Masyarakat Bugis. In *Indonesian Annual Conference Series*

(pp. 104-108). https://www.ojs.literacyinstitute.org/index.php/iacseries/article/view/606