

Ecotourism of Cireundeu and Basic Sundanese' Way of Life

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Abstract

Nowadays, some indigenous religion members in Indonesia are still fighting to grasp a fully civil rights recognition granted by the state. However, the way of such effort undertaken by people of Sunda Wiwitan of Cireundeu Cimahi is different. Rather than claiming the civil rights rigorously, they introduce as well as organize community ecotourism by preserving natural environment combined with Sundanese culture. This article aims at uncovering social changing around the shifting point of organizing ecotourism, objections from outsiders and adaptation with social environment whereby they negotiate with. Based on qualitative research which focuses on observation, in-depth interview, as well as literature study, this paper aims to portray the ecotourism initiative and its recent empowerment in this community which currently makes their customary village (kampung adat) well-known as one of the Sundanese cultural tourism destinations for not only Bandung greater area people, but also for the people of outside Bandung and abroad as well. The result shows that albeit some restrictions on expressing civil rights status still occur; having previous experience of losing informal job and objections from other groups alike, this community can maximize their teaching as well as their natural landscape potential in managing self-ecotourism based on their local cultural values.

Keywords: Sunda wiwitan of Cireundeu, ecotourism, Sundanese culture, gastro diplomacy

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Introduction

Generally, indigenous people in Indonesia are depicted mainly as being severely victimized and marginalized in terms of land possession as well as soil utilization restriction (Ningrum, 2019; Syafril, 2019). However, marginalizing indigenous people is not just merely retaining land for living, but also performing their faith on their ancestor's belief. Providing state's service for six world religion's followers only (Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) and inserting indigenous religions in the section of cultural affairs of the Ministry of Education and Culture have still become problematic. However, being excluded from the state's facilitated religions affects indigenous people to seek and to modify their public exposure like for example by attaching their entity with one of the six state serviced religions (Mutaqin, 2014; Syaputra & Nasution, 2020). Accordingly, most studies on indigenous religions in Indonesia put more emphasis on struggling of indigenous religion people to get state' interest as well as state acknowledgment (Schiller, 1996; Picard & Madinier, 2011; Fajriyah & Kustini, 2013; Maarif, 2015; Bharti, 2019; Putro & Kosasih, 2021), and only a few of them trying to explore the value and teaching belong to indigenous religion that they utilize them to adapt and to adopt with the current social development such for example implementing ecotourism enterprise based on their uniqueness as particular

community.

The recent situation that deals with indigenous people in terms of the issue of religion in Indonesia is much concerned with the release of the Constitutional Court decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 which was issued on October 18, 2017. In its decision letter, the Constitutional Court declared indigenous religions must be included into religion as long as it is stated in Article 61 paragraph (1) and Article 64 paragraph (1) in Law 24/2013 which is about Population Administration Law, and is contradict to the 1945 Basic Constitution as long as excluding indigenous religion. Indonesia's Constitutional Court clearly declared that indigenous religion is a common religion in Indonesia's legal system. In the verdict, the court also granted all requests for judicial review of the article that was submitted by a group of applicants from indigenous religions, namely *Parmalim, Ugamo Bangsa Batak, Marapu, and Sapta Dharma* (Farihah, 2020; Sihombing, 2020).

Historical account states that only a few years guided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, soon the indigenous belief was relocated to the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1978 (Rosyid, 2014). Indigenous belief or indigenous religion was no longer sat aside with other major religions. Unfortunately, internal problems among indigenous believers were occurred due to a huge variety of local religious groups. As a result, although the Constitutional

Court decision is significant to give them freedom of expression, the minority religious groups have different approach to grasp this new decision. It means that the Constitutional Court decision has still a less positive impact on indigenous religion followers.

The *Sunda Wiwitan* is a group on indigenous religion followers in West Java, Indonesia. Its esoteric meaning represents their core belief (Mutaqin, 2014). According to Djatikusumah, the central leader of *Sunda Wiwitan*, *Sunda* can be interpreted in three different basic conceptual categories as follows (Indrawardana, 2014). First, philosophically, Sundanese means *bodas* (white), clean, light, beautiful, good, beautiful, and so on. Second, Sundanese refers to the Sundanese ethnical community as just like many other tribes around the world. Third, geographically *Sunda* refers to the naming of a certain area based on a world map from the past towards the current territory of Indonesia (Nusantara). Besides, Indrawardana (2014) explains that the word '*wiwitan*' literally means "origin", while '*Sunda Wiwitan* (or *Agama Djawa Sunda*)' means original Sundanese or native Sundanese.

Ecotourism is a beneficial for a tropic county including Indonesia. Ecotourism has been embodied in the realm of the tourism industry in Indonesia for a long time ago. Bali with its people as well as its beautiful landscape for instance, is deemed as the best place for the ecotourism industry in Indonesia as well as in southeast Asia (Byczek, 2011). Besides, Byczek (2011) states that Bali has not only earned its fame through its superb setting as well as its landscape but also with its unique culture and people, well-known for their artistic talents and great virtuosity in flamboyant dances and ceremonies.

In general, ecotourism is obviously and closely linked with local people initiatives. Indigenous tourism is commonly viewed as a means of facilitating socio-economic benefits to Indigenous individuals, communities, and host regions. Subsequently, the development, implementation, and management of indigenous tourism should arguably be underpinned by the principles of sustainable development and natural resource management (Carr et al., 2016; Sisriany & Furuya, 2020). However, one may wonder how such development could generate the commodification of indigenous culture. It might not be so as long as there is an agreement among people in the community. Prioritizing their common interest is foremost rather than taking benefit for each member individually of the community.

Ecotourism in a precise conclusion is hardly defined. However, a definition comes from an influential figure in this realm is crucially helpful. Ecotourism or ecological tourism is an activity of visiting natural places that are relatively not yet contaminated by the negative effect of massive industrialism and globalization (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2008). Thus, its main aim is to enable tourists to learn, admire and enjoy the scenery, plants, and wildlife, as well as the forms of cultural manifestations that exist both in the past and the present. As ecotourism has grown in popularity, its definitions have been expanded to incorporate ideas such as ecotourism responsibility, environmentally and friendly destination management, and sustainable development of local human populations. Indeed, the last few decades have

witnessed a continuous expansion of ecotourism resulting from a global awareness of ecological practice and the role of indigenous communities (Coria & Calfucura, 2012).

Indigenous community is usually a cultural group that is commonly bounded by racial characteristics, language, beliefs, and kinship lines alike. In this regard, indigenous peoples may also belong to a particular ethnic or cultural group. Self-identity building of indigenous community can be very dynamic and complex. However, one major characteristic which distinguishes indigenous peoples from ethnic peoples is that the former usually have shared experiences of being colonized, often being removed forcibly from their previous lands and denied access to natural, historical and cultural resources. Being marginalized doesn't mean letting them losing their future. They can sustain their livelihoods via activities such as tourism (Carr et al., 2016).

In many areas, indigenous communities can show how they perform something that is linked with environmental preservation and sustainable development combined with indigenous culture to attract other people to come. Thus, ecotourism activities must be accessible and can give a positive impact on indigenous communities or ethnic communities, with these impacts primarily coming from the direct and indirect economic incentives or benefits from tourist spending (Charnley, 2005; He et al., 2008; Boley & Green, 2016).

While other studies on ecotourism focus on utilizing national park by local communities with no special attention toward religion like for example local community of Baluran National Park (Siswanto & Moeljadi, 2015), attitude of local community toward intention on ecotourism agenda like for example Paiwan ethnic group of Taiwan (Lai & Nepal, 2006), rejection of administrative of Kakum Conservation Area (KCA) in Ghana to acknowledge local people involvement and participation (Cobbinah et al., 2015), this paper examines the valuable link of local people of Cireundeu indigenous community in Cimahi, West Java, Indonesia with local government to organize ecotourism which is based mainly on ethnic (Sundanese) cultural values.

Many studies concern about the sustainable development program for Cireundeu community, even the effort on ecotourism (Nikmawati et al., 2019; Herawati et al., 2020; Rohmatulloh et al., 2020). However, study on exploring the natural and cultural benefit combined with religio-cultural aspect of *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireundeu is rarely taken. This paper aims at strengthening indigenous religio-cultural community-based ecotourism of Cireundeu people which is not merely cultivating ecotourism as merely a mean for economic mode of production and natural resources preservation. But, it also supported deeply by their belief on their own religio-cultural belief, namely *Sunda Wiwitan* religion. Based on that rationales, this paper tries at exploring the values, history as well as strategies of *Sunda Wiwitan* people of Cireundeu in implementing ecotourism which is based on tribal values despite their limitation to access of full civil rights from state.

Methods

The paper is stemmed from qualitative research approach

that combines some gathering data techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and study of documents. The main reason of using qualitative method is to explore the case studied deeply that is relevant to the subject of study. According to Aspers & Corte (2019), qualitative research is an iterative process to achieve understanding by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied in which it appropriates to the scientific community.

To observe the site vividly, the authors visited the site several times and arranged some interviews with the Cireunde'u *Sunda Wiwitan* community elite group. We interviewed the following informants from the community; 2 senior leaders, 2 junior leaders, 2 women leaders. Besides, the authors interviewed some other stakeholders such as Muslim leaders in its surrounding area, an academician from Bandung Art and Culture Institute and the Office of Ministry of Religious Affair of Cimahi. Field research was conducted in September 2018 and November 2020. During the field research, the authors walked around the community area and saw cassava plantation as well as herbal medicine plants at mountainous hill of its surrounding area where *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireunde'u settles. The authors also climbed up until the top the Mount of Salam. In September 2018, the authors joined a group of women of *Sunda Wiwitan* cooking any kind of cassava' snacks at their public kitchen.

Results and Discussion

A glance of *Sunda Wiwitan* people in Cireunde'u, Cimahi

To introduce a glance of *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireunde'u, classification relating with the general picture arranged as follows. Geographically, Cireunde'u Village is located in South Cimahi District, Cimahi City. The location is in the border area between Cimahi City and Batujajar District (West Bandung Regency). The Gajah Langu mountain (890 m) and the Mount of Jambul are adjacent to the Cireunde'u Village in the north side, Cimenteng Mountain borders the Cireunde'u Village in the south side, the east side is adjacent to the Puncak Salam Mountain, and Pasir Panji, Leuwigajah Landfill, and Mount of Kunci borders the Cireunde'u Village to the west. From the top of Puncak Salam Mountain, tourists can see the view of Bandung City area as well as Tangkuban Parahu Mountain from a distance view. The authors observed this beautiful panoramic when visiting this site on November 2020. Data from Cimahi's Office of Commerce and Industry in 2009 displays the land of Cireunde'u and its surroundings area typically for cassava cultivation purpose which is around 25 ha. Whereas, the area occupied for home settlement is around 5 ha (Tishaeni, 2010).

Administratively, *Kampung Adat* Cireunde'u (Cireunde'u customary village), where the *Sunda Wiwitan* followers live, is in the neighborhood organization (*Rukun Tetangga, RT*) 02, 03, and 05 areas of 5 RTs which are belong to upper neighborhood organization (*Rukun Warga*) 10 of Leuwigajah Village. The other two RTs are non-*adat* settlement' areas. The number of Cireunde'u *Sunda Wiwitan* indigenous communities themselves according to data of RW 10 in 2008 consists of 56 households. They are members of *Sunda Wiwitan*. Whereas adherents of other religions in Leuwigajah

can be mentioned as follows, Muslims are 35,198 people, Catholics are 47 people, Christians are 111 people, Hindus are 25 people, and Buddhists are 113 people (Tishaeni, 2010).

While conceptually, the elder and the patron of *Sunda Wiwitan* community in Cireunde'u, ES (82) stated that the basic existence of *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireunde'u is kept in *Pusat Sejarah Jawa Barat* (West Java History Study Center Office). In the New Order era, a regular meeting of indigenous followers who came from Central Java, East Java, and West Java alike was arranged at the office. The history of Java was often discussed there, including *Sunda* history. ES also remembered the opinion of his grandfather when The Dutch had detained him in 1923, saying that all human beings were originally from Java. ES himself is the grandson of Ali, one of Madrais students who had lived in Cireunde'u, Cimahi. ES' mother was a daughter of Ali (ES, personal communication, September 28, 2018). It is also believed that Madrais once stayed in Cireunde'u, Leuwigajah, Cimahi, West Java for a while. During his short staying there, Madrais taught Cireunde'u people about local philosophy and moral teachings that supports oneself in his/her life.

Based on that teaching, there are two taboos for the Cireunde'u indigenous people; 1) do not eat the 'sweat' of other people in this case it is not permitted to take; 2) don't force the belief on others. The ultimate values that must be carried out by *Sunda Wiwitan* indigenous peoples are; 1) *Saur kudu dibubut* (speak carefully and must be in the appropriate place); 2) *Basa kedah dihampelas* (speaking must be good and polite); 3) cooperation; 4) religious tolerance (Tramontane, 2017).

In respond to the Constitutional Court decision recently, some of its leaders know it but they are not rigorously demanding the fast changing. Basically, they want state to recognize them as just like many other major religions. However, struggling to get state recognition is too political and cannot be predicted the end of the result (Yana, personal communication, November 16, 2020). Despite keeping continuously to get state' recognition, they tend to show another alternative that resulted from their values and teachings, namely ecotourism.

In general, visiting this village more than three times enables the authors to know more about the benefit of natural, historical as well as cultural resources the *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireunde'u belong to. Natural resources buttresses ecotourism in this village such as mountainous land, massive cassava plantation, beautiful scene of panoramic and herbal medicine plants. Whereas cultural landscape for community-based ecotourism is plentiful ranging from Sundanese character preservation, Sundanese dance and music, Sundanese' value and teaching, eating cassava' rice as daily basic food and other similar things.

Managing ecotourism: From losing informal job to environmentalist

The historical setting mentioned above and teachings from the previous generation underlie the ability of the Cireunde'u indigenous village community (*Kampung Adat* Cireunde'u), either directly or indirectly, to preserve its natural environment and hence, to promote

ecotourism. However, a big human tragedy was tragically happened on 21 February 2005 when large garbage dump sliding caused 157 people dead in Cireundeu. Majority of them were *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireundeu community member of whom they worked as garbage pickers. The catastrophic tragedy has opened the new challenge to survive by initiating a new way of living and acknowledging the beneficial of natural as well as cultural landscape for tourism (Jabbaril, 2018; Mahmudin et al., 2021).

Certainly, many people from outside this village recognize the uniqueness of *Kampung Adat* Cireundeu. Foreign guests whose status are international tourists also come to see the attractiveness of the Sundanese guest house building's landscape packed along with Sundanese literature and verbal culture elements. In this case, one of the Sundanese cultural activists from the village received an award from the Ministry of National Education as the basic character activist in 2018 (Yana, personal communication, September 20, 2018).

By being visited the village, visitors can observe not only a unique landscape of *kampung adat* (customary village) of Sundanese people as well as learn Sundanese philosophy of life, but also try to eat delicious and crispy food made from cassava. Visitors can also learn Sundanese literature and Sundanese characters. The fame of this village has already been circulated by many media platforms. Tourism's event organizers have promoted the village too by offering a tour packages to stay several days in the village. Frequently, the local government of Cimahi promotes this *kampung* as a cultural asset and supervises ecotourism undergo in the village.

Another one thing that is also a distinctive feature of this traditional village is the farming and utilizing cassava which becomes an icon for the food security campaign. Regarding with the alternative people's primary food which is cassava is that it relates to *Sunda Wiwitan* beliefs. According to Yana' remark, cassava's cultivation and utilization is taught by his elder generations received from their ancestors that food connect with spiritual world and geographical condition. In other word, the geographical conditions of today's urban society are far away from rice fields as to site for a production base. Furthermore, he says,

Lesson learnt from the colonial time, if you don't want to be colonized, don't eat rice. Because the rice isn't here, the paddy field isn't here anymore. Today in Bandung, land functions have changed. Then, the important thing is that not eating is no problem as long as people keep strong enough. The proof is that we here haven't been eaten rice for the last 100 years. I have never eaten rice. Abah Emen is now 82 years old (now deceased), doesn't eat rice. Today the urban people forget the goddess of life. Lots of food, but it can contribute to disaster. Because you forget the will of the God with the fragrance of flowers that never made it up," (Yana, personal communication, September 20, 2018).

Based on this of ancestor's wisdom and belief, the community has a unique culinary food, which is so-called *rasi* (*beras singkong*, or cassava's rice). Cassava is being pounded and softened and then shaped like rice, which can last up to 6 months long. That sixth-month period is enough time to wait for the next harvested cassava period.

Knowledge of alternative basic food other than paddy rice allows the community to create further processed foods made of cassava like for example any kind of crispy foods providing good commodity of the *Sunda Wiwitan* group in this village. When visited the village in September 2018, the authors found that the *Sunda Wiwitan* women were active the most in the community' kitchen that was next to the village' hall. They cooked various crispy foods made of cassava. Being utilized some modern cooking devices, they worked together to make various kinds of processed foods stemmed from cassava such as egg roll, cassava chips, pastries, cheese-sticks, pastels, and chips.

Interestingly, all member of the cooking team was a thirteen *Sunda Wiwitan* women group. However, the reason why they only accommodate the co-member women and not inviting other women from different religions was a bit surprised. According to a women leader, the reason why they exclusively involved the women from internal group was that there would be no interruption matters during their working time like for example taking a break to do the communal praying. Hence, they could maximize their work to produce snacks as much as they can without having to worry about religious diversity' issues (personal communication with the women leader of this group, September 5, 2018). The opinion of the women leader reflects that she is unhappy working with the other women from different group.

To support marketing as well as the selling point of the processed foods and snacks, *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireundeu customary village community has built a cooperative that managed by themselves. Likewise, to increase tourist appeal, a performance hall was built in the middle area of the village, which is called *bale saresehan*, as well as traditional village museum. In certain times, the typical Sundanese cultural attractions of the village are also performed. In this regard, the art performance is quite attractive to many tourists, both domestic and foreign (Saraswati & Gulfa, 2017). Right now, improving ecotourism facilities continues to be set up including the performing stage, Sundanese music as well as housekeeping management to accommodate tourists who want to stay at the village.

Once entering the headquarter of this community, a basic principle of food resilience written in Sundanese characters can be seen at a carved text displayed on the wall of a bamboo shelter that stated in Sundanese language as follows: *Teu boga sawah, asal boga pare* (no problem of not having farming land, as long as having paddy). *Teu boga pare, asal boga beas* (no problem of not having paddy, as long as having rice). *Teu boga beas, asal bisa nyangu* (no problem of not having rice, as long as able to cook rice). *Teu nyangu, asal dhahar* (no problem of not cooking rice, as long as able to eat). *Teu dhahar, asal kuat* (no problem of not eat, as long as having strong enough).

To describe how the *Sunda Wiwitan* community contributes to the development of Cimahi municipality, especially in preserving their environment is also admitted by EH, the Rector of Institute of Seni dan Budaya Bandung. According to her, it is because the *Sunda Wiwitan* community maintains *adat* (customary) law and the environment that enable them to live better. Unlike many who don't concern about environmental problem by for example changing land of mountains into office buildings unwisely, the *Sunda*

Wiwitan group keep continuing to maintain their environment. Needless to say, it will help the further development of the community itself.

As an academician and also a Sundanese dancer, EH also knows that *Karinding* dance was almost extinct in West Java where Sundanese people live the most. But because it's now preserved by some communities just like what the Cireunde'u *Sunda Wiwitan* has been doing, hence the dance itself still exists. "We are from academicians have never been performing *karinding* dance for welcoming ceremony. But the communities like this (Cireunde'u *Sunda Wiwitan*) who have been done it and it seems that *karinding* dance' present is now getting stronger" (EH, personal communication, September 4, 2018).

Being enriched by enlivening Sundanese cultural heritage as well as ecological advantages, it is worth noting that ecotourism is being applied by this community. Indeed, the idea of opening this village to be a tourism destination is fortified. According to Yana, one of the tours guiding officers, the plan to build an ecotourism village was stronger than earlier after being directed by the Aliansi Nasional Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (National Alliance of Unity in Diversity or ANBTI), an interfaith NGO that bases in Jakarta in 2013. Once an ANBTI leader suggested Yana and his colleagues to study cultural and environmental-based tourism's management at the Center for Tourism Studies of Gadjah Mada University (*Pusat Pariwisata UGM*). The location of the training was in a tourism village in Bantul area of Yogyakarta (Yana, personal communication, October 1, 2018). After that, Yana and his friends began to arrange a package of ecotourism potentials for their village according to the concept of an ecotourism village. The promotion was shortly circulated, including by utilizing social media, and then many visitors began to come to Cireunde'u.

Latterly, tourism that focuses on ecological and cultural advantages for Cireunde'u *Sunda Wiwitan* is realized widely by an elite member of Cireunde'u customary village. Support for ecotourism development was also given by the Cimahi local government. The government of Cimahi municipality frequently introduces Cireunde'u customary village in their announcement about local tourism destination in their area. Then, it attracts some elite national political leaders to pay a visit to the village. During Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono precedency, Minister of Social Welfare, Aburizal Bakri have visited this village due to his attention on the food resilience of the community (Sudrajat, personal communication, September 28, 2018).

Very recently, the mayor of Cimahi introduced Cireunde'u customary village to the public through his presentation at the Ministry of State Apparatus Office for the potentially maximizing of any kind of foods and snacks of Cireunde'u to be the sign of gastro diplomacy of Cimahi. Gastro diplomacy, according to Suintikul (2019), is the strategic use of cuisine in influencing perceptions of a nation that can be positioned as public diplomacy. In this regard, the roles of food and tourism in nation branding are explored, leading to a detailed exposition on the multiple ways in which tourism is implicated in national gastro diplomacy campaigns, as well as in grassroots "citizen diplomacy" involving food. In the case of Cireunde'u's gastro diplomacy, it is obvious that

they have special foods and snacks that can be potentially marked as a tool of gastro diplomacy.

During the last three years, some elite figures who responsible for ecotourism management in this community have been built many tourism facilities such as a guest house, a common room for cooking cassava' foods and snacks, and hiking facilities thanks to some hills that surround them. They realize that tourism management is also quite important including how to manage housekeeping management of the tourist and providing space for cultural learning such as dancing, singing, and playing Sundanese music. They offered an opportunity for Cireunde'u people, not only for *Sunda Wiwitan* members but also for their Muslim neighbors to be able to make their house a guesthouse for visitors. For those who able to provide their house to be a guesthouse, guidance for hosting guests on their house is provided. One of its essential things to be shared with the guest and also to be served to them is cassava rice (*beras singkong*) (Yana, personal communication. November 16, 2020).

They have also really understood the essence of tourism principles that long-lasting announced by the Indonesian government namely *Sapta Pesona* of Indonesia's tourism motto, a kind of 7 principles of tourism management, which is one of its elements is security. Sudrajat, another young *Sunda Wiwitan* of Cireunde'u activist, states hereunder,

"Fortunately, we have the teachings of Rama (Father) Djatikusumah (*Sunda Wiwitan* leader that domiciles in Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java) that although not in the same acknowledgment but the same understanding. Then an ecotourism program was formed. Many Cireunde'u people joined. The local government is then interested in helping the local community to develop ecotourism further. We were asked to do many comparative studies involving Cireunde'u's Muslim group. From that event, we have been discussed many things" (Sudrajat, personal communication, September 28, 2018).

Another eco-tourism spot in this village is the availability of original spring water that is located in their conservation forest area. Hence, it attracts other religious communities to come to take the sacred water for arranging a religious ritual. In 2016, suddenly there was a proposal from some Balinese Hindus in Cimahi who had been taking the sacred water for their ritual, to build and to display the statue of Ganesha (elephant) at the front of the spring water area. The proposal was received by the elders of the village and then two statues were installed accordingly. At the same time, objection of statues installment was revealed by one of Muslim local leader. According to him, building statue would lead to disobey of Muslim' faith (personal interview with a local mosque leader, September 15, 2018).

However, the planning of statue building continued without having to pay attention of such objections. Not long after the installment, the two Ganesha statues were protested by some local Muslims. Conflict was being escalated. Then, a meeting was organized. During the meeting that was held in response to the rejection, representatives of the closest mosque' administrators complaining about the statue installation. According to them, it was a *shirk* in Islam. He protested by saying that it was not tolerance toward him and their fellow Muslim. To accommodate the protest and to cease the conflict, *Kampung Adat* Cireunde'u village

representatives asked for an apology. By coincidence, *Sunda Wiwitan* followers also do not idolize the statue, so they do not recognize the statues. But unfortunately, not long after the meeting, one of the statues was destroyed. In general, this statue rejection. the case is now finished unintentionally. Learning from the tension among community, ecotourism project is also offered to their Muslim neighbor to join home stay accommodation program as well as introduction program for visitors (Yana, personal communication, November 16, 2018).

Recent challenges for sustaining ecotourism have arisen from investors who are interested in having land in *Kampung Adat* Cireundeu conservation area for building house' property. The developer claimed that they have had a development permit from the mayor of Cimahi city and would build a housing complex in the area of around 6 ha. Unfortunately, the land is regarded as very remarkable by the indigenous community because the land is intended for planting cassava. But lately, some of the *kampung adat* community members objected, and finally, it is found legal problems on the side of the property developer. Coincidentally, when they begin to build a housing complex in that area some problems with the land secure stability have arisen because of its slopped land. Until today, house and property development have not yet been fully realized.

Very recently, infrastructures, as well as tourism facilities, are still being developed in this community. The progress of the completing facilities has been growing very fast. Before pandemic covid-19 that deters citizen to do outside home activities, local people of *Sunda Wiwitan* in Cireundeu were busy entertain and educating their guests about Sundanese culture, language, art, and song as well. Yana, as the tour guide leader of the community, says that once before covid-19' semi lockdown, many people come to his village and even a group of local tourists consisting of approximately 300 people staying at the village for 3 days long in the year of 2019. It was the busiest event that has ever happened in the *Kampung Adat* Cireundeu, giving the unique experience to serve hundreds of guests and guided them to know more about Sundanese cultural heritage.

Ecotourism of Cireundeu Village: A *Sunda Wiwitan* teaching based ecotourism Generating income by innovating local values for empowering the community is a very relevant issue currently for maximizing inclusive economy and erasing the gap of inequalities between the have and the have not in the community. Ecotourism innovation that has been arranged by Cireundeu customary village community can be seen as an example of how local values and teachings can be beneficial for the community to improve their quality of life. Interestingly, ecotourism that is running in the community is managed by their self-arrangement.

Sundanese culture, as just like many other world' cultures, is always far from static. Kurnia (2014) describes the significant role of a Sundanese figure Djatikusumah, who also a leader of *Sunda Wiwitan* of Kuningan, in creating *Seren Taun*, a celebration of gratitude upon the lavish harvest. Through the celebration of *Seren Taun*, Djatikusumah has spread the *Sunda Wiwitan* philosophy by

granting meanings to dances, Sundanese ballads, and other rites. He also known for creating batik motives, which were given meanings based on the *Sunda Wiwitan* philosophy. Hernawan et al. (2019) mentions Sundanese culture and its link with environmental preservation and arrangements. For instance, forests have been regarded as a place to be arranged in cultural manner. This phenomenon can still be found in Baduy traditional village in Banten, Kampung Naga in Tasikmalaya, and Kuta Village in Ciamis. Traditional village forest areas are divided into three different parts i.e. *leuweung titipan* (very restricted land due to spring water place), *leuweung tutupan* (purposed for some plants only, for example rattan, sap, honey, fruits, tubers, medicines, and similar things), and *leuweung garapan* (ordinary land for farming). Another portrait of Sundanese culture is Sundanese *pikukuh* (a set of rules on life guidance). It spreads out in Sundanese people life, both in the forms of spoken and written traditional expressions. Spoken Sundanese *pikukuh* are mostly found in society life, mainly in cultural society such as Baduy (Kanekes). *Pikukuh* of Baduy ancestors is inherited from one generation to another so that Baduy society are able to preserve their custom and tradition until today (Sudaryat, 2018).

Just like Sundanese cultures resilience mentioned, *Sunda Wiwitan* community in Cireundeu have done similar things. Losing job as informal waste pickers due to sanitary landfill closedown, they began to cultivate cultural as well as natural heritage for community ecotourism. Like many ecotourism provided by the local community, ecotourism in Cireundeu is an activity that put emphasize on visiting natural places in Cireundeu that are relatively not yet well known and not yet contaminated by the negative effect of massive industrialism and globalization (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2008; Pulungan, 2013; Stronza et al., 2019). Ecotourism in Cireundeu has enabled tourists to learn, admire, and enjoy the scenery, plants, and wildlife, as well as the forms of Sundanese cultural manifestations that exist both in the past and the present.

It can be said that it is not a matter of gimmick by observing thoroughly the competitive advantages of ecotourism sites in Cireundeu customary village. Otherwise, ecotourism proposed by local people can be a hazardous issue when it reaches the lack of good management as well as good facilities of ecotourism. As ecotourism has grown in popularity, it needs a kind of responsibility of local authorities as well as a warranty of its development sustainability for local populations. It is a matter of fact that ecotourism can be having a negative perception because of the lack of public knowledge among communities about ecotourism. It also can be exacerbated by the fact that the public has not played an active role in developing ecotourism that it should be based on the active participation of the local community (Pulungan, 2013).

Ostensibly, ecotourism in Cireundeu will be strongly sustained because it is based on local knowledge, that is *Sunda wiwitan* teachings. Being enriched by enlivening Sundanese cultural heritage such as Sundanese music, dance, characters, and foods as well as ecological advantages, it can be stated that ecotourism in Cireundeu is something that can be implemented accordingly. It is also supported by the

situation of the community that is surrounded by some hills. The local ecotourism management realizes that tourism management is also very important including how to manage housekeeping management of the tourist and providing space for tourists to generalize the cultural heritages such as dancing, singing, and playing Sundanese music. All these benefits offer an opportunity for Cireundeude people, not only for *Sunda Wiwitan* members but also for their Muslim neighbors to be able to involve in the ecotourism venture.

Undeniably, albeit there is a restriction from getting a full civil rights status from the state and having experience for being objected by other religious fellow, Cireundeude' *Sunda Wiwitan* people can maximize their potential in managing self-ecotourism based on their local cultural values. It is the excellence of the indigenous religion followers to wrapping up their identity that conforms the need of public interest related with cultural well as local values journey that underpinned by ethnic' heritage. Learning the cultural ethnic heritage by blending utilization of environmental benefit and cultural exposition will be determinant in attracting many visitors to come and ascertain the sustainability of community' resilience in the future.

Although only of small number, the people of *Kampung Adat* Cireundeude, Sub-district of Leuwigajah, Cimahi municipality can show a good example of ecotourism in Indonesia, outside Bali Island. What can be referred to as *kampung adat* here is that there is a group of almost 60 households who tries to maintain their local wisdom in their daily life like for example livelihood mechanism, managing ecotourism by their way, and daily religious expression as well. Hence, although they still struggle to get full recognition of religion by the state, they keep showing the initiative to promote their area as an area of ecotourism.

Undoubtedly, the indigenous group is not always meant the backwardness group of people. Some of them able to absorb the current and new social system in the modern era. For instance, Clinton and Westman (2013) notes how religious value like for example Pentecostalism has become part of indigenous culture in many communities of northern North America over the past few decades. In the spiritual context of native people's lived experience, what Pentecostalism offers is hope, redemption, and an experiential way out of and beyond the fear of damnation, curses, and bad medicine, goals which are in fact to some degree consistent with traditional animist belief and experience. Ironically, sometimes Pentecostal salvation also typically endorses some forms of pronounced distance from animism.

A rigorous example of a getting direct benefit in terms of economy resulted from ecotourism activities for Cireundeude customary village can be seen both by involving a significant number of employees to educate and to share their knowledge to the tourists and protecting their culture and environment. Likewise, *Sunda Wiwitan* followers in Cimahi believe that their communal group's future will be sustained as long as they practice a current social development, that is by continuing village development through like for example the ecotourism initiative.

Conclusion

Being lived in a suburb area of Cireundeude, Cimahi municipality of West Java Province, an enclave of *Sunda Wiwitan* members can be found which are approximately 60 households in total. Currently, they have been strengthening their village potential as the ecotourism destination spot in Cimahi municipality and Bandung greater area. Having a strong social boundary resulted from following a certain faith (*Sunda Wiwitan*) that not yet being fully facilitated by state and a communal past experience as a former group of informal workers enable them to adopt a new way of living and livelihood alike. Theoretically and practically, indigenous religio-cultural community-based ecotourism exists in Cireundeude currently, making them not merely cultivating ecotourism as a mean for economic mode of production, but also preserving natural resources as well as maintaining ancestral' noble values. Visiting the village enables visitors enjoying its unique landscape of Sundanese construction style, learn Sundanese philosophy of life and culture, and try delicious and crispy food made of cassava alike. Not surprisingly, local government pays a huge attention to his community and promotes this village as a cultural ecotourism asset which is combined with gastro diplomacy' point regarding the uniqueness of cassava rice, then. Finally, it can be concluded that by expressing their faith on indigenous teaching of *Sunda Wiwitan*, Cireundeude people can maximize their potential in managing ecotourism as well as preserving Cireundeude forestry environment.

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