

Revitalizing the Unjungan Tradition as a Public Sphere for Strengthening Citizen Engagement in Ranjeng Village, Indramayu Regency

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Abstract

Globalization has brought significant changes to social values and community life, raising concerns among community leaders in Ranjeng Village, Losarang District, Indramayu Regency, regarding the erosion of empathy, solidarity, courtesy, and moral responsibility among residents. In response to these challenges, efforts have been undertaken to revitalize local cultural values through the preservation of the Unjungan tradition. This study aims to examine the role of the Unjungan tradition as a public sphere in fostering citizen engagement within a rural community while preserving its cultural significance. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews with the village head, youth organization representatives, and community leaders, supported by observation and document analysis. The findings reveal that the Unjungan tradition functions as an effective public sphere by encouraging community participation, strengthening social cohesion, stimulating local economic activities, and providing a platform for public expression and collective aspirations. However, several challenges threaten its sustainability, including the influence of practical political interests associated with village head elections, the growing tendency toward hedonistic lifestyles among younger generations, and the misuse of ancestral burial sites by outsiders for ritual practices that conflict with local religious norms and customary regulations. The study concludes that revitalizing the Unjungan tradition contributes significantly to strengthening citizen engagement and social integration in rural communities. To maintain its relevance and social function as a source of community cohesion, revitalization efforts should be accompanied by the promotion of civic values and religious moderation.

Keywords: revitalization; Unjungan tradition; public sphere; citizen engagement; rural community.

Introduction

Globalization exerts a significant influence on shifting societal mindsets, thereby impacting attitudes and behaviors that reflect how communities accept local traditions, particularly within rural areas. Concurrently, modernization and globalization pose serious challenges to the sustainability of local traditions, as alterations in communication patterns, lifestyles, and social values have the potential to displace traditional practices from the community's social sphere (M. Arif Rahman et al., 2024).

In the contemporary modern era, many individuals have begun to abandon traditions and customary practices, perceiving them as incompatible with modern lifestyles, impractical, time-consuming, or ultimately inconsequential. A frequently observed phenomenon is the rise of individualism among rural communities heavily influenced by globalization; these populations tend to regard tradition as no longer essential, frequently leading to its abandonment. Furthermore, face-to-face interaction among residents has dwindled due to work-related preoccupations, making instances of casual

greetings or meaningful dialogues increasingly rare, often replaced merely by superficial, low-quality conversations. This decline in the culture of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is further evidenced by a widespread apathy among residents, characterized by a lack of empathy and sympathy toward fellow community members and their immediate environment. This shift in local cultural values is also marked by a waning interest among youths in less popular cultures and arts; younger generations increasingly prefer entertainment that lacks a profound contribution to the preservation of local cultural values (Szendro, 2024). Consequently, communities are losing their shared spaces for dialogue and solidarity building.

Indonesia possesses a rich cultural heritage that functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for social education. Local traditions serve a critical function in transmitting cultural heritage from ancestors to successive generations, carrying deep meaningful values that necessitate preservation. Moreover, local traditions strengthen community identity; when a society upholds its culture and traditions, the enactment of these practices reflects an identity that remains robustly preserved within the community.

In line with the historical spread of Islam in Indonesia, cultural practices developed within the fabric of community life, one of which includes the history of grave visitations (*ziarah makam*) (Geertz, 1998). This pilgrimage activity is carried out to demonstrate affection for the deceased and to perform *tawassul* (intercession) to the Prophet Muhammad, Islamic scholars (*alim ulama*), and deceased family members. This involves performing *dzikir* or *tahlilan* (congregational prayers for the dead), reciting holy verses of the Qur'an, and praying for blessings, as noted by Muthoharoh in Rohimi (2020).

Furthermore, local traditions serve as instruments for positive character building. In addition to serving as a forum for maintaining social ties (*silaturahmi*), local traditions provide a space for community deliberation (*musyawarah*). Here, residents from all corners of the village and even from outside the village can gather for a shared moment to

converse, discuss, and exchange ideas for the advancement of their village. Therefore, the concept of local wisdom becomes vital to safeguard and preserve.

The Unjungan tradition is a practice still maintained by the community of Ranjeng Village, Losarang District. Held annually around October, it has been passed down through generations as a form of respect toward the ancestors who contributed to the establishment of Ranjeng Village, while simultaneously serving as a gathering momentum for all villagers, as noted by Yunadin in Azizah (2020). This tradition encompasses various activities, such as communal prayers or performing *tawassul* to Allah SWT to implore forgiveness, safety, and prosperity for all Ranjeng Village residents. This is done by visiting a well known ancestral burial site (*makam kebuyutan*), specifically the tomb of Buyut Kunang, purely as a gesture of reverence and prayer for the ancestors of Ranjeng Village. Additionally, the Unjungan tradition acts as a networking arena for all Ranjeng villagers both those residing locally and those who have migrated to other regions. Transcending age boundaries, both the elderly and the youth gather and interact within this single traditional event. The tradition also yields positive communal impacts, prompting citizens to flock together in mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) to ensure the success of the event, with preparations beginning as early as five months prior to the execution.

The Unjungan tradition also provides a stage for residents to showcase various performing arts, including shadow puppetry (*wayang kulit*), traditional theater (*sandiwara*), the Serimpi dance, the mask dance (*tari topeng*), and *dangdut* or *organ tunggal* (electronic keyboard music). Moreover, the event is widely utilized by Ranjeng Village micro enterprises to sell various goods, thereby stimulating the local economy. The tradition further serves as a highly effective informal platform for deliberation, capturing aspirations from both villagers and community leaders to be directed to the Ranjeng Village government for local development. Therefore, the

Unjungan tradition extends far beyond a mere cultural ritual.

Prior literature has extensively discussed the historical aspects of traditions, cultural values, religious dimensions, and cultural preservation. Examples include studies by Rohimi (2020) titled "Sejarah Dan Prosesi Tradisi Ziarah Makam Keleang" (History and Procession of the Keleang Tomb Pilgrimage Tradition); Suwandi (2019) titled "Implementasi Nilai Gotong Royong Masyarakat Desa Kenanga Pada Tradisi Unjung-Unjungan" (Implementation of Mutual Cooperation Values of Kenanga Villagers in the Unjung-Unjungan Tradition); Himawan and Kurniawan (2024) titled "Eksistensi Tradisi Unjung-Unjungan (Studi Di Desa Rambatan Kulon Kecamatan Lohbener Kabupaten Indramayu)" (The Existence of the Unjung-Unjungan Tradition [A Study in Rambatan Kulon Village, Lohbener District, Indramayu Regency]); and Himawan and Nurjanah (2025) titled "Analisis Tradisi Mermule dan Unjungan Mbah Buyut Tambi Desa Tambi Kecamatan Sliyeg Kabupaten Indramayu" (Analysis of the Mermule and Unjungan Mbah Buyut Tambi Traditions in Tambi Village, Sliyeg District, Indramayu Regency). However, minimal research has examined the Unjungan tradition from the perspective of civic engagement in fostering citizen participation.

Over time, the Unjungan tradition has experienced a shift in meaning. According to community leaders and local accounts, this shift is visible in the dominance of certain factions regarding event coordination, which increasingly prioritizes entertainment and spectacles. For instance, residents of each neighborhood association (RT) are now expected to make matching uniforms and prepare *ogoh-ogoh* (large programmatic statues or effigies) for exhibitions, incurring significant financial costs. Consequently, an assumption has emerged that the Unjungan tradition has devolved into an annual routine driven more by consumerism than by the core activity of offering prayers or *tawassul* to the ancestors.

Furthermore, this tradition is frequently exploited by certain actors for practical political interests, which can ignite conflicts of interest. Additionally, external visitors

from outside Ranjeng Village are still found praying at the Kebuyutan Kunang tomb to ask for personal desires such as safety, prosperity, wealth, or specific political positions leading to practices prohibited by religious tenets and normative standards. If left unchecked, this practice will stray further from the true essence of the Unjungan tradition. Hence, a revitalization effort is imperative to keep the Unjungan tradition relevant amidst globalization. This study aims to determine how the Ngunjungan tradition in Losarang Village can function as a public sphere to enhance civic engagement and social solidarity within the Ranjeng Village community.

Literature Review

The study of the Unjungan tradition as a public space for strengthening civic engagement draws on several theoretical perspectives. Cultural revitalization is based on UNESCO (2003), within the framework of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage, cultural revitalization refers to a conscious and systematic effort to revive, strengthen, and preserve cultural practices or traditions so that they remain relevant within society. Its primary focus is to ensure that such traditions continue to be transmitted from one generation to the next. According to Bambang Sumardjoko (2013), revitalization essentially refers to an effort to improve or renew something in this context, culture by reviewing its shortcomings and adapting it to contemporary conditions in order to fulfill more beneficial needs.

Soerjono Soekanto defines tradition as an activity or behavior continuously and repeatedly practiced by a group of people. Meanwhile, according to Yunadin in Muasromatul Azizah (2020), *unjungan* or *haul* refers to a traditional cultural ceremony inherited from ancestors and held annually as an expression of gratitude to Allah SWT. The ceremony is generally held at sites considered sacred, particularly places associated with ancestors who contributed to the surrounding community. *Unjungan* or *munjungan* is an ancestral tradition that continues to be preserved today. It involves visiting the

graves of ancestors who are considered to have made significant contributions to a rural community. In Indramayu Regency, this tradition is still practiced by many village communities that maintain strong ties to ancestral figures associated with the origins of their villages. In Ranjeng Village, Losarang District, Indramayu Regency, the Unjungan tradition continues to be preserved and is generally conducted once a year. The tradition represents respect for ancestors who are regarded as respected figures because of their contributions to the integrity and existence of Ranjeng Village. According to community leaders, Buyut Kunang historically played an important role in protecting local residents from Dutch colonial forces in the Ranjeng Village area. In addition to its historical and cultural significance, the Unjungan tradition represents the respect and affection of village residents for their deceased ancestors.

Jurgen Habermas (1989) defines the public sphere as an ideal and democratic space in which individuals gather to critically discuss matters of public interest and form public opinion free from coercion by the state and corporations. Historically, this concept has contributed to the legitimacy of democratic governance by ensuring that state authorities remain accountable to informed public debate.

Civic engagement refers to Vigoda (2002) and Ehrlich (2000) is a two-way collaborative process in which local governments provide information to and involve residents, while residents actively participate, provide feedback, and influence community decision-making. This reciprocal dynamic fosters trust, strengthens social solidarity, and encourages the development of equitable public programs

According to Robert D. Putnam (2000), social capital refers to features of social life such as trust, norms, and networks that enable participants to act together more effectively in pursuit of shared objectives. From Putnam's perspective, networks, trust, and norms are essential components of social capital and constitute important resources for building cooperative relationships within society.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive research design. This approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding and provide a comprehensive description of the Unjungan tradition as a culture-based public space, forms of community engagement, social solidarity, as well as the challenges and revitalization strategies associated with the Unjungan tradition in Ranjeng Village. The study also sought to explore the experiences, perspectives, interactions, and social practices of community members in the implementation of the tradition.

The research was conducted in Ranjeng Village, Losarang District, Indramayu Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Data collection was carried out on May 29, July 10, and August 5, 2026. The research site was purposively selected because the Unjungan tradition continues to be held annually and involves various elements of the local community, including the village government, community leaders, youth, the Mbah Buyut Kunang Family Association, and Ranjeng Village residents.

Research informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in and knowledge of the Unjungan tradition. The informants consisted of the Head of Ranjeng Village, a representative from the Ranjeng Village Secretariat, two community leaders, two members of *Karang Taruna* (the village youth organization), consisting of its chairperson and one member, one representative of the Mbah Buyut Kunang Family Association, and three community members involved in the implementation of the tradition.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. The data were analyzed qualitatively using three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data credibility was established through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the village government, community leaders, youth representatives, the family

association, and community members. Meanwhile, technique triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence.

Results And Discussion

The Unjungan Tradition as a Public Sphere

The Unjungan tradition represents an expression of respect and affection and serves as a means of strengthening social relationships among community members. It provides an opportunity for residents to gather and maintain social ties, involving not only those who live within Ranjeng Village but also members of the community who reside outside the village. According to the Ranjeng Village Profile, the village had a population of 5,511 residents in 2022 (Ranjeng Village Government, 2022). The two most common occupations among the residents are traders or entrepreneurs, comprising 1,811 individuals, and farmers, comprising 1,226 individuals (Ranjeng Village Government, 2022).

The Unjungan tradition continues to be preserved because the people of Ranjeng Village believe that visiting and offering prayers at the grave of Buyut Kunang can protect the residents of Ranjeng Village, wherever they may live, from misfortune and bring blessings to their lives. This belief contributes to the continuity of the tradition across generations. In line with Sulaiman's view as cited in Muasromatul Azizah (2020), traditions continue to be regarded as important to study and transmit to subsequent generations because they are believed to contain values that are worthy of emulation and preservation.

This tradition evolves into a vibrant annual event, drawing the active participation of approximately 90% of the Ranjeng Village population. Its execution engages various institutional and communal stakeholders, including the Ranjeng Village Government, the youth organization (*Karang Taruna*), respected elders serving as the guardians of the ancestral site (*Tetua Kebuyutan Mbah Buyut Kunang*), the Mbah Buyut Kunang

family association, and the broader community across all demographics. Drawing on Habermas's (1989) conceptualization, the public sphere is a social realm that enables citizens to assemble freely and equally to engage in dialogue, express opinions, and achieve mutual understanding through effective communication aimed at the common good. Within this framework, the Unjungan tradition transcends its role as a mere ritual honoring Mbah Buyut Kunang. Instead, it functions as a culturally rooted, inclusive public sphere that bridges the village government, community elders, Karang Taruna youth, the ancestral family association, and ordinary citizens, irrespective of social status. Furthermore, the high turnout rate of 90% confers robust social legitimacy upon the decisions generated through this participatory communication dynamic.

Participants engage in dialogue and exchange views without barriers of social status or occupational background. Additionally, the village government utilizes the Unjungan tradition as a mechanism to capture public aspirations from both older and younger generations. This process is highly visible during the preparatory phases of establishing the event committee. The village government invites community leaders, Karang Taruna representatives, members of the Mbah Buyut Kunang association, and resident delegates to deliberate (*musyawarah*) on the committee formation. During these sessions, all stakeholders are granted maximum agency to provide input for the event's success. For instance, youth representatives often propose supplementary entertainment, such as traditional theater (*sandiwara*), dangdut or organ tunggal performances, and the creation of large-scale effigies (*ogoh-ogoh*). To further animate the festival, most residents design custom uniforms for their respective neighborhood associations (RT) to foster solidarity during the street carnival (*arak-arakan*). This collective effort receives institutional backing from the Ranjeng Village Government, which allocates public funds to ensure the successful execution of the tradition.

Consequently, beyond its traditional boundaries, the Unjungan event serves as a forum for silaturahmi leveraged by both the

village apparatus and residents as an inclusive public sphere that strengthens social integration. However, field observations reveal that despite extensive citizen participation, communication dynamics remain subtly dominated by the local social hierarchy. Therefore, future iterations should expand the scope of broad citizen involvement relative to the core organizing committee.

The Unjungan Tradition as a Means of Strengthening Civic Engagement

Civic engagement manifests early during the initial formation of the core committee, roughly one month prior to the event. During these initial meetings, the ideas and opinions raised by citizens extend beyond the immediate logistics of the Unjungan tradition; they frequently encompass broader proposals for village development. These include demands for village road infrastructure, public street lighting, facilities for places of worship such as water pumps for ablution and welfare proposals from residents demonstrating empathy toward economically vulnerable neighbors requiring communal and governmental intervention. Hence, the tradition serves as a highly effective, inclusive public sphere for channeling citizen aspirations toward local progress.

The Unjungan tradition is able to enhance community engagement because residents of Ranjeng Village collectively participate in supporting and ensuring the success of the event. This involvement includes the participation of the youth organization (*Karang Taruna*) and a special team representing the descendants' association of Mbah Buyut Kunang, who are involved in the core organizing committee. They serve in various positions, including chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and coordinators of different divisions, such as fundraising, logistics, food and refreshments, security, and documentation (Munjung Buyut Kunang Activity Report, 2025).

As argued by Ehrlich (2000), civic engagement is reflected in active participation through social concern, mutual assistance, cooperation, and responsibility in pursuing

common interests. In its implementation, the Unjungan tradition demonstrates a high level of *civic engagement*, as evidenced by community involvement from the initial planning stage through implementation and evaluation. During the initial planning stage, residents are not merely involved in providing suggestions and opinions concerning the implementation of the Unjungan tradition but are also given broader opportunities to express their aspirations regarding village development. These aspirations include the improvement of public facilities, such as village roads, water pumps for the *mushola* (small prayer facilities), street lighting, and assistance for economically disadvantaged residents.

This condition demonstrates that the Unjungan tradition serves as an effective medium for community participation in expressing and addressing public interests. Thus, the tradition extends beyond its cultural and religious dimensions by functioning as a participatory space through which residents can communicate their collective needs and contribute to village development.

During the execution phase, all components are synchronized. The village government serves as a facilitator by providing the village hall courtyard for the carnival and entertainment performances. Concurrently, the ancestral association manages the event logistics and partners with Karang Taruna youth to conduct door-to-door community fundraising across all 13 neighborhood units (*RT 1* to *RT 13*). The community resources contributed are not restricted to monetary donations; residents also supply goods such as sound systems, mineral water, and ceremonial rice cones (*nasi tumpengan*) for a communal feast held after the prayers at Mbah Buyut Kunang's tomb. This interconnectedness among the village government, youth, elders, the ancestral association, and the public reflects a well-developed framework of collective responsibility.

The cross sectoral involvement of community leaders, the village administration, the association, and the residents epitomizes gotong royong and effectively solidifies familial bonds within the community. Remarkably, Ranjeng villagers

working outside the region willingly commute back to their hometown to participate in honoring their ancestors. This phenomenon aligns with Putnam's (2000) assertion that civic participation in collective activities strengthens social capital by reinforcing trust, mutual cooperation, and solidarity. This is further substantiated by the behavior of migrant residents who, when unable to attend the core event due to external constraints, maintain their civic engagement by sending financial contributions or goods. Such behavior underscores a deeply rooted sense of community ownership among the residents.

The Unjungan Tradition as a Means of Strengthening Social Solidarity

The Unjungan tradition reflects the collective ethos of the Ranjeng Village community. The tradition conveys critical value education that warrants preservation, notably strengthening spiritual devotion, gotong royong, familial values, and interpersonal social solidarity. It bridges demographic gaps by connecting the elderly and the youth, and even prompts out-of-town migrant workers to return to the Buyut Kunang ancestral tomb solely to offer prayers.

Consequently, the tradition functions effectively to cultivate social solidarity among villagers. This is exemplified by institutionalized charity initiatives, such as providing aid to orphans and impoverished residents, which offers empirical proof of the community's high capacity for empathy and sympathy. Villagers perceive the tradition as a mechanism to unify individuals across diverse economic backgrounds, social statuses, ages, and occupations. Residents flock to the village hall and the ancestral tomb in unison, unified by the shared hope that honoring their predecessors will protect the village from misfortune and usher in community prosperity, particularly in the form of bountiful harvests. When analyzed through Putnam's (2000) social capital framework, social capital refers to features of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared

objectives. Social capital operates as a resource derived from community social relations, structurally characterized by **Trust**, evidenced by the community's willingness to voluntarily engage in gotong royong to ensure the event's success. **Shared Norms**, reflected in the collective consensus to preserve the tradition as an institutionalized form of ancestral respect. **Social Networks**, maintained through the inclusive engagement of all community strata, allowing social bonds to persist despite geographic separation and diverse occupational demands. These three elements incentivize citizens to cooperate voluntarily toward common goals, thereby significantly strengthening social cohesion.

Challenges to the Revitalization of the Tradition

The Influence of Globalization

Current globalization processes exert a significant impact on the existence of the Unjungan tradition. According to community elders, a stark contrast exists between historical and contemporary practices. Historically, the tradition was profoundly sacred and devoid of commercial luxury; it was celebrated simplistically, with residents assembling at the Buyut Kunang tomb to perform tawassul led by customary leaders and Islamic clerics (*kyai*) in a solemn, deeply meaningful atmosphere. In contrast, the modern era has shifted the focus toward expensive, capital-intensive entertainment spectacles (Fiqri et al., 2023), which places a financial burden on certain segments of the population. Consequently, a reflective reassessment is required to prevent the Unjungan tradition from becoming a mere cash-draining routine, restoring instead its deep meaningful value for the community.

Practical Political Interests

Because this traditional event successfully draws mass attention from both local and migrant residents, certain actors exploit the platform to garner public sympathy for political figures, particularly when the event coincides with village head

elections (*pilkades*). The introduction of practical politics behind the Unjungan festivities occasionally incites friction between rival political factions, which degrades the core meaning of the tradition.

Practices Prohibited by Religious Teachings and Local Norms

The Buyut Kunang ancestral tomb is frequently exploited by external actors predominantly from outside Ranjeng Village as a site to supplicate for personal desires from sources other than God Almighty. These visitors remain stationed within the tomb complex for days, praying for health, wealth, prosperity, or debt relief. Given that the majority of Ranjeng Village residents are Muslim, these practices cause public distress, as they are categorized as *syirik* within Islamic doctrine. If left unaddressed, such actions are feared to bring misfortune and diminish the spiritual blessings (*barakah*) of the village.

Misinterpretation of the Unjungan Tradition

A small segment of the Ranjeng Village youth has experienced a shift in how they interpret the tradition. The lack of sociological and philosophical outreach within the community has led to divergent interpretations. Some youths view the practice as shirk due to the perceived act of praying to ancestral graves. Others dismiss it as a mundane, secular annual routine. The influx of commercial entertainment, carnivals, and pop up markets has caused the sacred essence of the Unjungan tradition to be eclipsed by festive, superficial spectacles that outshine the core prayer rituals, ultimately driving a subset of the youth toward apathy.

Revitalization Strategies

Strengthening Cultural Values and Managing the Tradition Based on Local Culture

The Village Government, as the facilitator of the event, plays an important

role in organizing and managing the tradition while incorporating local cultural values. This can be achieved by involving traditional leaders, religious leaders, and education figures in the planning and implementation of the event. Accordingly, the core activities, including visiting the grave, *tawasul* (prayers offered for blessings), *tahlil* (collective recitation of Islamic prayers), communal prayers, and the presentation of the history of Mbah Buyut Kunang, should remain the main components of the event, while entertainment should serve only as a complementary element.

Furthermore, the entertainment presented should prioritize traditional performing arts that are characteristic of Ranjeng Village, such as *wayang orang* (traditional theatrical performance), *singa depok* (traditional lion dance performance), and *sintren* (traditional dance performance). Incorporating these forms of local cultural expression can simultaneously contribute to the preservation and transmission of local cultural heritage to younger generations (Ranjeng Village Government, 2022).

Establishing an Independent and Neutral Tradition

There is a critical need to form an independent regulatory body for the preservation of the Unjungan tradition. This council should comprise customary leaders, religious scholars, village government officials, academics, Karang Taruna representatives, the Mbah Buyut Kunang family association, and resident delegates. Political exploitation must be curbed by establishing a binding community consensus that strictly prohibits political campaigns, the display of party paraphernalia, or any promotional activities aimed at seeking political endorsement during the event.

Harmonizing Local Culture with Religious Values

The village government should implement formal regulations by installing informational signage and codes of conduct at the Mbah Buyut Kunang tomb complex,

explicitly banning practices that violate religious tenets and community norms. Furthermore, religious scholars should increase active guidance during the rituals to ensure alignment with Islamic law (sharia). Coordination among the village administration, tomb managers, and local law enforcement must be enhanced to monitor and curb actions that deviate from religious codes and standard decorum.

Strengthening Cultural Literacy and Value Education among Young People

Partnerships should be forged with local formal educational institutions (from early childhood education to elementary and junior high school levels) as well as non-formal education systems to reinforce literacy regarding the history of Mbah Buyut Kunang, the philosophy of the Unjungan tradition, and its moral lessons. In the educational sphere, curriculums should integrate local culture, utilizing the Unjungan tradition as an empirical case study for cultural preservation, gotong royong, and identity cohesion. Finally, the youth must be provided with constructive participatory channels to contribute innovative ideas for sustaining the tradition, positioning Ranjeng as a model village for community-based traditional event execution in Indramayu Regency.

Conclusion

The Unjungan tradition in Ranjeng Village functions as a culturally rooted public sphere capable of enhancing civic engagement through institutionalized processes of community deliberation (*musyawarah*), the articulation of public aspirations, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and robust collaboration among the village administration, community leaders, youth organizations, the ancestral family association, and the broader populace. Furthermore, this tradition structurally reinforces social solidarity and builds social capital by cultivating trust, shared normative standards, cohesive social networks, communal empathy, and deep-seated familial bonds among residents.

Nevertheless, the long-term sustainability of the Unjungan tradition faces pronounced challenges, including the encroaching forces of globalization, shifts in traditional meaning among the youth, the potential for political exploitation, and ritual practices that deviate from religious tenets and local customary laws. Consequently, a systematic revitalization approach is imperative. This strategy must be realized by strengthening local cultural and spiritual values, establishing independent and politically neutral event governance, harmonizing cultural expressions with religious values, and elevating cultural literacy among the younger generation. Through these concerted efforts, the Unjungan tradition will not merely survive as a passive cultural heritage but will remain actively relevant as an inclusive public sphere, a vital conduit for civic engagement, and a foundational anchor for social solidarity within the Ranjeng Village community.

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