



The Tradition of Ruwat Laut in the Perspective of Structuration as a Regenerative Solution to the Coastal Ecological Crisis in Lontar Village

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village as a form of regenerative governance in response to the ecological crisis in the northern coastal region of Banten, as well as to examine Giddens' structuration theory through the relationship between Ruwat Laut agents and social structures. Previous studies have not comprehensively reviewed regenerative governance and sociological perspectives. This study fills this gap by emphasizing that Ruwat Laut contains ecological, social, and economic governance formed through the relationship between agents and structures. The study uses a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm using triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using content analysis through the stages of reduction, presentation, verification, and conclusion drawing. The results show that regenerative governance in Ruwat Laut is reflected in the symbolic system (buffalo head, offerings, ornaments), control of resources by local communities, and dual legitimacy from tradition and religious values. In addition, in 2018, the catch of marine fisheries in Serang Regency reached 16.654 tons, an increase compared to 2017 with a catch of 2.323 tons. This condition indicates the recovery of fish stocks by maintaining a harmonious relationship between the sea and humans through Ruwat Laut as a model of regenerative governance. This condition indicates the recovery of fish stocks through maintaining a harmonious relationship between the sea and humans through Ruwat Laut. Ruwat Laut, as a model of regenerative governance that exists in the dialectic of agents and structures, can be replicated in coastal villages in Serang Regency through Regency or Village Regulations regarding coastal traditions and ecology. Further research is recommended to examine aspects of the local economy and cultural tourism, including the contribution of UMKM, culinary arts, and mangrove tourism in Lontar Village. This research is the result of field studies supported by content analysis on Ruwat Laut.

Introduction

Threats to marine and coastal ecosystems have occurred on the northern coast of Banten, where the water has turned reddish-brown due to oil slicks (Maulana et al., 2022). The northern coast of Banten has also experienced damage to its mangrove ecosystem, with around 23.76% severely damaged in Banten Bay. This has caused the intrusion of clean (fresh) water, resulting in difficulties for the community in obtaining clean (fresh) water. Groundwater in several villages on the north coast of Banten, such as Tonjong, Pamengkang, Banten, and Sawah Luhur, is classified as brackish to very brackish. The level of seawater intrusion ranges from moderate over an area of 6.05 km², moderately high over an area of 27.96 km², and high over an area of 3.05 km² (Santosa et al., 2021). Researchers also observed freshwater intrusion in the northern coast of Banten when they attempted to use water in one of the houses in Tanara District.

Another threat to the northern coast of Banten is the expansion of the Pantai Indah Kapuk (PIK) II National Strategic Program (PSN) megaproject in Tangerang and Serang districts. This PSN certainly requires a large amount of land (Rantau et al., 2024). This poses a threat to the northern coast of Banten, encompassing 82 villages in 13 subdistricts in Tangerang and Serang Regencies, including Lontar Village, Tirtayasa Subdistrict. Another problem is sand dredging. In 2016, dozens of fishermen drove away the large sand dredging ship “Queen of The Netherlands” in the northern waters of Banten. These sand dredging activities damaged the fishermen's nets. The climax came in the same year when hundreds of fishermen rejected sea sand mining in the waters of Lontar for the reclamation of Jakarta Bay. This is because since 2004, it has damaged the ecosystem and reduced fish catches. According to one informant, the dynamics described above have caused a decline in marine resources such as fish and shrimp. It is estimated that there was a significant decline in 2019, with a total catch of only 7.742 tons, compared to the 2018 catch of 28.273 tons.

The various dynamics occurring on the north coast of Banten above indicate the risk of marginalization of local communities and neglect of ecological sustainability. In this case, it is very important to pay attention to coastal areas, not only for profit, but also to accommodate environmental sustainability in the north coast of Banten. A regenerative management approach is needed, not just an exploitative and reactive one. A regenerative approach encourages a shift in thinking in designing development solutions, inviting us to view problems and solutions holistically, including by strengthening local communities (Huidobro, 2015). This

approach is highly relevant to the context of the northern coast of Banten, where the ecological crisis has a direct impact on community welfare.

Therefore, the challenges faced by the northern coastal region of Banten require a transformation in governance that is adaptive, inclusive, and long-term oriented. By adopting the principles of regenerative governance, development in coastal areas must be able to promote environmental restoration, strengthen the resilience of local communities, and ensure the sustainability of natural resources as a legacy for future generations. One of the efforts made by the coastal community is in Lontar Village, by carrying out the Ruwat Laut tradition. The word ruwat in ancient Javanese refers to the meaning of wrong or damaged, Rinuwat which means; damaged or released (Fauzan et al., 2021). The coastal community that still practices the Ruwat Laut tradition is the community of Lontar Village, Tirtayasa District, Serang Regency, Banten. In this village, the Ruwat Laut tradition was discontinued in 1996 due to disputes, then in 2018 this tradition was revived on the initiative of the youth of Lontar Village, until in 2019 it was suspended again due to the Covid-19 pandemic. After the COVID-19 pandemic ended, it was reported that fishermen's catches were not very significant. This was due to various dynamics of exploitation occurring on the northern coast of Banten.

In an effort to respond to the dynamics of problems occurring in the northern coastal region of Banten. Therefore, understanding the tradition of Ruwat Laut as part of regenerative governance is related to the social dynamics between communities and the structures that surround them. Therefore, Anthony Giddens' structuration approach is central to reviewing traditions in the feedback relationship between agents and fishing communities in Lontar Village and the social structures that have been initiated and subsequently reproduced. This theory not only views the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village as a purely symbolic practice, but more than that, it examines the reciprocal relationship between the agency of Lontar Village fishermen and the social structure through regenerative governance. This research is very important in examining the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village from a sociological perspective, namely structuration theory. In addition, it is also very important to connect religious-based traditions in responding to the dynamics of various environmental damages, so that they can be used as a reference in providing alternative environmental conservation. Therefore, Ruwat Laut is a good practice that must be preserved, especially as a form of legitimacy of the sea space on the north coast of Banten in responding to the various exploitations currently occurring on the north coast of Banten.

Several studies showing the correlation between tradition and conservation efforts have been conducted by various researchers. For example, the Ruwat Laut tradition in Banten has been studied by various researchers, especially on the west and north coasts of Banten, such as the Ruwat Laut study on the north coast of Banten, specifically in Lontar Village. There is only one study that discusses Ruwat

Laut in Lontar, namely by Iroh Muntafiroh. In her study, it is stated that there is no significant difference between the implementation of Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village and Ruwat Laut in other areas. The Fish Landing Site (TPI) in Lontar Village is the main center for the Ruwat Laut procession carried out by fishermen. The TPI is cleaned beforehand and prayers are recited together before the main Ruwat Laut ceremony. The main part of the Ruwat Laut procession is the offering of a buffalo head in the middle of the sea. The study also mentions that Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village is an expression of fishermen's gratitude for the abundant sea harvest and a form of thanksgiving for the blessings that have been given to the community. In addition, Ruwat Laut is an effort to maintain the balance of nature, as well as an effort to maintain a relationship with the creator and a relationship between fellow human beings (Muntafiroh, 2021).

Then, research by Muhamad Rafdhan Hakiki, which examined the Ruwat Laut tradition on the west coast of Banten, specifically in Anyer, stated that Ruwat Laut was born and developed through a long journey and has been passed down from generation to generation. In his research, Ruwat Laut is described as an effort by fishermen to seek blessings and protection for their marine harvest, which is the main source of livelihood and sustenance for fishermen in Anyer. Thus, its function is not limited to the vertical relationship between humans and nature. Over time, the Ruwat Laut tradition has been influenced by Islamic values, giving it religious legitimacy. Adjustments have been made so that it does not conflict with the values of monotheism and does not border on polytheism. However, there is still debate among various figures, such as clerics and fishermen. For example, clerics argue that no ruwatan is permitted in Islamic teachings, apart from thanksgiving. However, for fishermen, Ruwat Laut is an expression of gratitude for the sea's bounty and an effort to pray for safety at sea (Haqiqi, 2025).

The above research on the Ruwat Laut tradition on the west and north coasts of Banten generally still focuses on religious studies, especially regarding expressions of gratitude and efforts to pray for safety to the creator. However, the above research has not yet comprehensively reviewed the tradition from the perspectives of regenerative governance and sociology. This study fills the gap by constructing an understanding that Ruwat Laut is not merely a ritual expression, influenced solely by spirituality and affecting nature. Rather, there is regenerative governance that concerns ecology, society, and the economy, as well as structures that have been produced by agents, and these agents are influenced by existing structures. This research has a new element in the form of a combination of structuration analysis and regenerative governance approaches in the Ruwat Laut tradition, which has not been analyzed by other studies. Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village is the first structuration-

based regenerative model in Banten. The researchers also hope that this study will contribute to the discussion of regenerative governance and structuration theory in tradition, especially in relation to Ruwat Laut. It is hoped that this study will provide answers in the current era of coastal ecological crises, which are highly exploitative.

Based on the above background, this study aims to:

1. Analyze the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village, Tirtayasa District, Serang Regency, Banten as a form of regenerative governance implementation in response to the ecological crisis in the northern coastal region of Banten
2. Analyze the structuration theory in Ruwat Laut, especially the relationship between Ruwat Laut agents such as fishermen, local communities, Bantenologists, and social structure analysis in the form of rules, resources, and the centrality of space and time in the Ruwat Laut tradition.

Methods

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research approach. The focus of this approach is a deep understanding of the meaning, perspectives, and experiences of individuals or groups in specific situations. This approach can also explore social phenomena, which are very difficult to quantify. This study uses a constructivist paradigm to construct insights based on findings obtained from the field or the experiences of the research subjects. Using this paradigm makes it possible to interpret the subjective experiences of informants, thereby explaining their actions in a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This research was conducted in one of the villages in Tirtayasa District, Serang Regency, namely Lontar Village. The research location was deliberately chosen because there has been minimal research on Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village compared to other areas in Banten Province, such as Labuan and Carita, Binuangen, Karangantu, Pontang, and Kampung Kali Adem. This location also has its own characteristics compared to other areas, especially in terms of existing agents and structures. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation method is the basis for data collection in all sciences, because it allows researchers to find facts in the field in a truly objective manner (Moleong, Lexy, 2009). The observation technique uses participant observation, where the researcher informs the research subjects of the purpose and objectives of the observation (Alimandan, 2016). Observations and interviews to understand the demographic conditions of Lontar Village have been conducted since June 2022.

In addition to observation, the researcher used in-depth interview techniques to explore data through conversations conducted with specific objectives between two or more parties (Denzin & Lincoln, S, 1994). Preliminary interviews were conducted in June 2022, targeting the Head of Lontar Village and his staff, community leaders, and fishermen in Lontar Village. The aim was to understand the

existing conditions of the research location. After observing the objective conditions in the field, the researcher wrote down various field notes. Therefore, in October 2024, the researcher wanted to explore one of the traditions in Lontar Village, namely the Ruwat Laut tradition, from various perspectives. Thus, the researcher explored it further and gathered information by collecting data from various sources.

Data collection used source triangulation and collection methods to obtain depth regarding reality. Documentation from various sources such as books, theses, journals, YouTube posts, and Instagram posts from October 2024 to July 2025. In data analysis, the researcher also considered ethics, especially the confidentiality and privacy of research subjects, as well as the validity and reliability of the analysis through verification and triangulation. Re-verification and triangulation were conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings through interviews, observations, and YouTube videos.

Respondents for the interviews were selected using purposive sampling. The researcher deliberately selected informants based on certain considerations or criteria relevant to the research objectives. The researcher had full control in determining who would be sampled, with the belief that the selected informants could provide the most relevant and in-depth information (Stockemer, 2019). The informants were five fishermen and their families, one Bantenologist, and the head of Lontar Village.

Result

1.1. Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village

Ruwat Laut is a religious tradition closely related to marine resources based on local wisdom. This tradition has developed in Lontar Village, Tirtayasa Subdistrict, Serang Regency, Banten. The Tirtayasa District is mostly agricultural land and several villages located on the coast, one of which is Lontar Village. This village was originally divided into several hamlets, including Lontar, Pecinan (Chinese area), Pekandangan (pigsty), Kebalikan, and Berangbang. In 2023, the population of Lontar Village reached 6,749, consisting of 3,481 men and 3,268 women, making it the village with the largest population in Tirtayasa Subdistrict. The village is divided into 5 neighborhood associations (RW) and 22 community associations (RT) (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Serang, 2024).

Lontar Village is located in a coastal area, and the majority of its residents are farmers and fishermen. The characteristics of rural coastal communities, as referred to by Poulter, et al., (2009), are communities that depend on natural resources such as agriculture, fishing, and tourism. In addition, rural coastal communities are often

in an unfavorable position because they generally only depend on fishing and simple farming activities (Matthew & Seekamp, 2018). Simple fishing practices by fishermen are still commonly found on the north, west, and south coasts of Banten. For example, on the west coast of Banten, such as in Pasauran, Sumur, Labuan, and Carita; on the south coast of Banten, such as in Binuangen; and on the north coast of Banten, such as in Karangantu, Pontang, Kampung Kali Adem, and Lontar. Fishermen on the western, southern, and northern coasts of Banten still uphold traditions related to the marine ecosystem, commonly referred to as Ruwat Laut (Purwanti et al., 2020).

This tradition is carried out to seek protection and avoid danger while at sea. Generally, it is held once a year on Tuesday or Friday Kliwon nights. Fishermen on the coast of Banten generally still believe in supernatural beings that guard the sea, which have supernatural powers to provide protection and can bring disaster to humans if they do not maintain a good relationship with the supernatural, humans, and nature (Purwanti et al., 2020). The Ruwat Laut tradition involves several series of events. First, the Ruwat Laut preparation site is cleaned and a communal prayer is held. Second, a buffalo head is thrown into the middle of the sea, followed by residents who work as fishermen, and each fisherman who owns a boat must decorate it as beautifully as possible. The boats are decorated with various foods, fruits, and other agricultural products.

After the residents gather with various ornaments and trinkets, the Ruwat Laut is prayed over by religious leaders. Next is the procession. After the trinkets are placed in a special boat to carry the offerings, the boat is then sent out to the open sea, accompanied by dozens of other decorated boats. When it reached the middle of the sea, the boat containing the buffalo head was recited again, before being floated, followed by the recitation of the Prophet's prayers together by all the fishermen on the boat. After the buffalo head is floated, some of the community sprinkles sea water on their respective boats, after which the fishermen flock to dive in to retrieve the food that has been released in the middle of the sea, then all the boats return to the shore. The stages of the procession and a description of the activities are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Stages of the process and description of activities in the Ruwat Laut of Lontar Village

Stages of the Procession	Activity Description
Preparation and cleaning of the location	Fishermen and residents clean the Lontar Fish Auction Site (TPI) and the beach area as the main location for the Ruwat Laut ceremony.
Joint prayer	Prayers are led by religious leaders as a form of supplication for safety during the Ruwat Laut ceremony.
Decoration of the boat	Each boat is decorated and filled with various ornaments such as flags, food, drinks, fruits, and agricultural products.
Procession to the sea	The boat carrying the buffalo head offering is accompanied by other boats heading out to the open sea.
Offering of sacrifices	The buffalo head is thrown into the middle of the sea accompanied by the recitation of prayers.
Sprinkling of sea water and gathering of crops	Fishermen sprinkle seawater on their respective boats, and the fishermen dive into the sea to retrieve the food released in the middle of the sea.

1.2 Regenerative Governance of the Lontar Village Ruwat Laut Ritual

Ruwat Laut Ritual tradition in Lontar Village is inseparable from various symbols contained in the ornaments and trinkets used in the ritual, such as buffalo heads, decorated boats, offerings, and other ornaments. In the Ruwat Laut tradition, there is an allocation of allocative resources (boats, ornaments, and sea offerings) and authoritative resources (Lontar Village fishermen and the Bantenologi Team). In addition, this tradition is currently carried out by Muslim fishermen, so that it is justified based on two main sources, namely religion and tradition. This can be seen from the process of floating the buffalo head accompanied by the recitation of prayers. Before the Ruwat Laut ceremony, there is also an istighosah (prayer) and donations to orphans. The Ruwat Laut tradition also has rules, especially the prohibition of going to sea on the day of the ceremony, the stipulation of using a buffalo head as the object to be floated, and the order of the procession. The social practice of Ruwat Laut by the fishermen of Lontar Village shapes and forms the construction of space and time. The sea becomes a sacred arena that must be treated

as an entity that is inherent and alive in the lives of the fishermen of Lontar Village, so that the sea is not only a geographical space, but also a symbolic and spiritual arena. This arena is demonstrated by the assumption that the sea also has rights to the fruits of the earth. In terms of time, the Ruwat Laut tradition is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation, which is directly an effort to harmonize the marine ecosystem with humans.

Regenerative governance in the Ruwat Laut tradition is clearly seen as an effort to harmonize the marine ecosystem of northern Banten as part of the life of the Lontar Village community. Ruwat Laut, as local wisdom, is traditionally applied to create harmony between the real world and the spiritual world. This practice is designed to overcome various local ecological limitations in maintaining the sustainability of the surrounding environment (Walter et al., 2022). Gerhardinger et al. (2009) argue that local knowledge is important in managing and maintaining marine resources, as information and experience in marine conservation can be disseminated through cultural expressions and local traditions (Boubekri et al., 2022).

1.3 Structuration Analysis of the Ruwat Laut Tradition in Lontar Village

In the implementation of Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village, there are various elements that play an important role in ecological preservation, sustainable economy, and social aspects. This can be analyzed through structuration theory. Anthony Giddens, through structuration theory, reviews that structures in social practices include three dimensions, namely signification (marking), domination (control), and legitimation (justification). These existing structures are dynamically produced and reproduced by social practices, so they do not exist independently. Rather, they are continuously produced and reproduced by social practices, which he refers to as the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984b). Structuration theory is also considered capable of describing, analyzing, and interpreting abstract events (Rossi, 2025).

Structuration theory is very appropriate for unraveling the meeting point between interpretive analysis, description, and interpretation of the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village through regenerative governance. Through the analysis of various symbols and meanings contained in the ornaments and trinkets of Ruwat Laut, followed by the identification of allocative and authoritative resources that strengthen the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village, and then the identification of elements that provide justification (legitimacy), especially based on religion and tradition. In this context, Ruwat Laut through structuration analysis provides an understanding that there is reproduction produced by structures and agents in regenerative governance, with an emphasis on the sustainability of tradition, the involvement of fishermen, and marine ecology. This study provides space for exploring structuration through significance, dominance, and legitimacy that have not been studied by previous researchers related to Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village.



Fig. 1 A procession of boats as part of the Ruwat Laut ceremony

1. Structure of Significance

For Giddens, the structure of significance is one of three major structural clusters (Priyono, 2016). This structure concerns symbolic schemata, meaning, naming, and discourse. The structure of signification in the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village is evident in various symbols found in ornaments and trinkets, such as buffalo heads, decorated boats, offerings, and other ornaments. These ornaments have deep meanings; they are not merely decorations or accessories in the Ruwat Laut tradition, but also contain collective meanings. Various symbols have specific meanings and messages that are in line with the context within the community. The sign system in the form of symbols, discourse, and language institutions is important in expressing tradition, thus creating a structure of significance. Agents demonstrate the reproduction of meaning through inherited behavior, at a level that has been labeled with meaning (Thoyibbah, 2016).

2. Structure of Domination

The structure of control or domination includes schemes of control over material/things (allocative) and people (authoritative) (Priyono, 2016). Domination is related to the capacity to accommodate and mobilize resources, such as material (allocative) and people (authoritative). These allocative resources take the form of transformative capacities that lead to the mobilization of assets, objects, or material phenomena. Meanwhile, authoritative resources refer to types of transformative capacities that generate commands from agents. The term control or domination concerns the ability in social relations in the realm of agents through social

interaction. Power correlates with transformative capacity, so that if there is a structure, there must be agents. Likewise, a structure of domination must involve power relations with agents (Thoyibbah, 2016).

The fishermen of Lontar Village are not only the subjects who carry out the Ruwat Laut tradition, but they are also local authorities who determine the time of the ritual, the rules prohibiting fishing, and the scheme or procedure for carrying out Ruwat Laut. Thus, they have power or control over socio-cultural-based authoritative resources, as long as it does not conflict with the structure. The symbolic capital of the fishermen of Lontar Village, through their knowledge of the sea cycle and the Ruwat Laut procession, which has been passed down, legitimizes their authority as a fishing community that still upholds tradition. The fishermen of Lontar Village influence the structure of domination in the local sphere, holding authority by producing and reproducing shared values. Thus, Giddens' interpretation of the structure of domination is not only oppressive, but is also used by local agents as an affirmation of their position of power, which is continuously produced through space and time (Giddens, 1984a).

The Bantenologi Team acts as an institutional actor, with characteristics based on academia and the cultural narratives it carries. The Bantenologi Team has discursive dominance through academic and cultural narratives on various platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. This allows it to influence other people's perceptions of Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village. The Bantenologi Team's power in the academic and cultural narrative spheres gives it the capacity to document, create narratives and captions, and represent traditions and their connection to nature in the form of posts on Instagram and YouTube. Therefore, Giddens' interpretation of the Bantenologi Team as an external agent relies on discursive resource structures to influence local agents (Lontar Village fishermen), so that its power is delegative and arises from external legitimacy structures.

Informants from Bantenologi explained that: "We, Bantenologi, as an organization for the study of Banten culture and history, need to contribute to preserving this Banten cultural heritage. The form of contribution we can make is through cultural research and publishing it openly. Promoting culture through our social media in the form of educational columns and documentary videos" (Informant B1, interview on July 2, 2025).

Furthermore, allocative resources were provided by the fishermen of Lontar Village to be mobilized in the implementation of Ruwat Laut, namely boats, agricultural products, and ornaments inside them. In 2018, the Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village was attended by around 90 fishing boats decorated with ornaments and trinkets. Fishermen in Lontar Village who own boats must decorate them as beautifully as possible, for example with various foods, drinks, flags, fruits, and other agricultural products. All these trinkets are hung as supplies for the community participating in Ruwat Laut. The mobilization of resources by agents is supported by

anthropological research by Geng (2017) on religious rituals in traditional societies, which shows a dependence on natural resources and elements derived from nature, because various concepts, especially in terms of the carrying capacity for their implementation, are closely related to natural resources (Sidik, 2023).

3. Legitimacy Structure

The legitimacy structure concerns normative regulatory schemes, which are revealed in the legal system (Priyono, 2016). Legitimacy includes schemes of control over people (politics) and goods/things (economics). In addition, legitimacy also concerns normative regulatory schemes, which are enshrined in the legal system. Legitimacy lies in the normative influence of religion, which is influenced by the religious leaders involved (Khasri, 2021). The justification for Ruwat Laut is based on two main sources, namely religion and tradition. Religious practices characteristic of Islam can be seen in the process of throwing the buffalo head into the sea accompanied by prayers. Before the Ruwat Laut ceremony, there is also an *istighosah* (prayer for forgiveness) and donations to orphans. These good practices strongly reflect spiritual and social values. The strong influence of Islam on the north coast of Banten since the time of the Banten Sultanate has made this region very central in influencing various activities in the community, including Ruwat Laut.

The structure basically comes from the dominance of existing rules and resources, then shaped and produced by agents. Ruwat Laut is legitimized by religious leaders, so that its justification for the practice of Ruwat Laut includes religious elements, especially Islam. This also shapes the direction of traditions that are in line with Islamic values, while on the other hand there are efforts to maintain existing expressions. This condition is also supported by Khasri's (2021) perspective, which states that legitimacy in social practices in society is influenced by the normative power of religious leaders, as the main figures in social actions in society. Of course, legitimacy does not only come from formal law, but also from religious values and traditions that have been collectively agreed upon by various agents (Khasri, 2021). In this context, religious leaders have a significant impact on the Ruwat Laut tradition to align it with Islamic values. Traditional values are also maintained in Ruwat Laut, especially in the ritual of throwing buffalo heads into the sea.

Table 3. Structure and elements of the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village

Structure	Elements of the Lontar Village Ruwat Laut Tradition
Signification (Marking)	Buffalo head, decorated boat, offerings, and other ornaments (flags and trinkets)
Domination (Control)	Local authority: Lontar Village fishermen
Legitimacy (Justification)	Institutional actor: Bantenologi

1.4. The Dynamics of Rules, Resources, and Authority in Regenerative Governance of Ruwat Laut

Giddens' theoretical approach provides a perspective that structure must be conceptualized as rules and resources, so that the application of rules in constructing structures can be considered to provide different access to social, economic, cultural, and political resources (Elliott et al., 2009). Giddens also posits that structures are rules and resources that are recursively present in the reproduction of social systems. Structures exist as traces of memory, human capacities for knowledge that are then manifested in actions. In Giddens' theory, rules encompass both written and unwritten norms (A. Kinseng, 2017). Some unwritten rules, for example, in the Ruwat Laut ceremony, include a prohibition on going to sea, the requirement to use a buffalo head as an offering, and the order of the procession, starting with the cleaning of the Ruwat Laut preparation area and communal prayers, the parade, to the offering of the buffalo head accompanied by prayers, until the community sprinkles sea water on their respective boats. after which the fishermen flock together to take the food that has been released in the middle of the sea, and then all the boats return to the shore.

Giddens divides resources into allocative and authoritative resources. Allocative resources refer to the capacity for transformation through the mobilization of assets, objects, or materials (Thoyibbah, 2016). This is as described in the subsection on the structure of control (domination) below. In the context of Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village, allocative and authoritative resources are the most important pillars and have their own position as an inseparable identity. Allocative resources refer to boats, buffalo heads, and offerings that are used as ritual instruments. Meanwhile, authoritative resources refer to the types of capacities that create commands for people. The authority of the Lontar Village fishermen and the Bantenologi Team are authoritative resources.

1.5. The Dimension of Space as Place-based Knowledge and Time as the Continuity of Tradition

Space and time are central variables in structuration. These two variables indicate whether agents are present temporally (direct interaction) or spatially (separate). This perspective is also supported by other sociologists such as Gregory and Saunders, who state that space and time are the main concerns in modern social

analysis (Ritzer, 2011). The actions of agents are not directed by structure, but are determined by agents through their capacity to think, assess, weigh, and choose actions that are considered appropriate and suitable in a particular space and time context (A. Kinseng, 2017). The social practice of Ruwat Laut by the fishermen of Lontar Village shapes and is shaped by the construction of space and time. The sea space becomes a sacred arena that must be treated as an entity that is attached to and lives with the fishermen of Lontar Village, so that the sea is not only a geographical space but also a symbolic and spiritual arena. This arena is demonstrated by the assumption that the sea space also has rights to the fruits of the earth.

The practice of agency as a recursive pattern of individual and group activities within an embedded structure follows a certain pattern. The structure described above is actively produced by agents through rules and resources, essentially transcending space and time (Ressel, 2023). In 2018, Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village was held before the month of Syura'. This condition shows that there is a temporal structure in which agents in that month will interact directly in the same space, so that agents do not interact spatially (Ritzer, 2011). The Ruwat Laut (Nadran) ceremony/celebration in Lontar Village is generally held once a year in the month of Syura, but its implementation also adjusts to the internal and external conditions of the community. This tradition was suspended in 1996 and then became dormant due to differences of opinion among residents. Then in 2018, this tradition was revived in collaboration with Bantenologi. In 2018, Ruwat Laut was held on August 26, 2018, or in the Islamic month of Dzulhijah 1439 H, which is the month before Muharram. After 2018, the tradition was suspended again due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion

Previous studies have not examined in depth the agents involved in Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village. In 2018, the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village was initiated by local youth and supported by religious leaders. The Bantenologi Team was then invited to publish their findings through research and cultural narratives in order to promote Ruwat Laut through social media such as Instagram and YouTube. This tradition is very interesting to explore and has a long-term or sustainable nature. Regenerative governance is an approach that responds to a highly degenerative capitalist culture (which damages the environment and social relationships between humans and nature as well as between humans themselves), requiring humans to build a system that can complement and restore (Rowe & Ormond, 2023). Regenerative governance is an alternative approach that encourages a more comprehensive improvement of the ecosystem between humans and nature. In practice, this includes various fields, such as nature conservation, as an effort to

accelerate the ecological process to achieve the desired recovery (Buckton et al., 2023). This good practice originates from the community itself (bottom up) and can have an impact on various aspects. In his book *Designing Regenerative Cultures*, Daniel Christian Wahl (2016) proposes a holistic and transformative approach to the relationship between humans and nature. Culture essentially grows from the bottom up, namely from communities, groups, and individuals, rather than from the top down. The direction is to improve, strengthen, and balance the relationship between humans and nature (Wahl, 2016).

The identification of rural culture is very important in understanding the patterns of rural communities and is also important in knowing the values practiced by the community (B. Zessy et al., 2019). Thus, the identification of the Ruwat Laut tradition from a regenerative governance perspective is presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Elements of regenerative governance in the Ruwat Laut tradition

Elements	Ruwat Laut Tradition
Objectives	Ruwat Laut is not only a local religious tradition, but also an effort to preserve the sea and restore ecological, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability.
Principles	Gratitude for the sea's bounty and preservation of local culture.
Agents	Lontar Village Fishermen and Bantenologi Team.
Implementation Timeframe	Month of Syura' (Muharram)/Approaching the Month of Syura'
Challenges Faced	Damage to the marine ecosystem on the north coast of Banten (oil spills and mangrove destruction), expansion of the Pantai Indah Kapuk (PIK) II project.
Rules	Prohibition of fishing at certain times, provisions for the offering of buffalo heads and the procession.
Resources	Allocative: Boats, agricultural products, and ornaments.
Approach to the System	Authoritative: Fishermen and the Bantenologi Team.
Community Involvement	Spiritually, morally, and ecologically oriented. The northern coast of Banten is not only considered a resource to be exploited, but also part of the living entity of the Lontar Village community.

In Muntafiroh's (2021) research, the agents involved in Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village have not been studied in depth. In 2018, this tradition was pioneered by local youth and supported by religious leaders, then Bantenologists were invited to publicize Ruwat Laut through research and traditional narratives so that it would be more widely known on social media such as Instagram and YouTube. Previous researchers have also not examined the regenerative governance approach, which is an approach to understanding bottom-up traditions that emerged from the fishermen of Lontar Village in restoring socio-ecological relations. The fishermen of Lontar Village also reflect that Ruwat Laut is a form of good practice in the form of a sacred religious ceremony, which has value in constructing the lives of fishermen through symbolic behavior or actions as well as a manifestation of their souls in establishing a vertical relationship with the marine ecosystem.

Furthermore, the power relations between the fishermen of Lontar Village and the Bantenologi Team in the Ruwat Laut dominance structure are not one-way; rather, the fishermen of Lontar Village dominate in the structural realm based on local practices. On the other hand, the Bantenologi Team dominates in the structural realm based on institutional discourse. Both agents negotiate and interact in the reproduction of meaning and implementation of Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village. In its implementation, if the fishermen of Lontar Village maintain full authority over the determination of rules and schemes carried out in Ruwat Laut, then the structure of domination is in the hands of the fishermen, not the Bantenologi Team.

The dialectical relationship between agents and structures shows that there is mutual dependence, and both are not static. Agents and structures produce through their various actions to reconstruct Ruwat Laut (Sriyana, 2025). The presence of agents in coloring Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village has formed a dynamic relationship to mobilize various allocative resources. Sign systems such as prayers, ornaments, and Bantenologi narratives reproduce a new meaning that ruwat laut is not merely an economic resource, but a spiritual and ecological entity. This shows the reproduction of ecological meaning through traditional symbols. Of course, in the author's critical analysis, this shows that the significance of tradition is still a medium of resistance to the commercialization of culture in the context of coastal modernization.

In terms of existing dominance, Ruwat Laut is normative and symbolic in nature, namely the existence of spiritual and cultural influences that are validated by the community. The power relationship is two-way, namely fishermen have power in the realm of praxis (determination of rules and rituals), while Bantenologi dominates in the realm of discourse through digital representation. This structure

shows that there is a dialectic of local and institutional domination that shapes regenerative meaning. Power in the Ruwat Laut of Lontar Village is collaborative rather than hegemonic, marking a new form of cultural-ecological governance. The power of domination in this context does not result in external coercion, but rather demonstrates regenerative governance because it always has the potential to generate participation and compliance from the fishermen of Lontar Village.

The activity of collecting various agricultural products and buffalo heads as part of tradition means that the fishermen of Lontar Village will always indirectly protect and preserve the requirements of the Ruwat Laut so that they are not depleted or threatened. Through existing rituals, fishermen directly participate in preserving nature and diversity, and remind the community of the threats to the marine ecosystem in the waters of Lontar Village. Through Ruwat Laut, the community's attention is indirectly directed to the existing conditions on the coast and waters of Lontar Village, which are facing an ecological crisis.

Meanwhile, Haqiqi's (2025) research tends to focus on the dynamics of the ebb and flow of Ruwat Laut in Anyer as a culture and the normative conflict between local traditions and Islamic teachings. Haqiqi (2025) explains that Ruwat Laut is a spiritual heritage that has undergone a process of acculturation, whereby local beliefs have been adapted so as not to conflict with the values of monotheism. His findings show that differences in views between religious leaders and fishermen create value tensions, but through dialogue and moderate education, a solution can be found to maintain a balance between tradition and religion. In his research, the function of Ruwat Laut is more prominent in spiritual, social, and cultural identity aspects, as well as adaptation to modernization and globalization.

This study responds to the research that Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village forms norms and values that are the basis for the legitimacy of social actions. Social actions are influenced by agents who are Muslim, which is the majority religion in Lontar Village. As long as these activities do not conflict with Islamic values, namely by not leading to polytheism, these values serve as an effort to maintain the balance between nature and humans. These activities are also a response to all the damage that has occurred to the coast and waters of Lontar Village, which are increasingly posing a serious threat to the sustainability of tradition and ecology.

Through legitimacy from the perspective of tradition and religion, Ruwat Laut seeks to show that there are two major protectors as a defense against the coastal threats surrounding the community, so that ultimately the practice of Ruwat Laut gains dual legitimacy from religious and traditional values. Islamic values provide a moral and spiritual basis for the practice of Ruwat Laut, avoiding accusations of syncretism. Religious legitimacy functions as a cultural safeguard so that the regenerative governance of Ruwat Laut does not lose its normative foundation or roots. This dual legitimacy reinforces the function of tradition as a space for negotiation between local and religious values.

The rules in Ruwat Laut are practical in nature, meaning that agents carry out actions without the need for concrete formulation, but rather replicate them through existing social structures, through a process of heredity and strengthening the regeneration of local values. Thus, the structure in this case shows the nature of structuration through applicable rules, as well as influencing the social practices of agents (Ritzer, 2011). In this case, the agents have provided a specific construction to give full control over the rules in the form of the time of implementation, the provisions for the offering of buffalo heads, and the procedures for implementing Ruwat Laut.

The Ruwat Laut tradition shows the control and mobilization of allocative resources not only to regulate distribution, but also, through authoritative resources, there is a deep distribution of meaning to be allocated as part of the tradition. The distribution of these allocative resources is demonstrated through efforts to protect the coast and offshore areas of Lontar Village through the implementation of Ruwat Laut. Thus, resources are essentially an important foundation closely related to identity, culture, livelihoods, and physical and spiritual well-being (Walter et al., 2022). The resources that have been obtained are very important in giving deep meaning to the spiritual procession of Ruwat Laut for the fishermen of Lontar Village. The fishermen of Lontar Village can consciously and collectively allocate various agricultural products they have for the sustainability of the marine ecosystem and restore their relationship with nature. Thus, the active participation of the fishing community in various activities is very important in efforts to preserve shared resources.

The sea space is socially produced, so it is not neutral but is reproduced based on the beliefs, values, and traditions that have been passed down by fishermen in Lontar Village. Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village is practiced as a traditional space, then interpreted as a living and sacred space, and shaped by the fishermen of Lontar Village and other agents, until it is renegotiated with each passing moment. Space, when viewed from the perspective of regenerative governance, is categorized as place-based knowledge. The fishermen of Lontar Village have lived in harmony with the coastal landscape, and Ruwat Laut was created from a long process involving the community of Lontar Village and the sea. Wahl emphasizes the importance of place-based wisdom in creating true regeneration. Therefore, Ruwat Laut is a cultural expression that grew out of the fishermen of Lontar Village.

Ruwat Laut is not only an annual ritual that has been held since before 1992 and continued in 2007 and 2017, but it is also part of a living culture that maintains spiritual, social, and ecological relationships and strengthens gratitude and

ecological responsibility. The fishermen of Lontar Village make efforts to maintain the relationship between humans and nature, so as not to exploit it excessively, and to remind people of the importance of protecting the waters and coastline of Lontar Village. Wahl, as a figure of regenerative cultures, provides the view that culture is about revitalizing, not depleting. Regenerative cultures, as a model of holistic thinking and life systems, consider sustainability to be an interconnection between economic, social, ecological, geological, and natural sustainability (Lima, 2023). A holistic view of ecology, sustainable economy, and society can be seen in the Ruwat Laut tradition of Lontar Village.

In terms of ecology, the Ruwat Laut tradition, which is carried out as a form of awareness of the sustainability of the marine ecosystem, has a profound meaning in that the practice of throwing buffalo heads, seven kinds of flowers, and other agricultural products into the sea shows that the sea is not just an ecosystem to be explored and exploited. It also shows that the marine ecosystem has the right to obtain nutrients from agricultural products, which are obtained by the fishermen of Lontar Village. In 2018, the production of marine fisheries in Serang Regency reached 16.654 tons, an increase compared to 2017 with a catch of 2.323 tons (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Banten, 2018). This condition shows the recovery of fish stocks through maintaining a harmonious relationship between the sea and humans through Ruwat Laut. Furthermore, with the Ruwat Laut tradition, the fishermen of Lontar Village automatically do not catch fish on that day; they focus on the ceremony. This helps restore fish stocks and the marine ecosystem.

In terms of sustainable economy, Ruwat Laut directly supports sustainable economy in Lontar Village. Through Ruwat Laut, it is possible that tourists will take notice of the potential in Lontar Village. Lontar Village has long been known as a center for products based on *Eucheuma cottonii* seaweed and processed fish. For example, seaweed products include seaweed dodol or agar candy and seaweed crackers. However, production is still limited based on demand and marketing is only on a sub-district scale (Arenawati & Titi, 2019). Additionally, there are tourist attractions such as Lontar Beach and the Lontar Mangrove Conservation Area managed by the Segara Biru Lestari Group, which spans 8 hectares of mangrove forests and features two bridges (Ratnasari et al., 2024).

These local products and tourist attractions can certainly attract visitors, thereby becoming an additional source of income for the surrounding community. In addition, vendors selling food, beverages, clothing, and toys in the area where the Ruwat Laut ceremony is held feel the tremendous impact of the ceremony. The fishermen of Lontar Village think more long-term about their livelihoods. Overfishing in the Java Sea, if not balanced with various efforts in other aspects of economic development, will be futile. With the Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village, the community's economy has grown and developed as long as the tradition continues to be practiced.

In social terms, Ruwat Laut in Lontar Village can strengthen social solidarity among fishermen. All groups, from the young to the old, attend. This provides a transfer of knowledge and insight to the next generation. It also serves as a symbolic form of resistance to the destruction of the marine ecosystem due to development, as well as a space to voice ecological concerns and social justice, especially for fishermen who have increasingly limited and restricted access to the sea. Ruwat Laut in the context of regenerative governance has provided an illustration that agents and structures have negotiated to form their own character through symbols, authority, and legitimacy across space and time, which influence the ecology, economy, and society in Lontar Village, giving it its own characteristics compared to Ruwat Laut in other coastal areas.

Conclusion

The Ruwat Laut tradition in Lontar Village is a concrete form of community-based regenerative governance among fishermen, as manifested through Anthony Giddens' structuration analysis. This tradition not only functions as a spiritual symbol but also demonstrates the existence of sustainable socio-ecological and economic mechanisms. The fishermen of Lontar Village, as local agents, reproduce structures through symbols, rules, and resources, with the context always adapting to space and time. The structures of significance, domination, and legitimacy in the Ruwat Laut of Lontar Village show the integration of cultural meaning, local power, and normative justification from Islam. In addition, collaboration with Bantenologi strengthens the regenerative function through traditional narratives and documentation.

The Serang Regency Government or the Village Government on the coast of Serang Regency, which still preserves traditions, can adopt this structuration-based regenerative model into formal policies, such as the Regent Regulation (Perbup) or Village Regulation (Perdes) on coastal traditions and ecology. The implementation of this model can strengthen community-based coastal governance through synergy between tradition, conservation, and empowerment. In addition, the collaborative program between the Serang Regency Government, academics, and the fishing community can be used as collaborative governance in maintaining coastal socio-ecological sustainability.

This study was only conducted in one village, namely Lontar Village, Tirtayasa District, so the findings cannot be generalized to the entire coastal area of Banten. Recommendations for further research should involve at least five other coastal villages as comparative cases to validate the regenerative model based on structuration across different social, ecological, and economic contexts. Other

recommendations are expected to examine aspects of the local economy and cultural tourism, including the contribution of UMKM, culinary, and mangrove tourism in Lontar Village. These aspects are very important to explore, as they support Ruwat Laut. The researchers would like to thank the people of Lontar Village and Bantenologi for their participation in providing information and insights into the coastal dynamics in Lontar Village and Ruwat Laut. The information obtained is invaluable and has enriched the researchers' references in writing this study.

Declaration

No ethical issues arose during the research, and all procedures followed ethical standards.

Authors contribution statement

I am Ipan Saputra (Author 1/A1), confirming my contribution to this paper as follows: A1 contributed to the research design, conducted data collection at the research site, interpreted the research results, wrote the draft manuscript, and wrote the final manuscript.

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