The persistence of settlement space of AKUR customary community in Cigugur, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract. The Karuhan Urang Customary Community (Masyarakat Adat Karuhun Urang–AKUR) from Cigugur is one of the communities that still adhere to Sunda Wiwitan beliefs. This community has mutual respect for the religious views of others. At the Seren Taun ceremony, people from various religions attend and pray together in Paseban Tri Panca Tunggal as an effort to preserve the cultural heritage of the community’s ancestor. Other efforts to preserve their culture surfaced when a company wanted to acquire land for geothermal exploitation. Collectively, the community refused to release the area to ensure the preservation of their settlement concept. The research aims to reveal the underlying structure in the community settlement system as a manifestation of the community's transcendental awareness. This article reveals the meaning of space by exploring the surface structure of form and function of community culture. Moreover, the paper assesses community awareness by interpreting deep structures. The findings show that the persistence of settlement space was inspired by the great respect of the community for their ancestors. Furthermore, the teachings of their ancestors are embedded in the community's unconsciousness and govern their values of culture, nationality, and religion. As a result, strong tolerance manifests in a sense of universal brotherhood.

1. Introductions
Cigugur, one of the districts in Kuningan Regency, West Java, Indonesia is known for its pluralistic society where three religions co-exist: Islam, Sunda Wiwitan, and Catholics. Besides, Cigugur has been the center for followers of Sunda Wiwitan, who are known as the Karuhan Urang Customary Community (Masyarakat Adat Karuhun Urang – AKUR). This community maintains a cultural ceremony called Seren Taun, which is aimed at thanking God for the abundance of crops they have received. This ceremony takes place at Paseban Tri Panca Tunggal, the AKUR community’s cultural center. The Seren Taun ceremony preserves the heritage of their ancestor, Pangeran Sadewa Madrais Alibasa. Although the AKUR communitylives among the other communities insociety, they are able to preserve and maintain their ancestor’s heritage in the form of historical buildings and values of life. The people of Kuningan are protective of the AKUR community’s heritage as was evident from a clash for land between the Chevron Oil Company and the AKUR community. This clash was triggered by the company’s intention to exploit the geothermal energy in AKUR heritage space. Besides socio-cultural phenomena, the community strives to preserve the Bale Paseban heritage building. These phenomena manifest itself through the systems of life of Cigugur’s society.

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The cultural phenomena of the AKUR community encouraged the authors to explore the concept of systems of life in Cigugur’s customary society. The research aims to reveal the structures of people’s systems of life as the manifestation of their unconsciousness (transcendental consciousness). There are two types of structures: surface and internal structures. Surface structure refers to any form of visibility while internal structures are unconscious [1]. In previous research, Indratno used the transcendental phenomenology approach to reveal the phenomena found in the customary village [2]. This paper takes a different research approach as it uses structuralism to reveal the structures of the system of life in Cigugur’s customary community. The research applies the structuralism analysis technique, which was first developed in the field of linguistic anthropology, aimed at the textual interpretation of language structures [3]. Al-Ummalater evaluated this linguistic structure [4]. In the field of architecture, Sumardiyanto applied the structuralism approach to investigate the structures of Javanese traditional houses [5], while Stojilikovic and Trajkovic used this approach in investigating the correlation between architecture, urbanism, and structural anthropology [6].

In the structuralist approach, interpretative descriptions are used as one of the qualitative research methods. This paper studies the meaning of space by disclosing the surface structures of the forms and cultural functions in the customary community. Subsequently, the analysis investigates the stigmatic relations among elements and the paradigmatic relations between the aspects of forms and functions. Lastly, the unconsciousness of the customary community was uncovered by interpreting the internal structures.

2. Methodology
To investigate the phenomena of the persistence of settlement space in Cigugur, the authors used structuralism to reveal the meaning of unconsciousness in Cigugur’s customary community. Section 2.1 discusses the structuralism approach by employing binary opposition, while section 2.2 addresses the analysis of the form-function method as the elements of binary opposition.

2.1. Structuralism method
The authors conducted qualitative research by employing the structuralism approach in the customary village of Cigugur, Kuningan. Etymologically, structuralism originates from the Latin *structura*, meaning forms or buildings. Pradopo in Jabrohim (p. 71) stated that the basic concept which identifies the theory of structuralism is the assumption of its own, that the artwork is an autonomous structure which is generally understood as a unity with its interrelated forming elements [7]. Moreover, in discussing literature, Teeuw in Pradopo (p. 46) opined that the structuralist analysis is compulsory in understanding prose through understanding its physical and mental structures [8]. The distinctive characteristics of structuralism are the centralization of the description of the state of an object through investigation; the disclosure of intrinsic properties that are not bound by the time; and the establishment of the relationship between the elements of the system through education. Structuralism reveals and depicts the core structure of an object (its hierarchical, reciprocal link between elements at each level). The concept of structuralism is well-known in the world of anthropology and linguistics. Claude Levi-Strauss is the most known figure in structuralism. According to him, there are four model requirements to form a social structure [9]:

- A structure offers a character system. The structure consists of elements such as any modification, where one modification will cause the modification of all other elements;
- The entire model is part of a transformation group, where each element relates to a model from the same family. As such, the entire transformation forms a group of models;
- Properties that have been revealed earlier allow us to estimate in what way the model reacts to the modification of one of its many elements; and
- The model must be constructed in such a way that its functionality can be responsible for all observable events.

Levi Strauss viewed language as a condition for culture in its diachronic meaning. In fact, language precedes culture since humankind understands its societal culture through language. Strauss added that
language is the condition for culture [9]. This happens because the elements that construct language are identical to the elements that make up culture itself [1]. Structuralism theory normally employs the binary opposition as the basis for conducting textual interpretations. Claude Levi Strauss, as a structuralist, implemented the ‘binary’ or the ‘useful opposition’ in his analysis of myths. The general structuralism approach employs the binary opposition in revealing the deepest structures. Therefore, this research also employs the binary opposition of forms and functions.

Related to the surface structure, the authors investigated the aspects of functions and forms, both of which are binary oppositions consisting of seven central elements. This approach is the focus of the research to reveal the unconscious structures in Cigugur’s customary community. Figure 1 presents a further explanation about this binary opposition of surface structure.

**2.2. Analysis of forms and functions**

The authors created a framework of analysis to assess the aspects of functions and forms as the basis for viewing and understanding the phenomena found in the AKUR customary community of Cigugur, Kuningan. To do so, the authors adopted and modified the analysis of forms and functions method as conducted by Sumardiyanto [5]. The analysis of functions and forms comprised four essential steps to reveal the unconscious conditions in the customary community of Cigugur. These four steps reveal:

- The aspects of forms and functions that manifest empirically in culture;
- The surface structures of both aspects;
- The internal structures of the paradigmatic appropriateness; and
- The unconscious meaning in the community that governs the persistence of settlement space.

**Figure 1.** The binary oppositions of the surface structure.
3. The analysis of the persistence of space
This research aims to reveal the meanings behind the persistence of settlement space in Cigugur. The analysis starts by revealing the surface structure and investigating the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation among elements to uncover the internal structure. Next, this internal structure was interpreted to deliver the results of the research. Section 3.1 discusses the elements of surface structures, while section 3.2 explains the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations among elements. Lastly, section 3.3 discusses the analysis results that were revealed by interpreting the internal structures.

3.1. Surface structure
Structuralism reveals the surface structure by identifying the elements that form the binary or paired oppositions. These binary oppositions were formed based on the author’s perspective on the structures in the case study. In this research, the binary oppositions were the aspects of forms and functions. The observations and findings found seven elements that represent the aspect of forms, i.e., Paseban Tri Panca Tunggal, Situ Hyang, Curug Goong, Leuweung Leutik, the sanctuary, paddy fields, and the cemetery. These seven elements have become the structures of Cigugur’s customary community’s system of life.

This study observed the aspect of functions through activities. In doing so, the research seeks to reveal the relations among the aspects that make up the settlement space in the customary village of Cigugur. Many of the activities of the customary community of Cigugur relate to the custom ceremonies, the ceremony of Seren Taun ceremony. After the field observation, the study found seven elements that make up the aspect of functions, i.e., (1) the preservation of culture and the special
rituals, ceremonies, and gathering spots; (2) the area for water and cultural rituals; (3) sacred places for supernatural objects; (4) the area of water and sacred places; (5) burials; (6) agriculture and food sources, and (7) worship, wedding ceremonies, and funeral ceremonies.

Figure 3. Paseban as the core of all components

3.2 The Syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations

Syntagmatic relations refer to the syntactical interrelated relation within one sentence which shows the syntactical units that are acceptable in that sentence. This is called the horizontal relation. This definition shows that the intentionally sought syntagmatic relation highlights a parallel inter-element relation. The syntagmatic relation in this research is the analysis among elements of the surface structures in the customary community’s settlement space. The exploration of the syntagmatic relations shows that each element of the surface structure has a vertical element of three main activities, i.e., cultural activities (e.g., Seren Taun), wedding ceremonies, and funeral ceremonies. Moreover, that the Paseban is the center of all components of the settlement space of Cigugur’s customary community. As such, the Paseban serves as the main orientation for all cultural activities.

The study found that there are other vertical relations among elements besides the customary ceremony of Seren Taun, i.e., in the wedding and death ceremonies. These ceremonies involve three components of the settlement space: Paseban, Sanctuary, and Cemetery. During the funeral ceremony, if the deceased are Catholics, their bodies are initially taken to the Paseban where the representative of the customary community offers some prayers in the Megamendung room. This is followed by a mass in the nearby church. A similar procession is conducted for Muslims. Based on reports from the community, once someone passed away and received three funeral processions (in the Paseban, in the Catholic church, and in the Protestant church).

The internal structure can be revealed by analyzing the appropriateness of the paradigmatic relation. The paradigmatic relation is the relation between the meanings and the syntactical functions of a word, group of words or sentences [10]. It also can be described as the relations among words with any possibility to have a similar position in the sentence structures [11]. This is also known as the vertical relation. The relations among the elements of different cultural phenomena or among the elements of paired opposition (binary opposition) are found in the aspects of forms and functions. This
suggests the need to uncover the orientation from each element of the surface structure in the aspects of forms and functions. This is expected to show the existing unconscious structures in Cigugur’s customary community. Figure 4 shows that each element of the surface structure (aspects of forms and functions) has four orientation elements of the surface structure: culture, nature, religion, and supernatural objects.

**Figure 4.** Paradigmatic relations.

3.3 Results (interpretations)

Based on the analysis of paradigmatic appropriateness, the customary community has one main orientation: their ancestors. This conclusion is drawn based on each of the aspects of forms and functions, or the orientation of paradigmatic appropriateness that all structures have a connection with their ancestor, Pangeran Sadewa Madrais Alibasa. The great respect toward him is part of the unconsciousness of the customary community. Consequently, the community has strong intentions and efforts in maintaining their social existence which is manifested by sites or places that the community believes to be sacred. However, further study is needed to reveal the main roles and teachings passed down to the customary community by their ancestor.
4. Conclusion

The paper concludes that the persistence of space in Cigugur is the result of great respect for the ancestor and central figure of the AKUR customary community, Pangeran Madrais. This respect is part of the customary community’s unconsciousness and manifests itself in the physical area, namely at heritage sites such as Curug Goong, Situ Hyang, and Leuweung Leutik. This heritage needs to be preserved and maintained by society, although there are many activities that weaken the existence of customary communities by taking over and destroying their lands.

Ancestral teachings manifest themselves through the ways of living among the customary community. The principles of life as inherited implicitly from Pangeran Madrais have been deeply ingrained in the customary community of Cigugur. These principles consist of three types of values that govern the interactions in the community of Cigugur: cultural, nationalism, and religious values. These three manifestations inadvertently created tolerance in the community and instilled similar understandings. In turn, this avoided any differences to form between tribes, cultures, languages, and ethnicities. This is even true for religions in the area. This unity is manifested through the feelings of love and respect among all creatures of God, especially human beings. The feelings in the community of Cigugur are not merely based on tolerance but are a form of universal brotherhood.
Acknowledgment
In conducting this research, the authors received much motivation, many suggestions, and support from many parties. Therefore, the authors express their deepest gratitude to the Rector of the Bandung Islamic University, Prof. Edi Setiadi S.H, M.H, and the Institute of Research and Community Service (LPPM) of Bandung Islamic University for the moral and non-moral supports, specifically in the form of funding this research. In addition, authors wish to express the deepest gratitude to all the people of AKUR Community especially, to Rama Anom who was willing to accept the presence of researchers and take the time to provide all the information needed by the researchers. Finally, the authors would like to express their gratitude to Prof. Dr. Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, M.A., M.Phil. for providing such extraordinary knowledge about the methods of structuralism. Thanks to his knowledge and insights the authors gained a better understanding of the implementation of the structuralism method.

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