

Bima Customary Legal Manuscript As An Inclusive Cultural Heritage in the Framework of Global Discourse

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on preserving and interpreting local wisdom in Bima society, emphasizing indigenous legal traditions as integral to global cultural sustainability. Amid modernization and cultural homogenization, this research examines the Bima Customary Legal Manuscript as an inclusive cultural heritage reflecting enduring moral and legal principles that shape communal life while promoting intercultural understanding and social harmony within global cultural discourse. The research aims to analyze the embedded cultural values of the Bima community through the lens of Latini's cultural values theory, which emphasizes the importance of shared humanistic principles in sustaining cultural diversity. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study conducts textual analysis of the manuscript to identify key cultural values and their relevance to contemporary global issues. The study's samples include the Bima Customary Legal Manuscript, a historical text representing indigenous legal traditions and the Bima community, particularly residents of Nanga Wera Village, Bima Regency, whose cultural practices provide contextual insights into the manuscript's present relevance. Findings show that the manuscript embodies deeply rooted values such as collective responsibility, justice, and respect for social order, aligning with inclusive cultural paradigms on a global scale. These values contribute to a broader understanding of how local legal traditions can offer meaningful insights into the universal pursuit of equity and coexistence. The study concludes that the Bima Customary Legal Manuscript is not merely a historical artifact but a living cultural document resonating with global discussions on inclusive heritage, legal pluralism, and cultural sustainability. It calls for recognition and preservation of this indigenous legal knowledge as part of global efforts to valorize traditional wisdom amid growing cultural uniformity. The research contributes to cultural sustainability by showing how revitalizing indigenous legal manuscripts can serve as a resource for maintaining cultural continuity, strengthening community identity, and promoting sustainable intercultural coexistence in the global era.

Keywords: Bima Customary Legal Manuscript, Cultural Sustainability, Global Discourse, Latini Cultural Values

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is an important pillar in shaping a society's identity, especially in the era of globalization where cultural discourse is often dominated by narratives from Western centers of power [1]. In this context, customary law as an integral part of local cultural heritage is often marginalized or reduced to an object of exoticization, even though it has the potential to contribute to a more inclusive cultural dialogue. In the context of global cultural discourse, the preservation and interpretation of customary legal traditions has become an important topic that attracts the attention of researchers across disciplines. Increasing awareness of cultural sustainability and diversity encourages the need to review local knowledge systems as a source of moral values and legal philosophy rooted in community wisdom [2].

Initially, the conservation of cultural heritage, especially ancient manuscripts, was characterized by a strong emphasis on preserving their material and physical aesthetic aspects [3]. This approach prioritized manuscripts as static and eternal objects, often ignoring social and political context. This period saw the gradual development of an international conservation movement, driven by a shared belief in the universal value of cultural heritage. This evolving professional framework formed the foundation for the first international treaty on heritage conservation, marking significant progress towards global standards for the protection of ancient manuscripts.

In Indonesia, the cultural heritage conservation paradigm has also reshaped the perspective on the preservation of ancient manuscripts as an important element of the national intellectual heritage [4]. While initially conservation emphasized saving physical aspects such as the condition of the manuscript, ink materials, and writing media, currently the approach has shifted to a more comprehensive preservation effort, namely protecting the values of knowledge, social context, and cultural roles. Ancient manuscripts scattered across various regions and written in various languages and regional scripts serve as primary sources for studying the history, customary law, religion, and traditional knowledge of the Indonesian archipelago [5]. Thus, manuscript conservation is no longer considered a merely technical activity to save artifacts, but rather an interpretive and collaborative process involving communities of knowledge holders and cultural practitioners. In this case, the



conservation of ancient manuscripts not only serves to preserve the intellectual heritage of the past, but also serves as a tool to strengthen cultural identity, deepen academic research, and raise collective awareness of the importance of preserving traditional knowledge in the era of globalization [6].

Within this framework, the phenomenon studied in this article is the Bima Land Customary Law Manuscript (hereinafter abbreviated as HATB), which is a written cultural heritage that represents the richness of ethical, social, and legal values of the Bima people in eastern Indonesia. The Bima customary law manuscript, a traditional manuscript from the Bima people in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, reflects a customary legal system that has developed over centuries. This manuscript functions not only as a legal document, but also as a repository of social, spiritual, and cultural values that include inclusive aspects such as gender equality, communal conflict resolution, and harmony with the environment. This manuscript not only contains customary rules but also reflects an inclusive outlook on life, emphasizing balance, collective responsibility, and social harmony.

In recent decades, various forms of local cultural heritage have faced serious challenges. Amidst the accelerating forces of modernization, globalization, and cultural homogenization, local legal texts are increasingly vulnerable to neglect and loss of relevance [7]. Traditional knowledge systems, once central to communal governance and moral order, are often eclipsed by dominant legal and cultural paradigms that prioritize universalism over locality. Against this backdrop, the Bima Land Customary Law Text (HATB) has emerged as an important medium through which the enduring moral, legal, and philosophical principles of the Bima people can be re-examined and reinterpreted as part of a global discourse on cultural inclusivity.

The HATB manuscripts serve not only as historical records of customary law, but as living documents that encapsulate a holistic worldview that harmonizes human relations, social justice, and environmental ethics. They represent an indigenous epistemology rooted in the values of balance, mutual respect, and communal responsibility. However, in the current global context, where standard cultural narratives dominate, manuscripts such as this risk being viewed as static relics rather than dynamic sources of intercultural insights. This phenomenon highlights a broader challenge in cultural heritage studies: the marginalization of non-Western epistemologies and the underrepresentation of indigenous legal systems in global discourses on cultural sustainability [8].

Previous research on Indonesian customary law and regional manuscripts has largely focused on philological preservation, codification, and historical classification. For example, research conducted by Taufiqurrahman and Hidayat (2024) examined the conservation, digitization, and outreach of ancient manuscripts in Surau Manggopoh, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, with the aim of helping heirs care for manuscripts, raising public awareness, and extending the lifespan of manuscripts through digitization [9]. Subsequent research was conducted by Rizkyantha, Rusmiatingsih, Afrina, and Oktavia (2025) who proposed several practical steps in preserving ancient manuscripts as cultural heritage [10]. Kurnia and Cristiani (2021) analyzed the values of local wisdom in the Pararaton manuscript that had been modified into a novel, to suit the tastes of the global community. Interestingly, through the process of producing new documents from old documents, the values of wisdom implied in the moral messages in the folktales of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes can be preserved from generation to generation [11].

While these studies contribute to documenting textual authenticity, they often neglect the interpretive dimension that connects local wisdom to global ethical frameworks. Furthermore, discussions of cultural inclusivity tend to focus on linguistic or artistic expressions, with limited exploration of customary legal texts as manifestations of inclusive moral and juridical thought. This gap highlights the need for a more interpretive and values-based approach that places these texts in cross-cultural and intercivilizational dialogue.

The significance of this research lies in positioning the Bima Land Customary Law Text (HATB) as an inclusive cultural heritage capable of fostering intercultural understanding and social harmony. By reanalyzing the HATB text through the lens of Latini's Theory of Cultural Values, this study emphasizes the relevance of shared humanistic principles such as justice, empathy, equality, and coexistence in maintaining cultural diversity in a global context. The Latini framework offers a theoretical pathway to interpreting indigenous traditions not as isolated localities, but as contributors to a shared global moral consciousness.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the cultural values embedded in the Tanah Bima Customary Law manuscript, explore its resonance with Latini universal cultural values, and assess its potential to enrich the global cultural discourse on inclusivity and sustainability. Through this approach, this study seeks to demonstrate that customary legal traditions, when interpreted through an inclusive theoretical framework, have significant potential to rearticulate the global narrative of cultural coexistence. Based on the previous explanation, a central question arises that becomes the research problem: how can the Tanah Bima Customary Law Manuscript be interpreted as an inclusive cultural heritage that contributes to the global cultural discourse through the framework of Latini Cultural Values Theory?

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach that focuses on textual and contextual analysis of the Bima Land Customary Law Manuscript (HATB). This approach was chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration of the manuscript as a representation of a legal and cultural system rooted in the local wisdom of the Bima people. Through the integration of textual hermeneutics and contextual ethnography methods, this research aims to interpret the cultural values, ethical orientations, and social principles contained in the manuscript, while examining its relevance to contemporary global cultural discourse.

The primary data source for this research is the HATB manuscript obtained from regional cultural archives, specifically at the Samparaja Museum in Bima, and verified through consultations with local cultural experts acting as academics and guardians of tradition. Supplementary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with cultural experts and community members of Nanga Wera Village in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Information from these participants provides a contextual dimension that strengthens the interpretation of customary values and their application in contemporary social life.

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative content analysis and interpretive thematic synthesis, using photo/image analysis, cultural value categorization, and comparison with the theoretical dimensions of Latini cultural values. Triangulation was conducted between the results of text analysis, interviews, and field observations to ensure interpretive validity and consistency. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the manuscript's intrinsic meaning and its contribution to the development of universal ethical discourse and the sustainability of inclusive culture.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Latini (2019), cultural values can be categorized into three interrelated dimensions: ethical universality, communal inclusiveness, and transformative continuity [12]. Ethical universality refers to shared moral principles such as justice, empathy, and respect that constitute the ethical foundation of all human societies. Communal inclusiveness emphasizes the capacity of culture to integrate diversity within a collective identity, ensuring that differences are recognized as sources of enrichment rather than division. Transformative continuity highlights the adaptive nature of culture, where traditions evolve without losing their core ethical and symbolic meaning [13]. These dimensions provide a conceptual framework for analyzing how local wisdom contributes to global cultural sustainability through inclusive dialogue and mutual recognition.

In the context of inclusive cultural sustainability, Latini's theory bridges the gap between heritage preservation and intercultural ethics. Traditional approaches to cultural heritage often focus on the protection of material artifacts or intangible practices without adequately addressing the moral and philosophical dimensions embedded within the [14]. Latini argues that sustainable cultural development requires not only the protection of material expressions, but also the revitalization of their underlying ethical values [15]. Inclusivity, therefore, becomes a central mechanism for sustainability where local traditions are preserved not in isolation, but as active participants in a global network of shared human values.

The research results show that the Bima Land Customary Law Manuscript (HATB) represents fundamental values deeply rooted in the social and moral structure of the Bima people, including collective responsibility, justice, and respect for social order. These values not only serve as normative guidelines in community life but also reflect a worldview that places balance, social harmony, and moral sustainability as the basis for a shared order. In this context, the manuscript can be understood as a cultural archive that records local knowledge and ethical systems that remain relevant amidst global social change.

Based on Latini's Theory of Cultural Values, which emphasizes three main dimensions: ethical universality, communal inclusiveness, and transformative continuity, the findings of this study demonstrate that Bima customary law values align with the paradigm of inclusive culture on a global scale. The dimension of ethical universality is reflected through the principles of justice and social responsibility that place the common good above individual interests. The dimension of communal inclusiveness is evident in the mechanism of deliberation and collective involvement in dispute resolution, which demonstrates a social system based on participation and solidarity. The dimension of transformative continuity is evident in the ability of the Bima community to adapt customary practices to the challenges of modernity without losing the essence of inherited moral values.

Interpretation of the manuscript also reveals that the Bima customary legal system is neither exclusive nor rigid, but rather open to adaptation and cross-cultural dialogue. This reinforces the view that local cultural heritage can contribute to the global discourse on justice and coexistence, as emphasized in Latini's theory that an inclusive culture is one that is able to negotiate differences without losing its moral identity. Thus, the HATB Manuscript serves as an epistemological bridge between local traditions and universal human values, affirming its relevance within the framework of cultural sustainability and intercivilizational dialogue.

Fig. 1. *Hanta Uma* (House Hunting Tradition)



The photo shows a group of men collectively carrying a stilt house, a tradition known in Indonesia as “gotong royong (working together to move a house)” (often called *hanta uma* in the Bima context). This activity has a very strong social and cultural meaning more than just physical labor, but rather an expression of the values of collectivity and solidarity in the lives of indigenous communities. This activity of gotong royong (working together to move a house) reflects the application of the dimension of “communal inclusivity” in Latini’s Theory of Cultural Values. The community participates voluntarily without distinction of social, economic, or age status, affirming that collective work is an integral part of the moral and social fabric of Bima society. This value aligns with the concept of “communal inclusivity” emphasized by Latini, that cultural sustainability is achieved when community members practice active participation in shared life.

Furthermore, this activity demonstrates the dimension of “transformative continuity,” where traditional practices are maintained and practiced despite social change and modernization. This collective spirit not only preserves ancestral heritage but also strengthens a cultural identity that is adaptive to the current context.

Fig. 2. “Festival Rimpu 2025” (Rimpu Festival 2025)



The “Rimpu Festival 2025”, as depicted in the photo, is a concrete representation of the cultural identity of the Mbojo (Bima) people, emphasizing the close relationship between traditional values, spirituality, and social expression. Rimpu is not merely a dress tradition, but a symbol of morality, honor, and social equality that has been passed down across generations. In the context of this research, the Rimpu tradition can be understood as a visual and practical manifestation of the values enshrined in the Bima Land Customary Law (HATB), particularly the principles of collective responsibility, social order, and respect for human dignity.

Through the lens of Latini’s Theory of Cultural Values, the Rimpu Festival demonstrates three dimensions of cultural values that also emerge in the interpretation of traditional texts. First, the dimension of ethical universality, reflected in the Rimpu dress code, which emphasizes modesty, respect for self and others, and a balance between individual freedom and communal norms. This practice demonstrates that local moral principles have universal relevance in building a dignified system of human values.

Second, the communal dimension of inclusivity is evident in the broad participation of people across ages and genders in the festival. This shared engagement in the public sphere articulates the spirit of togetherness and social solidarity as enshrined in the Bima customary legal system, where social harmony is considered the highest form of justice. The *Rimpu* tradition serves as a symbolic space that unites the community through open and participatory cultural expression, demonstrating that custom is not merely a legacy, but a living value system that facilitates social connectedness.

Third, the transformative dimension of continuity is evident in the Bima community’s efforts to maintain the practice of *Rimpu* amidst modernization. Packaging this tradition into a contemporary festival demonstrates the ability of local culture to adapt without losing its moral substance. This aligns with Latini’s

notion that cultural sustainability depends on its ability to transform inclusively, remaining true to ethical values while opening up dialogue with the modern world.

Fig. 3. “Festival Sangiang Api 2025” (Sangiang Api Festival 2025)



Fig. 4. Sailing Boat Race at the Sangiang Api Festival (Sampan Layar)



Sangiang Api Festival 2025 and the tradition of the competition sailing boat reflects or “sampan layer” the revitalization of the Bima people's maritime culture, deeply rooted in their historical connection to the sea. This activity is not merely recreational but also serves as a medium for expressing collective identity, affirming local wisdom in managing natural resources and maintaining harmony with the coastal environment. In the context of the previous article, this festival demonstrates the continuity of cultural values such as mutual cooperation, social solidarity, and respect for nature, which have been passed down through generations.

From a cultural conservation perspective, the traditional of *sampan layar* or sailing race serves as a form of cultural performance that represents the community's traditional knowledge of navigation, wind, and the sea. The festival also contains economic and tourism dimensions that strengthen the appeal of local culture as part of the development of regional cultural branding. Thus, the Sangiang Api Festival plays a strategic role in maintaining the sustainability of Mbojo culture through the integration of tradition preservation, community empowerment, and the promotion of regional identity within a sustainable development framework.

The cultural heritage of the Mbojo people in Bima reflects the unity of social values, customary law, and cultural expressions that are present in the community's daily lives. The Bima Customary Law Text serves as a normative foundation that regulates the relationship between humans and nature, each other, and their social system. Principles such as “*mori ro sama*” (harmony between humans and the environment) and “*nggusu waru*” (collective justice values) demonstrate that customary law is not only normative but also contains ecological philosophy and social morality. In the contemporary socio-cultural context, these values are actualized through various traditions that strengthen social cohesion.

The *Hanta Uma* tradition illustrates the concrete manifestation of communal solidarity and mutual cooperation among the Bima people in collectively moving a house. This practice demonstrates not only physical strength but also moral strength, affirming that togetherness and mutual assistance are the essence of the enduring Mbojo culture. Similarly, the *Rimpu* tradition, showcased at the *Rimpu Festival 2025*, demonstrates how traditional Bima women's clothing serves as a symbol of identity and self-respect. *Rimpu* is not merely a form of body covering, but also an expression of values of modesty, spirituality, and ethnic pride. Within the

framework of Latini cultural theory, *Rimpu* can be understood as a representation of cultural performance that demonstrates cultural adaptation to changing times without losing its symbolic meaning. Latini theory emphasizes that culture is a network of meanings continually negotiated between tradition and modernity, and in this context, *Rimpu* serves as a visual narrative of local cultural resistance and revitalization.

Furthermore, the Sangiang Api Festival and the sampan sailing competition strengthen the maritime dimension of the Bima people as a resilient maritime society. This tradition represents local knowledge about the sea, wind, and seasons, passed down through collective experience. Beyond aesthetic and recreational value, this activity also has ecological and economic significance, serving as a means of preserving traditional knowledge and promoting culture-based tourism (cultural branding). Thus, this activity not only maintains the sustainability of traditions but also opens up a dialogue between local heritage and global needs.

The integration of customary law, cultural expression, and social practices above demonstrates that the Bima people have successfully maintained the continuity of traditional values amidst the dynamics of globalization. Based on Latini's cultural theory, cultural sustainability depends not only on preserving the external form of tradition but also on the community's ability to reinterpret cultural meanings according to the context of the times.

4. CONCLUSION

Latini's theoretical orientation offers a relevant lens for interpreting the Bima Land Customary Law Manuscript (HATB) as a dynamic embodiment of the Mbojo community's moral and cultural system. The manuscript encapsulates the interconnection between customary law, ethical principles, and communal practices that shape Bima's moral cosmology. Viewed through Latini's framework, HATB emerges as a living text that articulates ethical universality through customary justice, communal inclusivity through participatory decision-making, and transformative continuity through the adaptation of traditional norms to contemporary life. These dimensions reveal that Bima's customary law is not a static legacy but a continuously evolving source of values aligned with the principles of inclusive cultural sustainability.

This study reaffirms the significance of HATB as both a moral compass and a social foundation that transcends its historical nature. Grounded in Latini's Cultural Theory, the findings highlight that its values embody universal ideals of justice, solidarity, and adaptive cultural resilience. Traditions such as *Hanta Uma*, *Rimpu*, and the *Sangiang Api Festival* exemplify the living continuity of these values, transforming local customs into dynamic expressions of identity that engage meaningfully with global discourses on ethics, sustainability, and human coexistence. In this way, Bima culture not only preserves its ancestral wisdom but also contributes to shaping a global paradigm of sustainable culture grounded in balance, inclusivity, and respect for humanity and the environment.

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