

# ***Adat*-based Conservation: Realizing The Rights of Nature and Ecological Citizenship of Gunung Merapi and Danau Sentarum Communities**

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## ABSTRACT

*Adat* communities (Indigenous peoples) in Indonesia have a relationship with the surrounding nature. This paradigm takes nature such as mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, and wildlife living subjects with equal rights to humans. This idea can support more efficient and effective conservation efforts than relying solely on NGOs. In this paper, I analyze the discourse on ecological citizenship and the rights of nature that *adat* communities can represent as a conservation effort based on customs in local communities of Mount Merapi National Park and Iban communities in Danau Sentarum National Park. From the findings, I found that the presence of *adat* communities is important in conservation efforts and has advantages in the efficiency of management and funding of conservation efforts, but their existence and customary values are marginalized in Indonesian citizenship politics. As an effort to recognize ecological citizenship and the rights of nature, this finding suggests a major change in the citizenship framework, politics, and regulations for inclusivity in Indonesia by supporting the sovereignty and true recognition of *adat* communities and their religiosity.

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## 1. Introduction

After Indonesia's independence, the regulation of natural resources and the establishment of conservation areas continued due to the richness of biodiversity and its role as one of the "lungs of the world". Due to the importance of Indonesian's biodiversity, various conservation NGOs began to operate since the 1960's. However, biodiversity in Indonesia is still very much threatened by environmental damage caused by humans, such as deforestation, excessive fishing activities, and changes in land use, wildlife hunting, and natural factors due to erosion, predation caused by ecosystem imbalances, and climate change (Cleary & Devantier, 2011). IUCN noted that thousands of endemic species in Indonesia have vulnerable conservation statuses that require serious government action. Data from Global Forest Watch (2024) reveals that Indonesia has experienced a 19 percent decline in tree cover since 2000, or the equivalent of 30.8 million hectares of tree cover lost from 2001 to 2023, thus impacting the threat to biodiversity.

In terms of regulations, in the latter half of the New Order (*Orde Baru*), the Indonesian Government established Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural

Resources and their Ecosystems with three pillars, namely protection of life support systems, preservation of biodiversity and its ecosystems, and sustainable use of biological natural resources and their ecosystems (PPID KLHK, 2024). The Ministry of Environment and Forestry updated Law No. 5 of 1990 by issuing Law No. 32 of 2024 (PPID KLHK, 2024). These two regulations, especially Law No. 32 of 2024, have been criticized for not having clear conservation objectives, especially in involving *adat* (Indigenous) communities whose lives are intertwined with their natural surroundings (Maulana 2024). Indigenous peoples have a crucial role in conservation efforts. The global consensus in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 called for the involvement of Indigenous peoples in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including conservation efforts (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012). The involvement of Indigenous peoples must be carried out by utilizing local knowledge in managing natural resources and caring for nature in a traditional way (United Nations, 2019).

Adat communities are groups that are greatly affected by environmental damage due to political problems and exploitative development, including in Indonesia. Since 2003, Indonesia has proposed the Indigenous Peoples Bill or Customary Communities Bill to strengthen the position of adat communities' authority in managing resources and defending their rights and interests, but it has not been passed. The discussion of the bill, which has always been ignored, and its delay in being passed, has become a criticism among advocates and activists of the government's seriousness in exploiting the surrounding natural resources and criminalizing adat communities for the sake of development (Findi, 2024). At the 16th United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Colombia (COP16 CBD) in 2024, Indonesia agreed to the establishment of a permanent Indigenous peoples' institution as emphasized in Art. 8j (Dhanya, 2024). Conservation efforts are a way for indigenous peoples to obtain rights to manage their resources through various NGOs operating in protected areas. Meanwhile, conservation NGOs face a dilemma between the efficiency of participatory conservation work with Indigenous communities and responsibility to donors (Aldashev & Vallino, 2019). Ultimately, the dilemma causes conservation-based NGOs to work less efficiently by focusing more on certain burdens while taking risks in the sustainability of their programs.

Environmental ethics scholars have long criticized the anthropocentric paradigm in nature management because it has been proven to be the cause of ecological damage, crisis, and ecocide (Kopnina et al, 2018). This paradigm views nature as an object of exploitation to meet human needs, thus giving rise to the idea of a new paradigm called 'ecocentrism' as an environmental ethic that can see the equality of relations between humans and nature (Kopnina et al, 2018). In responding to ecological disasters, various adat communities in Indonesia have an ecocentric paradigm that states that damage is caused by an imbalance in the relationship between humans and nature (Maarif, 2021).

The paradigm of Indigenous peoples is based on the concept of intersubjective cosmology, which is different from the paradigm of world religions that view the existence of supernatural powers above all (Maarif 2019). Because nature is seen as another subject that is equal to humans, Indigenous peoples carry out activities, traditions, or rituals as a reciprocal relationship and strive for a harmonious balance (Maarif, 2021; Alfian, 2023). This paradigm is a tool for adat communities and *penghayat kepercayaan* (Indigenous/ancestral religion adherents) to understand that elements in nature can interact with each other through certain activities. Elements in nature, such as animals and landscapes that are sacred or have special meanings, have rights that must be fulfilled as other living individuals like humans.

Meanwhile, political scholars and researchers often divide the world into three citizenship frameworks, namely 'liberal', 'communitarian', and 'republican' (Stokke, 2017; van Klinken & Berenschot, 2018). The democratization of citizenship in Indonesia is very clearly included as a republican framework (van Klinken and Berenschot 2018). This framework has pragmatic advantages for the government to centrally control Indonesia's diversity in Java as an archipelagic country with the legitimacy of "unity", in contrast to the Dutch colonial political system which relied on local aristocratic natives who benefited from regulations and economics (van Klinken and Berenschot, 2018).

Common citizenship framework in various countries in the world, including Indonesia, has been criticized for developing its studies based on the Western understanding of the concept of "state" so

that it ignores the development of other citizenship studies based on the framework of the postcolonial world (van Klinken & Berenschot, 2018). Meanwhile, ecological citizenship criticizes the Western citizenship study paradigm, which tends to be anthropocentric and causes impact damage on the management of natural resources in non-Western countries (Dobson, 2004). This approach can be an alternative paradigm that recognizes nature not only as a resource that can be exploited in colonial frameworks but also as a living citizen that must be fulfilled by the state (Dobson, 2004). Yet, ecological citizenship in Indonesia is challenging because its recognition requires adequate recognition of indigenous peoples' sovereignty. In this paper, I account for the theoretical approach that before adopting the form of natural citizenship, the state must adopt a communitarian citizenship framework which is also supported by the principles of inclusive citizenship.

There has been no research that elaborates the study of indigenous peoples, citizenship, and environmental conservation with an ecological citizenship approach in Indonesia. The results of this discussion fill the elaborative gap with the aim of supporting conservation discourse that is normatively based on adat people's values. Therefore, this study evaluates the concept of ecological citizenship in adat communities, which consists of awareness, policy, participation—including those related to the rights of nature- and multi-stakeholder collaboration (Dobson, 2004). The rights of nature are related to the figure of a special guardian in the legal process, recognition of legal rights such as customary law, and environmental policy (Stone, 2010). Several questions will be discussed in the study: (a) How can ecological citizenship and rights of nature support conservation in Indonesia? (b) What is the role of adat community-based conservation through ecological citizenship? (c) How can nature and wildlife be recognized as ecological citizenship in Indonesia? The results of the study are expected to be discussed by policymakers and NGOs in involving indigenous communities in conservation efforts.

## 2. Research Method

The literature study method is employed in this descriptive research with documents collected as analysis data. This method collects data, reads, and records library data relevant to the research (Zed, 2014). Researchers must choose a topic idea, find supporting information, emphasize focus, search for and find references, read and take notes, review and enrich data, and classify data that follows the topic discussion (Zed, 2014).

This study focusses on two examples of the concept of natural citizenship in indigenous communities, namely the local Merapi community in Java and the Dayak Iban and West Kalimantan. Both were chosen because they are in or adjacent to conservation areas, namely Mount Merapi National Park and Lake Sentarum National Park. Also, both are having the concept the concept of ecological citizenship that encompasses immovable natural entities in the community around Mount Merapi National Park in Java from the findings of Martiam (2017) and Hidayana (2021) and mobile natural entities in the form of orangutans that live with the Dayak Iban community around Danau Sentarum National Park based on the findings of Yuliani et al (2018). The human-nature relationship is synthesized in the rights of nature concept by recognizing rights, representation, protection, and legal paradigms of both adat communities.

Since ecological citizenship is related to the rights of nature fulfillment, this study will synthesize the concept held by indigenous peoples with national conservation development, including various policies related to the protection of life, and the position of indigenous peoples in state politics. The results of the analysis of various conservation law studies such as AMAN (2024) and Sumilat (2024) are synthesized in the continuity of indigenous communities' involvement in environmental conservation efforts. Regarding the position of Indigenous peoples, this paper also synthesizes the problem of the position of Indigenous peoples' citizenship within the state from the findings of Sumilat (2024) and Maarif (2023).

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Nature as citizens

Indigenous communities believe that all elements in nature are living things that can interact. Indigenous communities in Indonesia, based on their beliefs, determine that an area such as a forest, especially one protected by customary (*adat*) regulations, is a living "figure" like a human whose intersubjective relationship must be maintained through reciprocal exchange (Maarif, 2019, p. 118; Alfian, 2023). These subjects are recognized as other living beings who are equal to humans and require life rights that must be fulfilled through rituals and maintained as something sacred or taboo. Even not all adat communities in Indonesia adhere to traditional religions, which are often referred to as "*aliran kepercayaan*", the Indigenous religion paradigm can be understood as exploring religious practices and carrying out traditions in Indigenous communities (Maarif 2019: 114). This paradigm is the basis for adat communities in responding to various phenomena that impact their communities by maintaining harmonious relationships with the surrounding environment (Maarif 2021).

Indigenous paradigm is not only owned by Indigenous people who still adhere to their adat teachings but also by those who have embraced official religions. Martiam (2017) describes that Muslim residents around Mount Merapi who maintain their customs believe that the mountain is a living creature that can come to give messages. Local communities testified that the spirit of Merapi often came when the mountain was about to erupt, so they prayed to God that the spirits would help protect the village (Martiam, 2017). The community believes that the eruption of Merapi is a punishment from God for human sins such as environmental destruction for sand mining around the mountain, the proliferation of accommodation for sex tourism so that people perform rituals such as *tirakatan* and *slametan* to honor Merapi (Hudayana, 2021). Merapi is not only a figure that can be seen in another dimension but can also respond to all changes caused by human behavior based on the interpretation of local communities that can represent the meaning of its activities as a living creature.

The Iban community in Kalimantan still practices traditional taboos that support the protection of orangutans (*Pongo spp.*) and their habitats which are considered sacred so that they are in line with conservation agenda efforts in the Danau Sentarum National Park (Yuliani et al, 2018). The Iban community believes that orangutans have helped humans give birth, studied medicinal plants, defended them in times of danger and war, and are believed to be the reincarnation of a respected community creature, so it is strictly forbidden to disturb and hunt them (Yuliani et al, 2018).

These subjects are recognized as other living creatures that are equal to humans and require rights that must be fulfilled through rituals and maintained as something sacred or taboo. Indigenous peoples' principles also have an approach to sanctions and regulations that range in efforts to maintain relationships between other creatures or individuals (Maarif, 2019; Alfian, 2023). The perspective of Indigenous peoples goes beyond the general anthropocentric paradigm and can become the basis of basic knowledge in conservation efforts by making them the "central party", rather than being trapped in the term "local wisdom" which is often used as a conservation narrative tool by external parties (NGOs and government) accompanying indigenous peoples.

The notion of animals as part of citizenship politics is common in various traditions. Western thinking that causes humans to be detached from nature and places them in a higher hierarchy than animals (Donaldson, 2020). The period of colonization brought an unfair system in occupied countries as subjects of exploitation such as nature and animals, as well as colonized Indigenous peoples (Donaldson & Kymlicka 2011: 168–69). Wildlife or wild animals as subjects whose

citizenship rights can be seen as forming sovereign communities in their territories that are vulnerable to human colonization (e.g., orangutans, tigers, and deer) (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011: 14). Recognition of wildlife rights requires the sovereign power of Indigenous peoples who recognize wildlife as living entities and can transcend national borders, while political systems must avoid imperialistic forms that discredit Indigenous peoples (Donaldson & Kymlicka 2011: 44 & 172–73). By this approach, the recognition of wildlife rights can be applied across national borders or transnationally.

Transnational citizenship is a principle of citizenship beyond the nation-state model where ownership and active citizenship are related to political and social spaces in countries of origin, immigration, and international diaspora (Stokke, 2017). Representation as an effort for social justice and to prevent political misrepresentation must use a transformative strategy approach (Fraser, 2009; Stokke, 2017). The transformative strategy can be carried out through democratic efforts that make people's control over public affairs with applications that can be carried out by post-territorial societies in a representative manner (Fraser, 2009; Stokke, 2017). However, wildlife does not have a "country of origin" nor is represented by a single representative who can be active in one country, for example, the orangutan is a species endemic to Indonesia and Malaysia that is living with the Batak and Dayak ethnic groups so it requires representation from more than one ethnic group and more than one country. It is possible that Indonesia can be the first pioneer of wildlife rights in Southeast Asia based on indigenous peoples so that its efforts in the realm of citizenship studies can be applied beyond national borders in future inter-state or international political agreements.

### **3.2. Justice and inclusivity in ecological citizenship and rights of nature recognition**

Ecological citizenship is related to the expansion of citizenship rights by extending citizenship rights to non-human beings (Dobson, 2004; Van Steenberg, 1994). In addition, environmental preservation is related to the rights of access and sovereignty of the surrounding community because of its proximity and need for nature as a natural resource that is maintained (Martin and others 2016). In a narrower context, all these elements exist in adat communities who have intersubjective relationality with non-human beings (Alfian, 2023; Maarif, 2018). Therefore, ecological citizenship needs to be adopted as a precondition for properly recognizing the sovereign rights of indigenous peoples and the religious status of belief systems. Ignoring one of the important points believed by marginalized groups, in essence, leads to unfair misrecognition in citizenship politics (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

The approach to recognizing the rights of nature could be through human representation like the lawyers handling the problems of legally incompetent people in court i.e., infants, mental disorders, and so on (Stone, 2010: 17). The implementation of it could allow the representative communities to get the compensation and attribution of natural rights violence (Stone, 2010: 17). Thus, Indigenous peoples can become representatives of natural rights because of their intersubjective knowledge and relations of their surrounding environment, including landmarks such as mountains and seas, as well as wildlife regulated by taboos.

Representing natural rights is an alternative view to the concept of citizenship with ecocentric environmental ethics. Stone (2010) suggests that the approach can be done with representation from communities that have theological beliefs that humans are "God's agents" in managing nature. Indigenous peoples, even though embrace official religions, are still interpret their religious teachings with ancestral teachings, namely the existence of other subjects in nature whose harmonious relationships need to be maintained (Maarif, 2014). Indigenous communities, through their religiosity, have an eco-relational citizenship view by making nature an inseparable part of their group order (Alfian, 2023). This notion allows conservation based on the voluntary nature of Indigenous peoples, thus not making them the target of programs from external parties but as



independent groups with ways of managing their nature based on the perspective. In sum, the rights of nature or ecological citizenship can be a precondition for customs, along with nature and their religiosity, as elements that the state must fulfill in building inclusive, just citizenship.

The hegemonic paradigm and environmental ethic in Indonesia view nature anthropocentrically which is related to the exploitation of natural resources. This challenge can be studied by looking at countries that have recognized the rights of nature, such as Colombia which has made the rise of Indigenous peoples a force to free themselves from exploitative neoliberalism by revising the Constitution, several states in Bharat use the approach of religious norms and local community paradigms, and conservation areas in Aotearoa those are driven by the demands of Indigenous peoples (Becker, 2011; Magallanes, 2020; Upadhyay & Nayak, 2024). Cases from other countries prove that indigenous peoples are the main element in the recognition of ecological citizenship and the rights of nature so that they can adopt and distribute the paradigm into environmental conservation. This effort can be done almost similarly in Indonesia by strengthening the rights of adat communities. Indonesia has a constitutional basis that recognizes "the law and rights of indigenous peoples" based on the 1945 Constitution in Art. 18B paragraph 2. However, before achieving the strengthening of indigenous peoples' rights, the derivative regulations of the constitution did not offer the use of indigenous community knowledge, including the environmental ethics paradigm.

Therefore, paradigm of Indonesian citizenship politics must move beyond the general citizenship framework such as republicanism and liberalism to realize social justice that creates space for recognizing natural rights. The republican framework that is obvious in Indonesian democratization takes the legitimacy of power very centralized, causing regional rulers not to have full control over managing their resources (van Klinken & Berenschot, 2018: 152). The liberalism framework takes individuals legal subjects, but aspects of tradition, culture, and welfare must be alienated from politics so that it cannot involve inclusive and equitable recognition (Miswanto, 2022: 152).

The communitarian framework allows for the management of community diversity by guaranteeing and maintaining minority rights (van Klinken & Berenschot, 2018: 152–53). Postcolonial citizens in a communitarian framework can relate to each other and power holders as equals so that they can negotiate, improvise, and open opportunities for close personal contact with the rulers around them (van Klinken & Berenschot, 2018: 153). The communitarian citizenship framework theoretically supports adat communities' perspective that view ecological citizenship or eco-relational citizenship as affirming their representative role of the surrounding nature or sacred natural sites and subjects as citizens.

The communitarian framework in democratization citizenship politic in Indonesia is not enough without the support of inclusive citizenship principles. Inclusive citizenship is not only related to formal recognition and rights but also must consider how everyone or group claims and carries out their citizenship politics (Maarif & Bagir, 2021: 39–40). The main objective of this concept is to ensure that every citizen gets an equal opportunity to channel their ideas and express their beliefs, how manage and control themselves, and participate in decision-making. Adopting inclusivity makes the concept of citizenship always dynamic to support broader formal rights. This requires a transformation of social change and social change and policy change that can accept citizens with any background to gain equality (Maarif & Bagir, 2021).

However, the justice of citizenship rights in Indonesia is problematic due to misrecognition. The state of Indigenous religions, ancestral religions, and/or aliran kepercayaan a "culture" that takes its adherents considered not or not yet religious (Maarif 2018: 114). The political system of religion marginalizes the aliran kepercayaan which leads them to convert to official religions (Maarif, 2018,

pp. 112–114; Bagir, 2018, p. 287). Meanwhile, Art. 28 I paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution states that cultural identity is “respected under the development of the times and civilization” which means that adat and aliran kepercayaan must be adjusted to the political interests of the state at a certain time. Misrecognition of traditional religions causes discrimination to still occur in society and the use of knowledge inherited from ancestors is considered heretical, mystical, and—coupled with the strengthening of secular thinking—irrational.

Moreover, the issue of land ownership recognition and the existence of indigenous peoples in Indonesia is still problematic. Regulation of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency No. 14 of 2024 regulates the administration of customary land registration and customary institutions like previous regulations, where the registration is submitted to the Regional Government through Regional Regulations or decisions of the governor, regent, or mayor. In practice, many customary institutions are formed by the Regional Government but are not representative of adat communities who benefit the interests of the elite power in the region in customary land conflicts (AMAN, 2024; Sumilat, 2024).

In short, indigenous peoples in Indonesia face challenges from two sides: their beliefs and their existence. Without any challenges, adat communities can register certain natural areas or subjects for protection through conservation regulations and be registered as living entities that have rights based on their beliefs. Thus, various things must be fixed to realize ecological citizenship. The main thing is a change in the inclusive ministry policy regarding indigenous peoples with a communitarian framework. The laws and ministry policies must be revised and synchronized (Maarif, 2018: 117–18). This also means recognizing “aliran kepercayaan” or all kinds of Indigenous peoples’ beliefs on an equal footing with other religions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Maarif, 2018: 118). This recognition must guarantee religious freedom and practice of aliran kepercayaan, including maintaining harmonious relationality with nature.

The notion of ecology and the recognition of natural rights in Indonesia may be able to develop further. For legal protection to exist, the state may revise the Population Administration Law by placing everything in nature such as mountains, rivers, seas, forests, and wildlife as subjects of citizens protected by law. Indigenous communities and believers as their representatives may be able to register them at the local Population and Civil Registration Office.

Of course, the recognitions outlined above require a strong foundation, namely through the empowerment of indigenous communities. Indonesia has drafted the Indigenous Peoples Bill which has not yet been ratified. If the bill is ratified following the will of adat communities, it can support their sovereignty in managing adat communities’ surrounding environment. Recently, Indonesia agreed to establish a permanent council for Indigenous peoples at COP16 to conserve biodiversity (Dhanya, 2024). The council must be independent as a representative of adat communities and struggle for their interests in decision-making.

### **3.3. Adat community-based as the alternative conservation**

Although Indigenous people and the conservation institution share the same notions, they have different efforts and goals in maintaining sustainability. The local communities that hold to their traditional principles still have a negative perception of the term “conservation” (Yuliani et al, 2018). Moreover, conservation institutions often accuse local communities of perpetuating hunting and wildlife trade, even though Indigenous knowledge carries out taboos that can support conservation efforts (Yuliani et al, 2018). Also, conservation NGOs are facing their own struggle of “size vs. efficiency” between the reciprocity of local community welfare and satisfying donors (Aldashev & Vallino, 2019). To overcome the dilemma, although not the best answer, NGOs must be able to help improve livelihoods for local communities, rather than replace them, and government institutions

should address basic community problems and demands to support conservation efforts (Aldashev & Vallino, 2019: 159). Thus, what concerns indigenous peoples is the recognition of the sovereignty of their management rights.

Meanwhile, NGOs focus on their programs' sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness based on resources. Conservationists need to involve traditional knowledge systems that should be supported by formal institutions that mutually respect and collaborate with indigenous communities (Yuliani et al, 2018). Modern conservation strategies are often criticized because the concept of nature between Indigenous and Western communities is different to be united in a coherent strategy (Dwyer, 1994). Indigenous communities have a management system that regulates access rights to resources communally so that can be utilized equally (Dwyer, 1994).

This problem can be solved by presenting an alternative approach in a participatory conservation system that considers the rights of self-management and involvement of Indigenous people. States and all parties involved in conservation efforts must go beyond the distributive model of thinking about social benefits and conservation costs (Martin et al, 2016). Rather than being the target of participatory conservation NGO programs, it would be more emancipatory and inclusive if adat communities could be involved more as equal groups in conservation.

Conservation efforts should acknowledge that NGOs have advantages in terms of technology and scientific research that indicate an imbalance in skills when compared to adat communities. Nevertheless, this does not mean that NGOs or conservationists should take themselves the main actors in conservation efforts because, in turn, it will have an impact on management problems within the institution itself and ignoring the sovereignty of local communities that are, ethically, supposed to have rights to manage their surrounding environment. Conservation must pay attention to social recognition, in this case, Indigenous peoples, to pursue equal status for local conservation stakeholders (Martin et al, 2016: 260). As a middle ground, Western science and indigenous knowledge must meet or create a point as transformative science in conservation in areas protected by custom and law (Rautio et al, 2022). This kind of knowledge collaboration allows both parties to exchange knowledge that supports the independence of indigenous peoples in ecological stewardship (Tengö et al, 2021).

To realize the adat community-based conservation, regulation should pursue relational aspects of the environment that must be explored and developed (Martin et al, 2016: 260). So, conservation efforts must be more effective, and conservation institutions or governments must not ignore the values of paradigm and religiosity of adat community. The recognition could empower sovereignty and count indigenous peoples as local conservation actors, instead of being assisted groups by conservation organizations. As the implementation of the notion, conservation regulations such as Law No. 32 of 2024 must be revised by making adat communities independent conservation institutions based on customary regulations and knowledge under adat organizations. The regulations must share space fairly between adat communities and conservation institutions in conservation areas and can play a role in each other. Supporting adat community-based conservation can encourage voluntary and independent conservation efforts so that, for the state and NGOs, it can save the budget for environmental conservation projects that have been mostly spent on accommodation, transportation, and protection from external parties.

The notion of animals as part of citizenship politics is common in various traditions. It is Western thinking that causes humans to be detached from nature and places them in a higher hierarchy than animals (Donaldson, 2020). The period of colonization brought an unfair system in occupied countries as subjects of exploitation such as nature and animals, as well as colonized Indigenous peoples (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 168–69). Wildlife or wild animals as subjects whose



citizenship rights can be seen as forming sovereign communities in their territories that are vulnerable to human colonization (e.g., orangutans, tigers, and deer) (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 14). Recognition of wildlife rights requires the sovereign power of Indigenous peoples who recognize wildlife as living entities and can transcend national borders, while political systems must avoid imperialistic forms that discredit Indigenous peoples (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 44 & 172–73). By this approach, the recognition of wildlife rights can be applied across national borders or transnationally.

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#### 4. Conclusion

Adat communities have an intersubjective relationship with their natural surroundings, making natural subjects as figures or living creatures that are interconnected and in need of human-nature relations. This requirement can be important in recognizing ecological citizenship and natural rights in Indonesia. Thus, adat communities can voluntarily be active subjects to protect nature. However, the state has a different paradigm and citizenship framework by making nature the subject of exploitation and management through inefficient anthropocentric conservation.

Therefore, to realize adat people-based or bottom-up conservation, there are many regulations that the government must improve inclusively, including population regulations, religious regulations, land regulations, conservation regulations, and the establishment of independent institutions representing adat communities such as the Customary Council. Population and conservation regulations are essential for a country considering ecological citizenship, which can ultimately support the rights of nature in legal protection through Indigenous communities. Religious regulations can support the paradigm of Indigenous peoples' beliefs such as *aliran kepercayaan* that receive protection and freedom in expressing their teachings in fostering human-nature relations under the Ministry of Religion. Registration and verification of customary land and recognition of adat communities are required with a legal basis that is no longer intervened by the involvement of customary institutions formed by the local government but must guarantee the self-identification of adat communities. Furthermore, independent institutions in the state's political structure representing adat communities are needed to support social justice through the recognition and redistribution to them, thereby facilitating their political participation.

Since some tribes or adat groups and certain species live across national borders, efforts to recognize the rights of nature and the sovereignty of indigenous peoples can be an important point for Indonesia in engaging in global conservation efforts. Economically, indigenous-based conservation efforts with recognition of ecological citizenship can provide management and funding efficiency benefits that are worth further study in future research.

It requires a change into ecocentric paradigm and communitarian framework by the state. Therefore, it still requires community and NGO efforts through campaigns—including education and advocacy—regarding the paradigm of human-nature relations which is adat's knowledge of legal rationality. The participation and involvement of adat communities are much needed in the effort. In addition, academics can continue to develop research on adat people's relationality and the importance of customary-based conservation in alternative ways to support the discourse of natural citizenship.

This study is limited to two adat communities in the local community around Mt. Merapi and Iban communities in West Kalimantan. Future research is expected to describe concepts of ecological citizenship that include ecological rights and human-nature relations to support adat-based conservation discourse. Many adat communities live in protected areas such as national parks and nature reserves that believe in traditional teachings, both traditional indignity philosophy and aliran kepercayaan.

In addition, the elaboration between world religions and local values can also influence the perspectives of indigenous communities who have adopted official religions in preserving their environment. Thus, future research can also review the teachings of ecological theology from communities that adhere to official religions in Indonesia. For example, religions, especially Abrahamic religions, which have been considered to have anthropocentric teaching views have alternative teachings through theocentric interpretations (Hoffman & Sandelands, 2005; Singgih, 2021). The view of ecological relationality of adat communities who have embraced official religions can also be deepened (Beck, 2015; Maarif, 2014). Thus, such studies can invite broader discussions on grassroots community-based conservation.

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