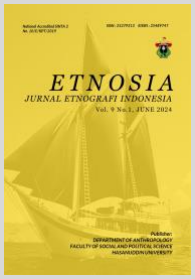
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From Tradition to Modern Parenting: An Ethnography of Child Rearing Practices in a Sundanese Village

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ABSTRACT

Child rearing practices among young mothers and young fathers in Sundanese semi-rural areas are changing rapidly, shaped by social transformation, digital media, and modern medical knowledge. While most studies focus on parenting as a way to preserve cultural values, this article examines how young mothers and young fathers are adapting their practices amid semi-urban change and what happens to local values such as *pamali*, extended family roles, and the use of the Sundanese language in everyday family life.

Using ethnographic approach, this study was conducted in Cileles Village, West Java Province. Data was collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with five mothers and three fathers who have children under five years old.

The results show that child rearing practices have become an arena for cultural selection and rationalization. Young mothers and young fathers tend to adopt child rearing practices informed by digital knowledge and information, which are considered more relevant to children's growth and development needs. Sundanese cultural values such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* are still recognized symbolically, but have undergone changes in form and in the intensity of their application. Shifts are evident in child stimulation practices, sleep arrangements, language use within the family, and less involvement of the extended family in child rearing. Rather than openly rejecting tradition, young mothers and young fathers engage in gradual and selective adaptations that subtly reconfigure child rearing as a medium of cultural inheritance. This study demonstrates that the transformation of Sundanese culture occurs not only in public or institutional domains but also within the domestic sphere. In the context of semi-urbanization, everyday parenting practices become an early locus of cultural change with long-term implications for cultural sustainability.

1. Introduction

When it comes to parenting, I learned from my parents, but now I also learn a lot from YouTube. There are certain things that I consider inappropriate, although people around me think they are acceptable. For example, giving snacks or light meals. I choose not to give my child such foods because I am more selective about what my child consumes. However, my parents usually say it is fine, as long as the child is healthy and not sick (Mrs. Era, mother of an eleven-month-old child).

This statement was made by a young mother who has a toddler in a village in West Java, where the majority of the population is Sundanese. This quote reflects an important change in child rearing practices in rural communities, where knowledge about child rearing no longer comes solely from family traditions and local communities, but also from a range of modern sources, such as parenting books, digital media, and health workers. In daily practice, young mothers and young fathers do not necessarily abandon traditional values; rather, they select, adapt, and adjust various forms of knowledge they consider relevant to children's needs and the current family situation.

In the context of Sundanese society, traditional child rearing is not only a domestic activity, but also an important space for the transmission of cultural values. The values of *silih asah* (mutual learning and knowledge exchange), *silih asih* (love and compassion), and *silih asuh* (protection and guidance) form a moral framework in parent-child relationships, as well as the basis for the formation of social character from an early age. In addition, the family is the first social group that children are involved with and plays a key role in helping to shape and develop an individual's character (Maunah, 2021). Through parenting, norms of politeness, social relations, and the use of the Sundanese language are introduced to children from an early age.

Some studies show that child rearing practices are influenced by various factors, including socioeconomic background, tradition, parents' level of education, technological developments, and geographical conditions (Adawiah, 2017; Solihat et al., 2023; Miyati et al., 2021). In Sundanese society, the tradition of parenting is passed down from generation to generation and it plays an important role in shaping children's mindsets and character (Diananda, 2021). However, the development of digital technology has changed the way parents acquire and practice parenting knowledge, especially through social media and other online sources that serve as new sources of reference for parenting (Atmojo et al., 2021; Maysara & Yuliani, 2024). More recent studies indicate that Sundanese child rearing practices remain rooted in local wisdom despite social change. Research in Kampung Pasir Kaler shows that parenting is grounded in cosmological, spiritual, and traditional values from the prenatal period to early childhood, shaping children's character according to Sundanese cultural foundations (Andrisyah et al., 2022). Similarly, studies in Kampung Ciroke document rituals such as *babarit* (earth alms), *nurunken* (receiving the birth of a baby), *digedog* (assisting childbirth), *gusaran* (tooth brushing), *radinan* (giving advice), and circumcision (local ceremonial practices related to pregnancy, birth, and child development) which embody values of belief, religiosity, politeness,

cooperation, and social relations, reinforcing parents roles in shaping children's behaviour and gender relations (Nurhayati dan Napisah, 2024).

Previous studies show that the Sundanese people continue to strive to preserve cultural values in their parenting practices, despite various adjustments (Nurhayati & Napisah, 2024). Madjid et al., (2016) show that parents are the primary agents in transmitting Sundanese cultural values through parenting from an early age. On the other hand, studies on Sundanese language and culture show a shift toward mixed and Indonesian dominant language use in daily life, driven by the dominance of Indonesian and pragmatic considerations within families (Zenab & Anggana, 2023). In addition, although elements of Sundanese culture are still used in social activities, some people, especially the younger generation, tend to be indifferent or even less confident about displaying their Sundanese cultural identity in everyday life (Kembara et al., 2021). This change in attitude is not only apparent in public spaces, but also permeates the domestic sphere, including in child rearing practices.

Changes in parenting practices are increasingly evident in rural areas transitioning to semi-urban areas. Geographical proximity to educational centers, industrial areas, and urban areas enables intensive interaction with external values that indirectly influence daily practices, including child rearing patterns (Rizqi et al., 2022). In this context, child rearing becomes an important arena for cultural rationalization, where young mothers and young fathers weigh traditional values against modern knowledge obtained from digital media and medical authorities without completely rejecting local culture.

Previous studies have emphasized the continuity and resilience of local wisdom in Sundanese parenting (Andrisyah et al., 2022; Nurhayati & Napisah, 2024; Madjid et al., 2016). However, this studies tend to focus on parenting as a mechanism of cultural preservation, with limited attention to how everyday parenting practices may also contribute to the transformation, reduction, or gradual disappearance of cultural values. This research demonstrates that child rearing can function as an early locus of cultural transformation, where cultural values are filtered, reduced, or even abandoned. In doing so, this article positions parenting as a critical mechanism in the gradual reconfiguration and potential weakening of Sundanese cultural sustainability.

Based on these dynamics, this article uses child rearing practices as a gateway to understand Sundanese cultural transformation at the domestic level. The study focuses on the experiences of young mothers and young fathers in Cileles Village, West Java, in raising children, as well as how they maintain, select, and reinterpret Sundanese cultural values in their daily lives. The main question asked is how changes in child rearing practices occur in young Sundanese families and to what extent these changes shift the role of child rearing as a medium for passing on local culture. This article argues that cultural transformation occurs not only in public or institutional spaces, but also more subtly and in layers, through child rearing practices within families.

The study demonstrates how parenting practices function as a site of negotiation between *pamali* (taboos) and modern rationality, marked by a shift in caregiving authority from elders and parents to medical professionals and digital sources, as well as the narrowing of cultural transmission through the declining use of Sundanese within the nuclear family.

2. Method

This article using ethnographic approach to understand child rearing practices within the social and cultural life of the Sundanese people. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meanings, values, and cultural logic underlying child rearing practices in everyday contexts, as well as to capture the gradual, often implicitly apparent process of cultural change (Spradley, 1980).

Field research was conducted in Cileles Village, West Java Province, a rural area transitioning to semi-urban status. This location was chosen because it represents a social context in which local cultural values interact intensively with the influences of formal education, digital media, and modern health institutions. The research was conducted through the researcher's direct involvement in the community's daily life, particularly in families with toddlers.

There are eight informants participated in this study, consisting of five young mothers and three young fathers who have children under five years old, ranging from toddlers to preschool-aged children, who lived permanently in Cileles Village. The informants were selected purposively based on family conditions, including primary caregivers with different employment statuses, such as working mothers and non-working mothers, as well as fathers who were engaged in paid work, and educational background in order to capture the diversity of parenting experiences (see Table 1 below). The limited number of informants was not intended to produce statistical generalizations, but rather to obtain in-depth data and contextual understanding of child rearing practices in Sundanese family life.

Table 1. Research Informants

No.	Name	Age	Parental Role	Education
1.	Mawar	38	Primary caregiver, non-working mother	Junior High School
2.	Melati	25	Primary caregiver, non-working mother	Senior High School
3.	Era	21	Primary caregiver, non-working mother	Junior High School
4.	Ais	28	Primary caregiver, non-working mother	Junior High School
5.	Neng	30	Working mother (balancing employment and child rearing)	Bachelor's degree
6.	Ujang	28	Father with full-time employment	Bachelor's degree
7.	Amin	31	Father with full-time employment	Vocational High

				School
8.	Soleh	28	Father with full-time employment	Senior High School

Data was collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews. Participant observation involved visiting informants homes, observing daily child rearing activities, and documenting interactions among young mothers and young fathers, children and other family members The aspects observed included interpretations and applications of *pamali*, the adoption of modern child care and stimulation practices, language use in everyday interaction, and the role of the extended family in shaping parenting decisions.

Data were analyzed using an ethnographic analysis procedure proposed by Spradley (1980:85–144), which consists of domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and thematic analysis. *First*, domain analysis was conducted to identify broad categories of meaning related to child rearing practices, sources of child rearing knowledge, language use, and cultural values within Sundanese families. *Second*, taxonomic analysis was employed to examine the internal organization of each domain, particularly the distinction between traditional and modern child rearing practices and knowledge sources. Third, componential analysis was applied to identify dimensions of contrast in child rearing practices, such as *pamali* based reasoning versus medical or digital rationales, collective versus nuclear family involvement, and the use of Sundanese versus Indonesian in everyday child rearing interactions. *Finally*, thematic analysis was carried out to synthesize recurring cultural patterns across domains, revealing child rearing as an arena of cultural selection, rationalization, and transformation in the domestic sphere. The analysis process occurred simultaneously with data collection, allowing field findings to be continuously explored and contextualized. This approach enabled us to identify patterns of meaning, practices, and changes related to child rearing and the transmission of cultural values.

Ethical considerations were a primary concern in the implementation of the research. All informants provided informed consent prior to participation, including consent for audio recording of the interviews. All interviews were recorded with their consent. To protect informants privacy and comfort, all names used in this article are pseudonyms. The researcher also maintained a reflective stance throughout the research, being aware of his role in the knowledge production process and striving to build equal, mutually respectful relationships with informants.

3. Result and Discussion

- **The Social and Cultural Context of Cileles Village**

Cileles Village, West Java Province a rural area that has undergone significant social and spatial changes over the past two decades represents the character of Sundanese rural areas, which are neither completely detached from agrarian traditions nor entirely within the sphere of influence of urban areas. Administratively, Cileles Village consists of four hamlets, ten Community

Associations (RW), and thirty-seven Neighborhood Associations (RT) with a relatively dense number of nuclear families compared to traditional agrarian villages in the surrounding area. The village's proximity to higher education centers, industrial areas, and major transportation routes creates intense social mobility.

Changes in livelihood structures are one of the main indicators of social transformation in Cileles Village. Whereas in previous generations most residents depended on agriculture and village-based work for their livelihoods, today the majority work as factory workers, online motorcycle taxi drivers, informal-sector workers, and service workers. Only a small number of families still rely on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. This shift in economic orientation has direct implications to the rhythm of family life, the division of time between work and household chores, and the patterns of relationships between family members.

This social transformation is also reflected in changes to the village settlement landscape. On the one hand, traditional houses and agricultural land remain as markers of Sundanese rural identity. On the other hand, new residential areas with modern-style houses have emerged, built by young families or migrants working in the industrial and service sectors. These spatial changes not only alter the physical appearance of the village, but also influence patterns of social interaction, the intensity of relations between residents, and the form of extended family involvement in daily life.

Demographically, of the 6,331 residents of Cileles Village, the majority are Muslim and use Sundanese as their first language in social interactions. However, in the domestic sphere, especially among young families with toddlers, the use of Sundanese is beginning to mix with Indonesian. This change is closely related to the orientation toward formal education, social mobility, and parents' concerns about their children's readiness for school. Mrs. Melati, mother of a two-year-old child, stated that, "Everyday language is a mixture of Indonesian and Sundanese. This is because children today communicate more frequently in Indonesian, mainly due to the intensity of cell phone use, so that language choice carries over into interactions at home." In this social context, young families in Cileles Village are at a crossroads between preserving inherited cultural practices and adapting them to contemporary life.

Cileles Village's semi-urban status makes it a relevant context for understanding changes in child rearing practices. Child rearing no longer takes place in a homogeneous, relatively closed social space, but rather in one filled with diverse new sources of knowledge, values, and authority. Thus, the social and cultural context of this village is an important foundation for interpreting child rearing practices as part of the ongoing transformation of Sundanese culture at the domestic level.

- **Child Rearing: an Arena for Cultural Selection and Rationalization**

Child rearing practices in Cileles Village do not take place as a linear continuation of tradition, but rather as an arena for cultural selection and rationalization. Young mothers and young fathers no longer practice the parenting patterns inherited from previous generations in their entirety, but actively weigh various parenting practices based on rational considerations, personal experiences, and the knowledge authorities they deem most relevant. In this context, child rearing becomes an important space where Sundanese cultural values interact with modern parenting knowledge. This process reflects an ongoing tension between traditional cultural values and modern knowledge systems, in which young mothers and young fathers must decide what to preserve from their upbringing and what to adopt from ways of life considered more rational and relevant today.

Sundanese cultural values such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* are still recognized by young mothers and young fathers as moral principles in raising children. These values are understood as the basis for loving relationships, mutual learning, and caring within the family, as also shown in research on Sundanese parenting that emphasizes the importance of social and religious values in shaping children's character (Madjid et al., 2016; Fadilla et al., 2024). However, in daily practice, applying these values does not always follow traditional patterns involving the extended family. Young mothers and young fathers tend to practice them within the nuclear family in a more individualized form, adapted to the demands of modern life.

Child rearing has also become an arena for selecting various traditional practices that were previously accepted without question. Several studies show that socioeconomic background, parents' level of education, and changes in the social environment influence the way parents raise their children (Adawiah, 2017; Miyati et al., 2021; Solihat et al., 2023). In Cileles Village, young mothers and young fathers show a reflective attitude when deciding how to raise their children, especially when faced with practices considered inconsistent with scientific knowledge or irrelevant to children's developmental needs. This selection process is important because the parenting style chosen by parents has direct implications for the formation of children's behavior and character, both in the short and long term (Yapalalin et al., 2021).

The process of cultural rationalization in parenting has intensified with the development of digital technology and the widespread availability of parenting information. Social media, health platforms, and online parenting content have become the main references for young mothers and young fathers in making parenting decisions. The knowledge obtained from these digital spaces is perceived as scientific and up-to-date, thus gaining strong legitimacy compared to the advice of older generations, as stated by Mrs. Ais, as follows:

> During my pregnancy, I only attended the four-monthly religious lectures … With my second child, I did not follow this advice because I obtained a lot of parenting information from my cell phone and the midwife also did not recommend excessive practices … I no longer do this practice because

> it is considered inappropriate in today's circumstances (Mrs. Ais, mother of a two-month-old toddler).

This condition aligns with the findings of Valantia & Munawaroh (2025), which show that digital technology plays an important role in shaping modern parenting practices while posing a dilemma between adopting new knowledge and preserving local cultural values. In the context of Cileles Village, young mothers and young fathers digital literacy is a key factor in determining the extent to which modern knowledge is adopted or filtered in parenting practices. However, rationalizing parenting does not always mean a total rejection of local culture. Young mothers and young fathers still strive to maintain Sundanese cultural values that are considered essential and do not conflict with modern logic, such as the importance of emotional closeness, respect for elders, and the formation of children's social character, as expressed by Mrs. Neng, as follows:

> I learn parenting from books and videos on social media, but not all parenting advice suits my child. Therefore, I apply it by adjusting it to my child's character. Nowadays, people are already in a transitional situation. Some *pamali* are still known, but whether they are practiced or not depends on us. If it makes sense and has benefits, it can be followed. If it does not seem logical, it is usually abandoned (Mrs. Neng, mother of an seven-month-old child).

Similar attitudes were expressed by other informants, who emphasized evaluating traditions based on relevance and practicality, as Mrs. Melati explained below:

> I don't really sing Sundanese songs or apply specific Sundanese traditions when my child goes to sleep. It doesn't feel very relevant anymore. Nowadays children are more used to playing with phones, and it's hard to tell them not to. I learned parenting from my parents, but I also watch TikTok because parenting today is different from the past. If something seems realistic and makes sense, I apply it. If not, I just follow what older people used to do. As for specifically applying Sundanese culture in parenting, I just let it flow some things carry over, some don't (Mrs. Melati, a mother of a two-year-old child).

This pattern shows that child rearing functions as a space for cultural negotiation, where young mothers and young fathers actively filter and reinterpret traditions within the framework of contemporary life.

Child rearing practices in Cileles Village thus reflect a selective, gradual process of cultural change. Child rearing is no longer merely a means of cultural reproduction, but also a field of reflection in which young mothers and young fathers negotiate cultural identity, knowledge authority, and the demands of modern life. This process confirms that the transformation of Sundanese culture in the domestic sphere occurs through seemingly simple everyday decisions, but has long-term implications for the inheritance of cultural values.

- **Parenting: Negotiating Tradition and Rationality**

In the practice of child rearing in Cileles Village, *pamali* occupy an increasingly fluid and contextual position. For previous generations, *pamali* served as moral and symbolic guidelines that regulated children's behaviour and family relationships. These *pamali* were accepted as part of cultural knowledge passed down from generation to generation, and their rationality was rarely questioned. However, it was found that for young mothers and young fathers *pamali* is no longer practiced as an absolute rule, but is treated as cultural knowledge that can be selected and reinterpreted in accordance with the context of modern life. Mr. Ujang, for example, explained that:

> As much as possible, *pamali* are no longer followed nowadays because they are considered irrational. However, for a child who is only two months old and whose immune system is still weak, we still adjust to certain *pamali*. For example, the child is not allowed to go outside, or may only stay outside for a limited time before sunset, because the child's physical condition is still vulnerable. Once the child reaches around two years old and has developed a stronger immune system, the restriction is no longer applied (Mr. Ujang, a father of a two-month-old child).

The process of selecting *pamali* is closely related to changes in young mothers and young fathers views on child rearing. As education levels and access to medical information increase, young mothers and young fathers tend to evaluate traditional practices based on logical considerations, practical benefits, and their impact on children's health and development. *Pamali* that are considered to have a protective function or are relevant to children's safety, such as prohibiting children from leaving the house during sunset. This prohibition is rooted in a cultural belief that the time of sunset is associated with a dangerous moment when supernatural beings are believed to appear. However, in contemporary interpretation, the restriction is also understood in relation to children's physical vulnerability. Young father explain that at sunset the air becomes colder and darker, and infants whose immune systems are still developing are considered more susceptible to illness or physical harm. Thus, while the supernatural explanation persists culturally the practice is increasingly justified through health-related and practical considerations, are still maintained and practiced. Conversely, *pamali* related to certain symbolic practices during pregnancy, childbirth, or infant care are beginning to be abandoned because they are considered to have no clear rational or medical basis. Several informants described a gradual decline in symbolic rituals related to pregnancy, childbirth, and early infant care. Practices such as *tujuh bulanan* (seven-month pregnancy ritual) involving coconuts, flower water, or other ritual objects are now rarely performed and are often replaced by religious gatherings (*pengajian*) without accompanying ritual elements. This decline is closely related to the weakening presence of older family members who traditionally played a key role in transmitting these practices, as Mrs. Neng revealed that:

> It still depends on the family. Some people perform both the four-month and seven-month rituals, but in my family, we usually choose one, either at four months or seven months. In essence, both are prayers, but many prefer the four-month ritual because it is believed to be the time when the soul is breathed into the baby, so it feels more sacred. After birth, there is also *aqiqah* or what we call *marhaban*. As for other traditional rituals, they used to involve symbolic items like coconuts, flower water, rice, and grains. But nowadays those elements are rarely used. Most families focus more on religious recitations and prayers rather than the traditional ritual objects (Mrs. Neng, a mother of a seven-month-old child).

These findings align with the study by Kembara et al., (2021), which shows that the Sundanese people, especially the younger generation, are increasingly selective in practicing local cultural values. This selective attitude does not necessarily reflects a rejection of Sundanese culture, but rather a shift in how traditions are interpreted in everyday life. In the context of parenting, *pamali* no longer functions as an absolute prohibition, but rather as a moral reference whose applicability is negotiated based on the family's situation and needs.

In addition to *pamali*, changes are evident in infant care and parenting practices. Young mothers and young fathers in Cileles Village have begun to adopt modern parenting practices, such as infant motor stimulation, sleep pattern regulation, and regular monitoring of child growth and development. These practices are obtained from health workers, such as midwives and *Posyandu* (integrated health service post) officers, as well as from digital media that provide medically based parenting information. This knowledge is perceived as more scientific and accountable, thus gaining strong legitimacy in child rearing decision-making (Atmojo et al., 2021; Maysara & Yuliani, 2024). These changes primarily occur at the level of practice, while young mothers and young fathers continue to recognize *pamali* as part of their cultural identity. Rather than abandoning it entirely, they selectively apply it in ways they find logical and useful, guided by what they believe supports their children's development.

However, the negotiation between tradition and modern rationality is not always confrontational. Young mothers and young fathers still strive to maintain Sundanese cultural values considered essential and aligned with modern parenting principles, such as the importance of emotional closeness, social character development, and respect for elders. These values are maintained even though the practice has undergone adjustments, mainly because parenting is now more centered on the nuclear family and influenced by mother and father work schedules, as Mr. Amin explained below:

> Affection does not mean giving everything the child asks for. Even if a child asks for something, if it has no benefit, it should not be given. This is actually a form of parental care. I also teach my child that desires cannot be fulfilled instantly; they must go through a process or effort first. In Cileles Village, maintaining social harmony is important. Children must be taught

> to respect others and admit mistakes so that community relations are not disrupted (Mr. Amin, a father of a three-year-old child).

The shift from traditional to modern parenting reflects the complex dynamics of cultural negotiation. *Pamali* has not completely disappeared from child rearing practices, but has undergone changes in function and meaning within the framework of contemporary rationality. This process shows that the transformation of Sundanese culture is taking place gradually and adaptively through the daily practices of young mothers and young fathers as they raise their children, rather than through a drastic break with tradition.

- **Authority on Child Rearing Knowledge**

Changes in child rearing practices in Cileles Village cannot be separated from shifts in authority over how children are raised. In previous generations, the authority of child rearing rested with mother and father, extended families, and local traditions. In today's young families, this authority has become more pluralistic and fragmented. Young mothers and young fathers face various competing sources of knowledge, ranging from the experiences of older generations and health workers to digital media, each of which offers different legitimacy for parenting practices.

Where previous generations learned about parenting mostly through family experience and intergenerational transmission, the young mothers and young fathers in this study have access to a far broader knowledge base ranging from digital media and parenting books to formal education and health professionals. This wider accessibility has gradually shifted assumptions about whose knowledge carries authority in child rearing, as parents increasingly turn to multiple sources rather than relying solely on family tradition.

In the context of the family, parents and older relatives are still seen as sources of experience-based knowledge. Advice on baby care, *pamali*, and patterns of interaction with children are often presented as "proven methods for a long time." However, this experience-based authority is no longer automatically accepted. Young mothers and young fathers tend to question this advice, especially when it is considered inconsistent with medical knowledge or information they obtain from other sources. This situation creates a symbolic distance between older and younger generations in parenting practices, even though kinship relations are still maintained socially. In response to this, Mrs. Ais stated that:

> In the past, my parents often told me that babies should not do certain things, such as being placed on their stomachs or wearing a necklace for forty days to protect them from disturbances by supernatural beings. They also said that tummy time should not be done because it was considered too early. However, I trust the midwife and the information I find on my phone more. According to the midwife and online sources, tummy time is actually beneficial for strengthening the baby's body. Therefore, I do not follow all of my parent's advice and tend to follow the midwife's recommendations instead (Mrs. Ais, a mother of a two-month-old child).

Health workers, especially midwives and *Posyandu* officers, have emerged as new authority figures with significant influence on child rearing practices. The advice given by midwives regarding infant care, developmental stimulation, and children's diets is often seen as more credible because it is associated with scientific knowledge and formal health institutions. In some cases, young mothers and young fathers openly stated that they trust the midwives' explanations more than their own parents' advice, especially regarding children's health and safety, as Mrs. Ais confirmed below:

> When I had my second child, I didn't just rely on my experience with my first child. I learned a lot from parenting videos on YouTube and TikTok. Honestly, the information from my phone influences me more than people around me. Sometimes what I see online is different from what my parents say. For example, when I did tummy time, my parents said it was too early and the baby shouldn't be placed on the stomach yet. But according to the midwife and what I saw online, it's actually good for strengthening the baby's muscles and helping the head stay upright. So I usually check with the midwife if I'm unsure, and she said what I was doing was correct. That's why I tend to follow the midwife's advice rather than my parents'. There was also advice to give a black chicken to the *paraji* (a traditional Sundanese birth attendant who assists childbirth and performs related cultural and ritual practices), but to me that doesn't make sense. If a chicken is taken care of, of course it will grow well it doesn't mean it affects the child's life (Mrs. Ais, mother of a two-month-old child).

This shift shows that medical rationality has become the main reference in child rearing decision-making, replacing some of the roles of tradition and family experience.

In addition to health workers, digital media also plays an important role as a source of authoritative knowledge in child care. Social media, video-sharing platforms, and health applications provide a variety of easily accessible and attractively packaged parenting information. Young mothers and young fathers use these media to find references on child stimulation, sleep patterns, and even how to raise children "ideally." Knowledge obtained from digital spaces is often perceived as up-to-date and science-based, thus gaining strong legitimacy in parenting practices (Atmojo et al., 2021; Maysara & Yuliani, 2024). However, the use of digital technology in parenting also presents a dilemma between adopting modern knowledge and sustaining local cultural values (Valantia & Munawaroh, 2025).

This shift in knowledge authority does not always occur without tension. Young mothers and young fathers often find themselves in a dilemma when they have to choose between following their parents' advice, health workers' recommendations, or information from digital media. As illustrated in the previous accounts, young mothers and young fathers do not simply reject traditional practice of *pamali*, but selectively reinterpret them based on considerations of children's physical vulnerability and health resilience. This

tension is often resolved through compromise strategies, such as adopting modern practices in child health and development while maintaining cultural values that are not considered to conflict with medical rationality. In this context, child rearing becomes an active space of negotiation between various intertwined authorities of knowledge.

Thus, changes in child rearing practices in Cileles Village can be understood as part of the transformation of the authority of knowledge in the domestic sphere is shaped by an ongoing tension between traditional and modern parenting knowledge. Child rearing is no longer entirely controlled by tradition or family experience, but it is shaped by complex interactions between local knowledge, medical rationality, and digital information. This process shows that Sundanese cultural transformation is not only about changes in values or practices, but also in the sources of knowledge legitimacy that young mothers and young fathers refer to in raising children

- **Language, Family, and the Narrowing Space for Cultural Transmission**

Language is one of the main media for cultural inheritance in Sundanese families. In traditional parenting practices, the use of Sundanese serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a way to internalize values of politeness, social hierarchy, and cultural identity from an early age. However, the use of Sundanese in the parenting practices of toddlers in Cileles Village has undergone a significant shift. Many young mothers and young fathers prefer to use Indonesian in their daily interactions with their children.

The choice to use Indonesian is generally based on pragmatic considerations. Young mothers and young fathers consider Indonesian easier for children to understand, more neutral, and better suited to preparing children for formal education. Mr. Soleh, a father of a four-year-old child, revealed that:

> Now it's a dilemma, I'm afraid that if I use Sundanese, my child will absorb the harsh words. So, I often mix it with Indonesian, but I don't want to eliminate their mother tongue. I just introduce them to the gentle words little by little.

Concerns that children will absorb forms of Sundanese considered coarse or inappropriate by politeness norms are also a reason for restricting the use of local languages in the domestic sphere. This finding aligns with research by Zenab & Anggana (2023), which shows that the dominance of the national language in everyday life contributes to the weakening of Sundanese as the first language in the family environment. In Sundanese cultural practice, parents are expected to use refined (*lemes*) language and model gentle behavior, teaching children to speak respectfully, honor guests, and express gratitude appropriately. Through these everyday interactions, children internalize norms of politeness and cultural pride. The declining use of Sundanese in the domestic sphere therefore reflects not only a linguistic shift, but also a gradual transformation in how respect and cultural values are transmitted across generations (Mulyana et al., 2020). As reflected in young mothers and young fathers concerns about children absorbing "harsh words," the reduced use of Sundanese in the domestic sphere therefore

implies not only a linguistic shift, but also a transformation in how norms of politeness and social hierarchy are internalized from an early age. As previously expressed by Mr. Soleh, concerns about children absorbing "harsh words" reflect anxieties about maintaining appropriate forms of politeness in daily interaction.

This shift in language in parenting practices shows that cultural inheritance does not always end with explicit rejection, but rather through practical decisions made by young mothers and young fathers in their daily lives. The domestic sphere, which was previously the primary space for the transmission of language and cultural values, no longer performs this function as effectively. This condition is reinforced by changes in family structure, where child rearing is increasingly centered on the nuclear family. The involvement of grandparents and other relatives in child rearing has become increasingly limited, both due to the demands of mother and fathers work and changes in settlement patterns.

The narrowing of the role of the extended family directly reduces intergenerational interaction in children's lives. In fact, this interaction previously served as an important means of transmitting the Sundanese language, stories, and cultural values. This change shows that child rearing has transformed not only in technical practices but also in the social structures that support it. This in line with the findings of Madjid et al., (2016), the reduced role of the extended family in child rearing has implications for the weakening of the process of internalizing cultural values in children from an early age. As Mr. Ujang explained:

> Sometimes the grandparents help take care of the child, but everyone has their own activities. If they have time, they accompany their grandchild; if they are busy, they don't. When my child is with them, they may give advice, but I'm often at work, so I don't really know what is being taught (Mr. Ujang, father of a two-month-old child).

Thus, the change in language use and the narrowing of the extended family's role in child rearing in Cileles Village shows how cultural transformation occurs structurally and is not always recognized. Child rearing practices have become one of the spaces where these changes accumulate and impact the sustainability of Sundanese culture at the domestic level.

- **Child rearing and Cultural Transformation in the Domestic Sphere**

Overall, child rearing practices in Cileles Village can be understood as an important arena for transforming Sundanese culture in the domestic sphere. Cultural change does not occur through open rejection of tradition, but rather through a process of selection, adaptation, and rationalization that takes place in the daily practices of young mothers and young fathers. Child rearing becomes a space where local cultural values, medical rationality, and the demands of modern life interact, forming new configurations.

This transformation is evident in various aspects of child rearing, from how young mothers and young fathers interpret *pamali* and determine child care practices to the language they choose and the roles they negotiate with the

extended family. Young mothers and young fathers do not completely abandon Sundanese culture, but rather place it in a more flexible, contextual position. Cultural values considered relevant and not in conflict with modern logic which tend to be retained, while other practices decline or change in function.

Child rearing in this context no longer functions optimally as the primary medium for cultural inheritance, but rather as a reflective space for young mothers and young fathers in developing child rearing strategies deemed most appropriate to the family's social and economic conditions, as Mrs. Mawar revealed that:

> In the past, when I had my first and second children, when I was pregnant, there were still four-month and seven-month recitations, and then when they were born, they were also given *aqiqah* (ritual for the birth of a child). But now, with my third child, it's different. During pregnancy and after birth, there were no religious gatherings or *aqiqah* ceremonies due to unfavourable economic conditions. The parents are also no longer around, so there is no one to help with the costs for events like before. The first and second children were still supported by their parents (Mrs. Mawar, a mother of a three-year-old child).

This process shows that Sundanese cultural change occurs subtly and in layers, often without being recognized as a significant cultural shift. In line with Kembara et al., (2021), changes in attitudes toward local culture among the younger generation contribute to shifts in how culture is presented and transmitted in daily life.

Domestic sphere is a crucial space for understanding the dynamics of cultural transformation in rural communities undergoing semi-urbanization. Child rearing is an early indicator of how Sundanese culture is adapting, being negotiated, and potentially changing in the lives of future generations.

4. Conclusion

Child rearing in Cileles Village is not merely a domestic activity, but a social practice through which cultural values are negotiated, transformed, and recontextualized. Rather than passively transmitting tradition, young mothers and young fathers actively reflect on which values remain relevant and how they should be practiced.

The findings show that medical rationality, digital media, and modern parenting knowledge have become dominant influences, reshaping everyday practices of parenting. Core Sundanese values such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* remain symbolically recognized, but their forms and intensity have changed. *Pamali* is no longer treated as an absolute rule, but is applied selectively based on perceived relevance to children's development and contemporary life.

This study also shows that these shifts are not purely individual, they are embedded in broader structural changes, including the growing dominance of the nuclear family, reduced extended family involvement, and changing language use at home. Together, these changes weaken child rearing as a primary

medium of cultural transmission and reflect the fragmentation of domestic life under conditions of social mobility and formal education.

This article contributes to family anthropology and the study of local cultural change by showing that cultural transformation unfolds quietly in everyday parenting practices, rather than through open rejection of tradition. Future research could explore how these dynamics differ across rural and semi-urban contexts, and examine the long-term implications for the intergenerational transmission of local languages and cultural values.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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