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ADVANCES IN SOCIAL HUMANITIES RESEARCH

THE ROLE OF RAGUNAN ZOO AS A WILDLIFE CONSERVATION MEDIUM, 1966-1993

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Abstract

This article examines the role of Ragunan Zoo as a medium for wildlife conservation from 1966 to 1993, focusing on its development amidst criticism for prioritizing tourism over conservation. Using historical methodology, the study traces the evolution of Ragunan Zoo from its origins as Planten en Dierentuin during the Dutch colonial era to its transformation into a modern conservation institution. The research highlights key efforts by Ragunan Zoo to address criticism, including the development of animal collections, breeding programs, partnerships with international zoos, and educational initiatives. The research also explores the tangible outcomes of these efforts, such as animal releases, successful breeding programs, and international recognition, including the Ramon Magsaysay Award awarded to Benjamin Galstaun, the zoo's first director. Despite challenges like limited funding and outdated infrastructure, Ragunan Zoo has made significant strides in balancing its roles as a conservation, educational, and recreational institution. The article concludes that Ragunan Zoo's conservation efforts have yielded positive results, contributing to preserving Indonesia's biodiversity while navigating the complexities of its dual role as a tourist attraction and conservation center.

Keywords: Ragunan Zoo; Wildlife Conservation; Biodiversity; Tourism; Historical Development

Introduction

As a mega biodiversity country, Indonesia has the advantage of rich biological natural resources in the form of flora and fauna of various types. 25,000 species of plants and 400,000 species of animals are spread throughout the land and waters of the archipelago (Kementrian Kelautan dan Perikanan, 2015). Such abundant biological wealth has a high risk of damage, both from the ecosystem and the distribution of the food chain, thus triggering conservation efforts in Indonesia, especially for endangered animals and plants.

According to the government, the ideal conservation effort is to maintain its genetic purity (Kementerian Kehutanan, 2012). One of the existing conservation media regulated

by the government is zoos. Zoos are conservation media that maintain at least three classes of taxa (classification of living things). The vineyard area is at least fifteen hectares with visitors not allowed to use motorized vehicles when visiting (Kementerian Kehutanan, 2012). Although zoo facilities are usually adapted to conservation concerns and are considered ideal due to human supervision, history records that zoos do not always provide a sense of security and work based on science.

History records that the relationship between humans and nature is not always harmonious, which is illustrated by the establishment of zoos that were better known as menagerie which was more focused on as a tool of legitimacy of power. According to William M. Mann (1930), the human disposition to keep animals and then confine them, both for cultivation, service, and entertainment, has existed since the early days of the development of human civilization. Zoos in the early days of civilization until the Middle Ages were a center for collecting animals to show the power and social position of the zoo's founder. The zoo does not have a scientific basis in zoology, which is certainly different from the concept of modern zoos (Scott, 2012).

During Mesopotamia, the first primitive zoos appeared in the era of the Dynasty of Your, which did not leave any records to study further (Scott, 2012). Ancient Egypt became the next civilization to establish zoos, even though with different orientations and treatments for their collected animals. For the Egyptians, animals such as lions, bulls, crocodiles, and snakes were sacred. The sanctification of these animals encouraged early conservation efforts by making them animals to be cared for and made central figures in their belief system (Croke, 1997). The Zhou Dynasty in China also established a 1,500-hectare park containing exotic animals that cannot be found in the Chinese plains. The park is as large as the distance from Beijing to Nanjing and contains animals such as anteleopes and pheasants. In Greece, animals are collected and displayed in the middle of the city as a show of strength and wealth. Although exploitation continues to occur, the competition for wealth and power using animals has aroused some parties to learn more about these animals, especially in the era of Alexander the Great (Croke, 1997).

The cruelty of humans to animals was evident in the Ancient Roman era with the use of these animals as a means of gambling and a medium of conflict. The elites in Ancient Rome were so thirsty for power and wealth that they made a man named Marcus Terentius Varro to become a distributor of exotic animals that he got from North Africa (Croke, 1997). Entering the era of church domination, there has been no significant change in the relationship between humans and animals through zoos. In fact, gejeja even accommodated and legitimized the cruelty by including the doctrine that the science of animals is a derivative of zoology so that it is believed that God speaks to humans through animals (Hoage & Deiss, 1996).

The birth of John Evelyn's work entitled 'Sylva' and the development of science after the eruption of the Renaissance changed the concept of human beings in seeing the bilateral relationship between humans and nature, especially animals (Hemery, 2014). A paradigm shift occurred with a significant difference between the definition of zoos as menagerie and zoo. The zoo confinement system changed with the creation of a small

ecosystem similar to where the animals came from and the community became more interested in studying animals (Sampaio et al., 2020). This change also extended to the Dutch East Indies with the birth of the first zoo in the Dutch East Indies which was the forerunner of the Ragunan Zoo.

The Ragunan Zoo, which was inaugurated by Ali Sadikin in 1966, has the main function as a conservation media and several other functions such as recreation, education, and research media. Ragunan Zoo has proven its role as a medium to attract tourists and public curiosity about the wildlifes since the colonial period. However, in its development, its function as a conservation media is covered by its function as a tourism destination and provokes various kinds of criticism from many parties who consider that the zoo is only functioned as to present the animals and make the visitors go home without bringing any new knowledge about the wildlifes. Ragunan Zoo's efforts to build its image as a conservation media will be discussed in more depth with three questions asked. First, how is the development of Ragunan Zoo as a medium for animal conservation. Second, what efforts have been made by Ragunan Zoo in developing its function as a medium for animal conservation. Third, what are the real results provided by the Ragunan Binatag Garden in animal conservation efforts.

Research Methods

This article is compiled following four stages in the historical method, which include the heuristic or source-gathering process, source criticism, source interpretation, and historiography (Wardah, 2014). The sources used in this study were obtained from various institutions, such as the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), the National Library, Kompas Daily, and the Ragunan Zoo’s private library. This article uses primary sources from relevant newspapers, a colonial law or staatsblad, modern laws and regulations, lists of government-proposed projects, and direct publications from Planten en dierentuin. Several secondary sources, such as relevant books and scientific journals, are used to get more in-depth context. The sources were critiqued through an observation and in-depth reading to gather all the information needed for the article. Some of the sources were written from the colonial era, so the translating process from Dutch to English was done by using a translation machine. After securing the data from the primary sources, all the information was interpreted by using active, imaginative thinking to understand the flow, story, and correlation from one historical fact to another. The secondary sources were used at this stage to enrich the explanation. The end of the method is historiography by writing all the information into a writing format. For this research, a scientific paper model is used to present the data and the information related to the topic.

Results and Discussion

Many studies were done to understand Ragunan Zoo from multiple perspectives, but not many studies were conducted to understand the zoo from a historical perspective and using the environmental history approach. First, Haryoko et al. (2021) and Wibisono (2021) conducted research discussing the modernization of Ragunan Zoo’s facilities to

improve animal welfare. One of the modernization is the establishment of the Schmutzer Primate Center in 2002. Both discussions found that the limited funding and outdated infrastructure were as two biggest obstacles to this effort. Bureaucratic constraints also become an obstacle to improving the facilities. Research conducted by Rahman (2020) found that the design of animal enclosures in Ragunan Zoo is mostly outdated due to fund constraints. In terms of conservation, Haryoko et al. (2021) and (Wibisono et al., 2021) explain that Ragunan Zoo has taken a serious step to increase its conservation initiatives, especially to expand the role of the zoo in the international network. Ragunan Zoo partnered with World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) to enhance its breeding programs and participate in species recovery plan.

From Planten en Dierentuin to Ragunan

In 1864, several Batavian elites gathered and voiced to build a zoo in the center of the Dutch East Indies government. Nicolaas Trakranen became one of the central figures in the formation of Vereeniging Planten en Dierentuin or also known as the Institute of Botany and Zoos. The establishment of this zoo cannot be separated from the role of Raden Saleh who donated 10 hectares of land in the Cikini area and gave him a seat on the honorary board of Planten en Dierentuin (Irmalasari, 2018). There are three goals that this institution wants to achieve with the establishment of Planten en Dierentuin. First, making Planten en Dierentuin a center of botanical activities and a zoological center. Second, to be a contributor in the economic field as a center for agriculture and livestock, Third, to be the center of the Batavia community to socialize and learn (Bataviasche Planten-En Dierentuin 1864-1939, 1939).

Planten en Dierentuin was legally protected in 1870 by the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, Pieter Mijer and inaugurated the zoo on March 26, 1874, ten years after the founding of Planten en Dierentuin. The construction of the collection was immediately carried out by bringing several animals from other zoos or by buying and extracting them themselves. The birth of the industrial revolution made it easier for Planten en Dierentuin to carry out the process of receiving and sending animals. In building its collection, Planten en Dierentuin also built a correspondence network throughout the Dutch East Indies, such as Palembang, Pontianak, Padang, Ternate, and Ambon (Bataviasche Planten-En Dierentuin 1864-1939, 1939). However, the development of animal collections is not accompanied by building a zoo that has adequate professional personnel. Planten en Dierentuin lacks zoologists and lags behind zoos in Europe in terms of science because it does not cooperate with universities in building academic networks (Bataviasche Planten-En Dierentuin 1864-1939, 1939).

The function of Planten en Dierentuin as a conservation medium has regressed due to the zoo's focus on building itself as a recreational medium in Batavia. Several facilities were built to support Platen en Dierentuin as a medium of recreation and entertainment, such as the construction of a theater building for film performances and the construction of a football field for matches. As a result of the focus that is no longer oriented towards conservation efforts, many of the Planten Dierentuin collections have been abandoned and even forced to be sold and released into nature. In addition, Planten en Dierentuin

was in debt of 200,000 guilders and caused an internal crisis. Several zoo officials have also undergone several changes of leadership and there are rumors that the land on which Planten en Dierentuin stands will be sold (Bataviasche Planten-En Dierentuin 1864-1939, 1939).

Concrete action in repairing Planten en Dierentuin was carried out under the command of F. Bonte who was appointed director of Platen en Dierentuin in 1932. The reforms carried out were to build cooperation with other zoos, such as the zoo in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, eliminate the football field so that the collection of animals would not be disturbed, and extend the theater provider to 1945 to cover the deficit and debt. Cooperation with overseas zoos is also carried out, such as cooperation with the Hanover Zoo in 1936 with animal exchange activities in the form of orangutans and zebras. (Bataviasche Planten-En Dierentuin 1864-1939, 1939). One form of Planten en Dierentuin's seriousness in improving itself as a conservation media is by conducting an expedition to Flores to research and bring Komodo dragons to Batavia to be used as a collection (Irmalasari, 2018).

Entering the independence era, Planten en Dierentuin changed its name to Cikini Zoo in 1949 after being repaired due to war damage and not taking care of the collected animals. Benjamin Galstaun, a zoologist of Armenian descent, became a meritorious figure in transforming Cikini Zoo so that it can be worthy of becoming a conservation center again ("Dari Kamp Interniran", 2015). Entering the 1960s, Jakarta made improvements by building several facilities and infrastructure, one of which was the relocation of the Cikini Zoo to Ragunan (Sedyawati et al., 1986). The main reason for the relocation of the zoo is the Cikini area which is starting to be inadequate for animal welfare due to pollution and population density problems ("Sejarah Ragunan Kebun Binatang", 2021). Ragunan Zoo was then inaugurated by Governor Ali Sadikin in 1966 (Anggraini, 1996).

Conservation Efforts of Ragunan Zoo

Based on the Decree of the Governor of DKI Jakarta No. 734 of 1986, the Ragunan Zoo is managed as a medium for the protection and preservation of flora and fauna by not leaving the development of its supporting function as a medium of education, research, and recreation (Anggraini, 1996). However, its function as a recreational media even closes the main function of the Ragunan Zoo as an animal conservation media with the emergence of many criticisms from various parties, including the Ragunan Zoo itself which assesses that there are still many people who do not bring any knowledge after returning from Ragunan ("Ragunan belum sepenuhnnya", 1977). Several efforts were also made in responding to criticism, including the development of collections and networks with other zoos, maximizing animal welfare, the correctional care of the Ragunan Zoo and cooperation with several parties such as international organizations and the government.

The Ragunan Zoo Correctional Service is carried out in two ways, namely the development of educational recreation and developing the function of the Ragunan Zoo

as an educational and research medium. In developing its supporting function as a medium of education and research, Ragunan Zoo received laboratory equipment assistance for zoological research from Belgium and was assisted by an animal expert, Van Hauwe ("Belgia Bantuan KB", 1968). Ragunan Zoo also announced to build a zoo school to learn more about zoos and animals ("Sekolah Kebun Binatang", 1971). Ragunan Zoo also opens itself to school visits, conducts socialization outside the institution, especially to schools (Anggraini, 1996), and makes information boxes containing information about animals collected by Ragunan Zoo ("Ragunan Kotak Informasi", 1986). The recreational side of Ragunan Zoo is focused on educational recreation by setting a low price from only Rp. 50,- for children and Rp. 100,- for adults ("Taman Margasatwa Ragunan", 1973). The recreational function of the Ragunan Zoo was enriched by the donation of an aircraft frame from the Commander of the Jakarta Air Force Command V to be used as a vehicle for children ("Kapal Terbang Untuk", 1966). The construction of several other supporting facilities was also carried out, such as the construction of a terrarium, the procurement of a special bus to go to the Ragunan Zoo, and the construction of a safari park.

Animal breeding by Ragunan Zoo is focused so that animals can be released back into the wild and increase their population. Breeding carried out by Ragunan Zoo is influenced by several factors, such as nature, feed, stress levels, and the level of animal dependence on humans. If an animal that was previously privately owned is bred by a zoo, then its chances of success will be small and if successful, it will be difficult and take a long time to eliminate its dependence on humans (Soedjono, 1985).

Ragunan Zoo builds their collections through collaboration with other zoos and individuals. In 1966, Ragunan Zoo received 66 animals from parties, such as the government, regional heads, private and individuals ("Penghuni Baru Ragunan", 1966). Representatives of friendly countries also donated animals as a symbol of friendship, as did the Spanish Ambassador to Indonesia, Pascual Villar, who handed over two Gibraltar macaques to the Ragunan Zoo ("Sepasang Kera Gibraltar", 1982). Cooperation with other zoos is also carried out by Ragunan Zoo, such as cooperation with Longleat Zoo, England which gave three lions to Ragunan Zoo ("Tiga Anak Singa", 1973). In 1976, the Okahandja Zoo sent three giraffes, two two-horned rhinos, and five zebras to the Ragunan Zoo. The collaboration with Okahandja Zoo was carried out due to the Ragunan Safari Park construction project ("Calon Penghuni Taman", 1976). Ragunan Zoo also cooperates with other European zoos such as the Amsterdam Zoo which donated squirrel monkeys, the West German Zoo which sent 84 birds ("Monyet Bajing Masuk", 1984), and Howlett Zoo, England which gave dwarf horses ("Sepasang Kuda Kerdil", 1983).

Ragunan Zoo is also a container for donated and confiscated animals collected by Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHPA). In the period from 1980 to 1984, PHPA handed over about 508 animals from 76 types of poultry or aves to the Ragunan Zoo. The large number of animals donated due to the small size of the poultry often goes undetected by security officers (Soedjono, 1985). In 1986, Ragunan Zoo received a Sumatran rhino named Jalu which became an honor for Ragunan Zoo because of the

difficulty of ex-situ rhino cultivation. Unfortunately, the breeding efforts of Jalu had to end in 1994 when Jalu died from the disease he suffered. Jalu's death ended the Ragunan Zoo's efforts to breed rhinos and since then the Ragunan Zoo no longer has a collection of rhinos ("Badak Sumatera di Ragunan", 1994).

In animal conservation, the role of external parties, such as international organizations, research agencies, and even the government is very crucial. In developing the Ragunan Zoo as a conservation medium, the DKI Jakarta government has spent around Rp. 2.2 billion for the management of the Ragunan Zoo. In addition, the existence of levy assistance from the entrance fee of Rp. 1.2 billion per year is also directed to build facilities and animal welfare. However, the cost does not cover the costs that must be incurred by the Ragunan Zoo which reaches Rp. 5 billion so that the role of private donations also plays an important role ("Fungsi KB Ragunan, 1990). The DKI Jakarta government has also opened a registry of privately owned animals with the aim of obtaining animals that should not be private pets, especially protected endangered animals. This was successful as hundreds of fish, dozens of bird species, especially starlings and birds of paradise, tigers, and even orangutans were received. In addition, the government also received some dead animal parts, such as elephant tusks and anoa horns. Not only the general public, many government officials also collect endangered animals from aves such as parrots to orangutans and siamangs ("Batas Waktu Pendaftaran", 1992). Several other partners who collaborate with Ragunan Zoo in terms of organizations and non-government parties, include the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), universities, such as UI, UNAS, and IPB, the South East Asian Zoological Park's Association (SEAZA), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (Poespitasari, 1999). Ragunan Zoo fund donations were also obtained from several donors, such as Sudono Salim, Osbert Lyman, Bank Dagang Negara, and Bank Niaga. Funds were also obtained by the Ragunan Zoo from the United States Scouts and the United States Scouts in 1983 and 1984 ("Pramuka Amerika Sumbang", 1983).

Hasil Nyata Upaya Konservasi Kebun Binatang Ragunan

Ragunan Zoo's efforts in building its image as a medium for animal conservation have yielded satisfactory results. In 1977, Benjamin Galstaun received the Ramon Magsaysay award from the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation of the Philippines. This award was given to Benjamin Galstaun for his services in building Ragunan Zoo as the largest zoo in Southeast Asia and with the development of a unique ecosystem. The Ramon Magsaysay Foundation also acknowledged the contribution that Galstaun made Together with his wife, Henritte, who took part in designing a zoo that has the same environment as its natural nature. He helped design the lake with small islands containing orangutans, elephants, reptiles, and many other species. The increasing number of visitors to Ragunan Zoo which managed to reach 1.5 million visitors per year is also the reason why Galstauns was chosen as the recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay award, which is equivalent to the Noble award ("Kepala Kebun Binatang", 1977).

Another tangible result that has been the success of Ragunan Zoo in its efforts to contribute to animal conservation is the release of animals into their natural habitat. In 1980, Ragunan Zoo released 15 monkeys, 6 civets, and 5 Javanese deer to Mount Walat, Sukabumi, West Java (Soedjono, 1985). A year later, the Ragunan Zoo again released around 4 suren starlings, 40 Javanese birds, and 2 samba giraffes. The release of these animals was carried out together with the Jakarta Nature Protection and Conservation Sub-Center (PPA). In addition to being released into their natural habitat, PPA also helps Ragunan Zoo to distribute animals to other zoos in Sumatra and Kalimantan. There are about 43 poultry, a pair of monkeys, siamangs, kangaroos, and 70 deer that will also be released by the PPA ("Kebun Binatang DKI", 1981). Animal releases were also carried out in 1982 and 1983 with the release of several starlings, purple crustaceans, and about a few birds of bondol to Ujung Kulon. Peacocks, Javan deer, and rusili were also released in Ujung Kulon and in Meruhibitiri, East Java. Ragunan Zoo also collaborates with the Navy in releasing animals with the intention of being used as research material (Soedjono, 1985).

Another indicator that is used as the success rate of Ragunan Zoo in conservation efforts is the existence of several success stories of animal breeding at Ragunan Zoo. In 1976, three types of animals, namely the wau, the siamang, and the lion, managed to give birth at the Ragunan Zoo ("Tiga Jenis Binatang", 1976). Two years later, a female tapir named Darti gave birth to a male tapir name Huta ("Darti, Melahirkan Setelah", 1978). In 1980, a zebra at Ragunan Zoo successfully gave birth and became the first case of zebra birth at Ragunan Zoo ("Yang Pertama Melahirkan", 1980). Orangutans also managed to give birth at the Ragunan Zoo where an orangutan named Tina gave birth to a baby male orangutan ("Orang Utan Ragunan Melahirkan Lagi", 1981). Other births also followed with the birth of hippos, zebras, and white tigers that added golden ink to the success of animal conservation efforts at the Ragunan Zoo ("Si Umi Punya Adik", 1984).

Conclusion

Ragunan Zoo, Indonesia's first zoo, originated from Planten en Dierentuin, established by the Batavian elite reflecting a shift in human-animal relationships. Despite facing financial and internal challenges, it was revitalized by F. Bonte through partnerships, facility improvements, and a focus on animal welfare, eventually becoming Cikini Zoo in 1949. Initially focused on conservation, Ragunan Zoo evolved to balance its role as both a conservation and recreational space. Facing criticism over its conservation efforts, the zoo strengthened its mission by collaborating with international zoos, engaging local communities, partnering with organizations, and improving animal welfare and staff development. These efforts, led by figures like Benjamin Galstaun, who helped rebuild the zoo post-war, have been successful. Ragunan Zoo has achieved notable conservation milestones, including breeding tapirs, hippos, and tigers, and partnering with the government on animal release programs to ensure species survival.

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