

Vernacular Knowledge Under Threat: Insights from the Baduy Community in Kanekes Village, West Java, Indonesia

Irfan Sabarilah Hasim¹, Budi Faisal², Iwan Sudradjat

¹Department of Architecture at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Policy Development, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia.

²School of Architecture, Planning, and Policy Development, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

³Department of Architecture, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan, Bandung, Indonesia

Emails: 35221003@mahasiswa.itb.ac.id; ishasim@itenas.ac.id;

iwansudr@gmail.com; bfaisal@itb.ac.id

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Abstract

The Baduy of Kanekes are an indigenous community living in the remote region of Banten, Indonesia, known for their strong commitment to preserving their traditional way of life and natural living environment while resisting outside influences. For centuries, their indigenous knowledge has maintained their culture while sustaining the natural resources, largely unaffected by modernization and globalization. The Baduy community comprises two main groups: the Inner Baduy (Baduy Dalam) and the Outer Baduy (Baduy Luar). The Inner Baduy, also known as Tangtu, are the most conservative and live in the region's heart, adhering strictly to their ancestral customs and traditions. They are not allowed to use footwear, electrical power and devices, chemical products, or vehicles and have contact with the outside world. On the other hand, the Outer Baduy, known as Panamping, have limited interactions with the modern world and act as intermediaries, representing the community in external matters. However, today, their culture is facing an imminent danger of disintegration, with their traditional knowledge likely to be lost. In this context, this study examines the indigenous knowledge of the Baduy, and the external threats that may jeopardize the future of the community.

The research employed field surveys and in-depth informal interviews with key informants to acquire deeper cultural information and meanings during 2021–2023 and recorded visual data and information using sketches and handwriting since the Baduy prohibits the use of electronic and digital devices in the Inner Baduy area.

The research reveals that The Baduy community has a deep knowledge of Nature, culture, and religion, which sustain their lives through a harmonious relationship between Man, the environment, and the supreme power, guided by strict customary rules. The principles of protecting Nature and its survival are realized through rules and taboos. They are related to the basic principle of living in Harmony with Nature, Unfortunately, today, challenges such as scarcity of horticultural land, illegal mining and industrial waste produced by tourism threaten their quality of life in the long run. External efforts are needed to defuse those threats.

Keywords: Baduy of Kanekes, Nature, Banten, Indonesia.

Introduction

The Kanekes Village community, known as the Baduy, resides in a secluded enclave within the Banten province of Indonesia. They are divided into two main zones, namely Inner Baduy, known as Tangtu, and Outer Baduy, known as Panamping. Their unwavering dedication to preserving ancestral customs and the pristine natural environment is relentless, as they firmly resist external influences. Across generations, their indigenous wisdom has adeptly safeguarded both their cultural heritage and the bountiful natural resources that sustain them, steadfastly resisting the tides of modernization and globalization. In the past, the Baduy community has shown remarkable prowess in building or renovating houses and essential structures. They make many dwellings in just 1 to 2 days, by utilizing original materials and locally sourced wood, efficient building structures and elements, and cooperative work. Gulati et al. (2019) identify this astute practice of employing native resources through cost-effective construction methods and design principles as something that epitomizes an ingenious and intelligent solution (Manu, 2006).

Unfortunately, however, this community and its approach to Living in Harmony with Nature is under treat from numerous external influences. As a result, the community is struggling hard to maintain their cultural values and identities.

In this context, this study explores the daily life and knowledge of Baduy customs in Kanekes Village, Banten. Its aim is to illuminate upon the ways in which Native people develop practical and rich knowledge to live wholesome lives. Its objectives are:

- 1) To reveal the livelihood and indigenous knowledge of the Baduy, practiced daily in maintaining harmony with Nature, and
- 2) To identify the external threats that may jeopardize the future lives of the Baduy community.

Theoretical Framework

Indigenous knowledge

The term indigenous knowledge refers to a range of knowledge produced in a specific social context and used by community members daily. Indigenous knowledge is not generated through a planned set of procedures or rules but as a result of the search for practical solutions to the problems of everyday life, relying on community wisdom and available resources, and utilizing intuition and creativity. The knowledge built is then passed down from generation to generation through oral traditions (Sudrajat, 2019; George, 1999; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999).

The legacy of indigenous knowledge is not only passed down to indigenous communities themselves but has the potential to be adopted by all levels of the society throughout the world. As Wahid (2012) and Dayaratne (2003;2000 &1999) have shown, indigenous architecture is inherently sustainable, and knowledge underlying their practices are invaluable even in the modern world. Indeed, as Wijetunga and Gayantha (2024) show modern architects also adopt their principles in creating cultured and environmentally friendly architecture.

The sustainable way of life that indigenous communities have arises from such knowledge. Indeed, employing them to live as communities has proven to be effective in maintaining harmony and continuity of life. Turner (2005) says that even though all forms of life need food to eat and are willing to give themselves to each other as food, traditional protocols must still be followed. The rule is to treat all life with respect and never waste or use animals, plants, food, or medicine carelessly. In terms of such knowledge, the elders will explain that, just as one should not joke about other creatures, children should not joke, tease, play with, or waste animals or plants because these living creatures have generously given themselves to human beings for our own good. The ties of inland people to their entire territory—from river valleys to mountain peaks—are extensive and strong. For them, too, everything in their lives, past and present, is still interconnected. The diverse landscapes and waterways that sustained their ancestors were as important as their well-being and survival.

This is a collection of knowledge that can be identified as being a way of 'Living in Harmony with Nature'

In connection with living in harmony with Nature, Turner (2005) also conveys the famous speech of thanksgiving, which is always read at Mohawk ceremonies. Several things that can be taken from the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving speech imply that the cycle of life always continues according to the will of the Creator, and we as a society are given the duty and responsibility to live in balance and harmony with each other and all the living creatures. We must unite our hearts and minds, greet each other, and give thanks to the earth, which supports all forms of life and the place where humans return; to water, which supports life in its various forms, namely river water, waterfalls, rain mist, and oceans; to plants that provide food, fruit, medicine, and materials for making objects; to animals; to the wind, sun, moon, and stars; to enlightened teachers; and to the Almighty Creator, who allows us to know life as it is, who gives us all beauty, who gives us the ability to love.

Currently, many indigenous people still adhere to their principles of maintaining harmony with Nature, even though most of them are currently experiencing quite complicated problems. However, as Dayaratne (2018) shows, many of them are marginalized and forced to abandon traditional lifestyles due to the development of the modern world. The conveniences of modernization, such as communication, transportation, and fulfillment of daily life, are very tempting for indigenous people. Many people, especially the young, leave their villages and go to the city to experience the joys of modernization. However, there are still many indigenous people who continue to value and maintain their culture and lifestyle, utilizing traditions and creating new solutions (Dayaratne, 2018; Knudtson and Suzuki, 1992).

Some of them are making transitions and changes; for example, indigenous people who live in forest villages in Barak Valley, Assam, Northeast India, still carry out traditional activities in their daily lives, such as shifting cultivation and carrying out new activities outside of customary practices. These indigenous communities are faced with the problem of population growth coupled with land scarcity due to restrictions imposed by the government. They were forced to change their livelihood patterns. Agricultural livelihoods are increasing, namely, the traditional method of shifting cultivation coupled with lowland or wetland paddy, as well as the increase in commercial farming such as monoculture and agroforestry. Outside of agriculture, they do additional work as labourers, private employees, government employees, and others (Chanu et al., 2023).

However, there is a paradox here. As said, indigenous people possess valuable indigenous knowledge that can be adopted as good principles even in the modern world. However, they are often unable to defend themselves due to external interests. Therefore, research must not only uncover good and valuable indigenous knowledge but also identify potential threats so that they can be anticipated and mitigated early on.

Literature Review

Previous research into the traditional vernacular knowledge is in abundance although they have not been specifically presented in that way. For example, Ahmad et.al (2025) examine the role of community leadership in the management of everyday knowledge and social capital for sustainable development by the community in Terengganu, Malaysia. They reveal three important dimensions in rural community leadership and sustainable development i.e., knowledge management, leadership, and linking bridging social capital. These findings underscore the quality of rural community leadership within the framework of sustainable development. Similarly, Husain (2025) examines how language shapes our thoughts, knowledge and the surroundings. Adding to these, Zahrasadat et al. (2024) show how languages need to be preserved to sustain traditional knowledge. Moreover, Ernawati et al. (2024) demonstrate re-actualization of traditional knowledge in contemporary craft art through the concept of hybrid aesthetics bringing insights from Indonesia. Similarly, Fardhil (2024) examines local wisdom and knowledge in maintaining the value of diversity among the communities in Thekelan Village, Semarang Regency, Indonesia.

At the same time, the impact of tourism on rural communities has also drawn attention, since many villages in Asia develop tourism to promote their economies. In this regard, one interesting study by Chen, Nakama, and Zhang (2017) involves attitudes and preferences of the tourists towards one of the traditional village forest landscapes of Bise Village in Indonesia. According to the survey, aspects such as peaceful views, tree-lined landscapes, sea views, traditional architecture, and rich biodiversity are very important. Tourists consider that maintaining the rows of distinctive trees (Fukugi trees) and restoring traditional architecture are the two most important things in Bise Village (Chen, Nakama, and Zhang, 2017). Yadav and O'Neill (2013) also show that tourists are willing to pay for beautiful rural views.

It is now understood that various parties must address the problems experienced by the majority of indigenous communities today. The state, as a lawmaker, must involve and communicate intensively with the indigenous communities. In this connection, Li, Fan, and Liu (2019) show that rural elites are important actors in transformational development in relatively successful villages. They argue that the main factors influencing village development can be identified as endogenous factors and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors include natural and environmental resources, geographical locations, economic foundations, human resources, social resources, and random endogenous factors. Exogenous factors include institutional settings, specific technologies, local and foreign markets, the macroscopic economic environment, government policies, and random exogenous factors. Another important thing is community involvement in every village activity. Li, Fan, and Liu (2019) also argue that when community participation becomes a consistent activity, the results will continue, thus ensuring that important issues in village transformational development can be effectively addressed.

Collectively, these research findings demonstrate the significance of vernacular traditional knowledge in maintaining the world as a pleasant and peaceful place to live, and how the modern communities can benefit from understanding them and supporting their continued existence.

Research Methodology

This research employed case study as a method, within which field observations and in-depth informal interviews with key informants were employed as data gathering techniques. Data collection, observations, and interviews were carried out using an ethnographic approach. According to Wolcott (1999), ethnography is an approach by which a researcher collects information about community life. It involves selecting the key informants with the most subtle approach. The researcher slowly builds a rapport with several local figures and creates a sense of trust among the local communities. He or She can thus obtain the relevant information naturally and openly (Hasim et al., 2023; Neuman, 2013).

This research was conducted in the 2021–2023 period, where initial visits were made to get to know several key persons and to build relationships. After several visits and more than a year of building relationships, several key persons were successfully approached. They were cultural figures, community figures, and government figures. At the same time, in Inner Baduy, there were "Juru Basa," who are interpreters of words or language experts, "Juru Pantun," who are interpreters of rhymes or poetry experts, and "Jaro Tangtu," one of the leaders of the Inner Baduy.

Inner Baduy does not allow the use of modern tools such as electronic and digital tools. Therefore, recording, observing, and retrieving data in the Inner Baduy is performed by handwriting and sketches. Digital recording can only be carried out in Outer Baduy. Therefore, interviewing and recording Inner Baduy people can be done only when they occasionally leave the Inner Baduy area.

The Case Study

The Kanekes Village is in Leuwidamar District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. Geographically, it is at 6027'27"-6030' South Latitude and 10803'9" East Longitude, covering an area of 5,136.58 ha (Iskandar and Iskandar, 2017), occupying the western part of the Java Island as shown in the Figure 1 below.

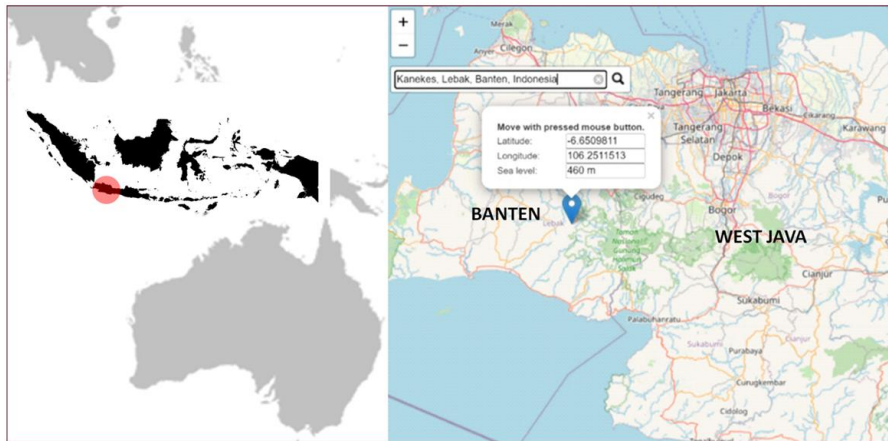


Fig. 1: The Location of the Kanekes Village
Source: <https://www.mapcoordinates.net/en>

The Baduy community in Kanekes Village consists of the Tangtu, and the Panamping. The Tangtu (Inner Baduy), who live in the inner areas of Baduy, firmly adhere to the customary rules and authorities (Nuryanto et al., 2021; Susilowati et al., 2020; Permana and Eka, 2006). The Panamping (Outer Baduy) who live in the outer regions of Baduy do not strictly adhere to but respect the traditional regulations and controls (Figure 2). The inner areas of Baduy cover the mountain areas, the sacred forest, the plantation areas, and the three primordial villages, namely: 1) Cikeusik, 2) Cibeo, and 3) Cikertawana. The number of villages in the Inner Baduy remains steady, while the number of villages in the Outer Baduy tends to increase.

In 2010, the number of villages in the Outer Baduy was 58 (Suryani, 2021; Kurnia and Ahmad Sihabudin, 2010), and according to the data recorded at the village office, by 2023, it had increased to 64. This means there is natural growth in this area.

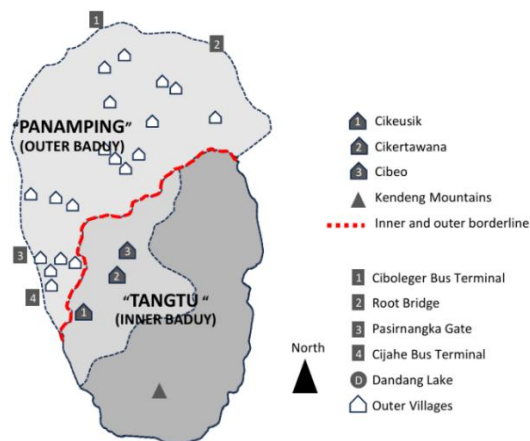


Fig. 2: The Baduy's Customary Land in Kanekes Village
Source: Field survey

Natural Environment of the Baduy Community

The natural environment of Baduy is part of the Kendeng mountain range, with an altitude of 300–600 meters above the sea level. It has a hilly and undulating topography with an average slope of 45%, composed of volcanic soil (in the north), sedimentary soil (in the middle), and mixed soil (in the south), with an average temperature of 20 °C (Susilowati et al., 2020).

The natural environment of the Baduy especially the mountains and the forests are well preserved. For the Baduy people, forests are part of their living ecosystem and must be maintained sustainably (Mustomi, 2017). The mountainous and forest area in the southernmost part is heavily guarded and sanctified by the Baduy people. They call this sacred place "leuweung kolot" or "leuweung larangan" (ancient forest or forbidden forest).

Findings

Activities of the Baduy

According to the observations, the daily activities of the Baduy community are mainly related to farming as their livelihood, which covers four consecutive activities along the year. They are: 1) harvesting activities, 2) post-harvest rituals, 3) land clearing activities; and 4) planting and maintaining fields (Figure 3).

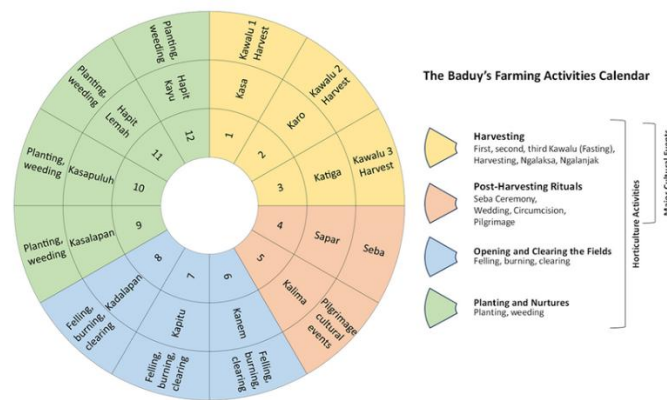


Fig. 3: The Baduy's Farming Activities Calendar
Source: Field survey

Harvesting

As found from the interviews, the Baduy people divide the yearly calendar into 12 months. They call the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd months "Kasa," "Karo," and "Katiga," and named these three months "Kawalu," the best time for rice harvesting or "mipit." During the months of Kawalu, they reap the paddy, dry it, and store it in the granaries. They also choose the best paddy to use as seeds for the next planting season and save it in different places.

Besides the harvesting activities, several cultural events also take place during the months of Kawalu, such as hunting (ngalanjak), rice noodle feast (ngalaksa), and fasting (Maharani, 2016). The months of Kawalu are considered sacred; no outsiders can visit the Inner Baduy area during this period.

Post-Harvesting Rituals

Harvesting activity usually ends when the 4th month comes. The Baduy people call the 4th and 5th months the month of "Sapar" and "Kalima." Many important rituals involving the entire Baduy community occurred during these two months, including the tremendous social interaction event "Seba" in the 4th month and the pilgrimage "Hajat Puun" in the 5th month. In the ritual of Seba, the Baduy community reinstates their relationship with the general public outside their villages, while with Hajat Puun, they re-establish their relationship with the divine God.

It was revealed that in the ritual of Seba, the Baduy community from the inner and outer areas congregate and proceed to the offices of political leaders at the local government, such as the regent and the governor, who symbolically represent the local citizens. On this occasion, they display and deliver their crops to the general public as an expression of gratitude for their support and sympathy (Isnendes, 2016). In 2023, according to the international

calendar, the Seba was held on the 4th to the 7th day of the 4th month of Baduy or the 27th to 30th of April. More than 1350 Baduy community members participated in this event to make a 160 km roundtrip journey (Figure 4). Amongst them, 47 members from the Inner Baduy had to travel on foot, as they are forbidden to use any vehicle.



Fig. 4: The ritual of Seba, 2023

(a) Community members from the Inner Baduy. (b) Community members from Outer Baduy.

"Hajat Pupun," or pilgrimage to the sacred sites, is the highest spiritual or religious activity of the Baduy community, conducted in the 5th month and usually takes 2 to 3 days. In 2023, 80 Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy members participated in the worship. They left the village in the morning to make an arduous journey to the southern prohibited forest to perform rituals of worship to their divine God.

During the 4th and 5th months of the Baduy calendar, the community also conducts other essential rituals such as weddings, mass circumcisions, house construction, and renovation. In these rituals, the traditional leaders are always involved from the beginning to the end.

Horticulture of the Baduy - Swidden Cultivation Fields

The Baduy community spends most of their time tending to the fields to fulfill their basic needs, but the high respect for the natural environment has given them a place to live. Their horticultural practices involve a traditional method of shifting cultivation. This method entails clearing forested areas to cultivate crops for a few years before moving to a new location, allowing the vacated land to regain its soil fertility naturally (Cairns, 2015). Shifting cultivation involves planting a piece of land for several years, then leaving it uncultivated or resting for a long time so that the natural vegetation growing on it will naturally restore soil fertility that had declined during the planting times (Aweto, 2013).

The Baduy do not breed cattle, goat, or fish. To supplement their protein intake, they sometimes go hunting in the forest or fishing in the river (Aweto, 2013). In the farming system, they do not water the crops but are entirely dependent on rainwater. Many taboos apply to the Baduy concerning the farming system. The cultivation lands should be left natural, not to be dug, cut, filled, or leveled. No wells, dams, or irrigation are allowed to provide water except for the existing wild rivers. Modern farming equipment such as plows, tractors, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides are not allowed to cultivate the fields. Four-legged livestock is not permitted in the farming area and the village. Some industrial products are forbidden to be planted, including papaya, cassava, coffee, tea, cloves, and palm oil.

It was observed that the farming activities of the Baduy community began with clearing forests, cutting down trees, and burning (slash and burn), only cleavers and "baliung" (typical Baduy axes), as tools and not hoes. The next activity is planting seeds in the following ways: 1) The men carry wooden sticks 1–1.2 m long and thrust them into the ground, making small holes with a depth of between 3 and 6 cm; 2) The women follow the men and insert the seeds into those tiny holes. The fields are then treated and cleared of nuisance plants and pests by natural means, such as burning particular crops to repel beetles (Figure 5).



Fig. 5: The Baduy's Cultivation Activities

- a) Cutting down the trees, burning branches, and clearing land; b) Planting the paddy seeds; and c) The paddy's field on the sloping land.

Source: Author

The Baduy community only practices one harvest per year. After a field has been harvested or left unused, they allow the land to recover over an extended period. The time it takes for the land to recover varies depending on the region. For instance, tropical dry forests in Colombia, semi-deciduous forests in Bolivia, and humid cypress forests in Nigeria take 5 to 7 years to recover. In contrast, in the tropical dry forests of southern Mexico, it takes between 8 and 13 years (Delang and Li, 2013). In Baduy, it takes nine years, but due to the limited farming land and population, the cycle is shortened to less than five years. There are two types of cultivation fields (*huma*) in Baduy based on their ownership:

- 1) community-owned fields and
- 2) privately (family) owned fields.

The community field is called "Huma Serang" and is owned by each inner village (Tangtu). The community fields always initiate the horticulture cycle, followed a month later by the private fields owned by the elders and the leaders and then by the private fields owned by the ordinary people. In 2023, the planting of "Huma Serang" was carried out in early August, and in early September. Afterwards, privately owned fields began to follow. Figure 6 shows the spatial distribution of the cultivation fields of Baduy in 2023.

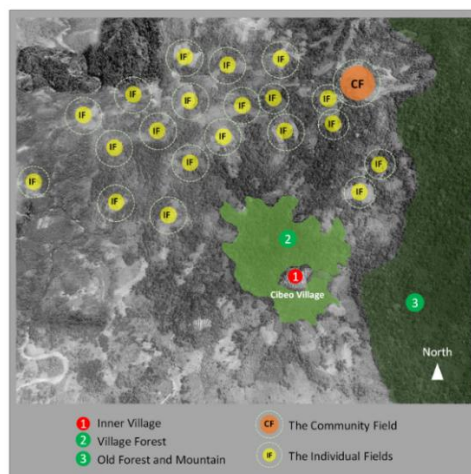


Fig. 6: The Spatial Distribution of the Cultivation Fields, 2023

Source: Author

The Built Environments of the Baduy

Kanekes Village comprises 67 villages, three located in the Inner Baduy and 64 in the Outer Baduy. The villages in the inner and outer Baduy areas have similarities but also differences. The buildings and environment in the Inner Baduy are well reserved. The three villages, Cikeusik, Cibeo, and Cikertawana, have very similar layouts, consisting of the traditional leader's house, the meeting hut, the mortar and pestle hut, open space (plaza), granary, cemetery, and the houses of the villagers (Figure 7).

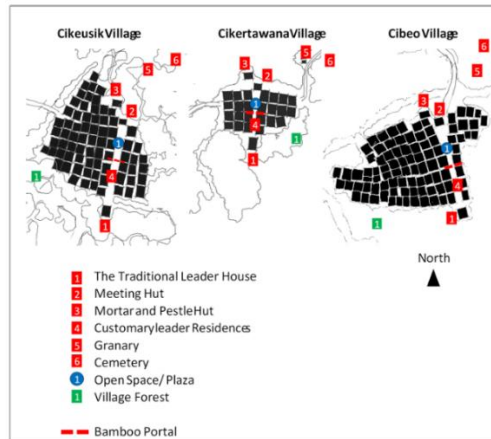


Fig. 7: Inner Baduy (Tangtu) Village Patterns
Source: Field study

Indigenous Knowledge of the Baduy

The Baduy community has a life guideline (Pikukuh) inherited from their ancestors. It covers all aspects of their daily life, from social norms and conducts, cultural values, ceremonies, and rituals to taboos. (Zawahir Muntaha and Josias Simon Runturambi, 2020). Some of these taboos are well known to the broader community, including the following directives: community members from the Inner Baduy must not lie, steal, kill, or commit other crimes; they may not wear sandals or modern tools such as mobile phones, vehicles, or even body soap or toothpaste (Ichwandi and Shinohara, 2007). They should not trade because trading activities may lead them to lies and deceptions (Rochman et al., 2021; Solikhah, 2020).

All these rules and taboos were passed down from generation to generation and subsequently transformed to become their indigenous knowledge. They believe that regulations and taboos formulated by their ancestors primarily protect the sustainability of their livelihood. The indigenous knowledge of the Baduy community also teaches them how to relate harmoniously with Nature, culture, and the built environment (Figure 8).

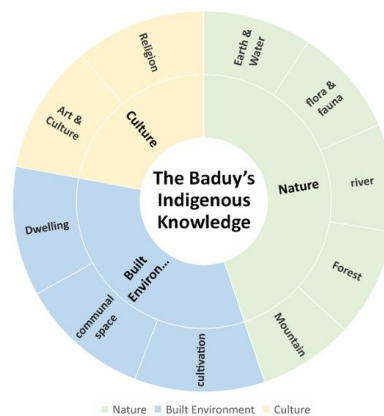


Fig. 8: Indigenous Knowledge of the Baduy
Source: Field survey

Indigenous Knowledge Related to Natural Environment

It was noted that the ancestors have passed down customary rules to conserve Nature from generation to generation. According to these, the Baduy people must protect water, trees, rocks, rivers, and mountains and only take a little from Nature as needed (Sujana, 2020).

The Baduy community strictly protects the Southernmost area, as the sanctified "heirloom" is placed in this zone. Once or twice a year, the Baduy community visits this area to worship or perform holy rituals and communicate spiritually with their God. One can decipher the indigenous knowledge related to the natural environment from the following credo:

Gunung teu meunang dilebur
Lebak teu meunang dirusak
Mountains should not be disturbed
Valley should not be tampered with

For the Baduy community, this credo has become an absolute command to protect Nature from any violation. Sujana (2020) points out that the sinful feeling and shame when committing a breach will continue to haunt us so that the customary rules born from the mandate of the ancestors can lead the community to a reasonable uniformity of behavior.

The Baduy has strict rules related to Nature, especially regarding land, water, mountains, and forests. Without permission, no one can enter the ancient or prohibited forests to cut trees, clear grounds, or harvest forest products (Senoaji, 2004). The ancestors inherited the Kendeng mountain range and the forbidden forest not for fulfilling the daily needs. Logging, hunting, and horticultural activities are not allowed in this area. These sacred areas are not accessible to the outsiders, and only limited community members can enter for particular purposes, such as worshipping and collecting materials for certain rituals. One may take only a few things from the forest, specifically for ceremonies or cultural events.

The Baduy also has strict rules to protect water sources and bodies of water. They prohibit the inhabitants from disturbing springs, making a dam, or diverting river flows. No industrial or chemical residues are allowed to be thrown into the rivers or creeks. They also profoundly care for trees and plants that support their daily lives. Industrial vegetation such as cassava, coffee, cloves, tobacco, and papaya that may reduce soil fertility is strictly forbidden to be cultivated. Strict rules also apply to maintain the sustainability of their fauna population in the forest. Hunting is allowed only at certain seasons and uses only simple equipment.

Indigenous Knowledge Related to the Built-environment

The community cautiously preserved the built environment in the Inner Baduy area following directives dictated by their indigenous knowledge. Thus, the layout, the number of houses, structures, and materials of buildings in the villages of Cikeusik, Cibeo, and Cikertawarna are tenaciously preserved to remain the same. These three villages are located near the river, surrounded by the forest and the granary, which is placed in a distance to safeguard their food supplies in case the village is on fire. Entrance to the village is facilitated by a remarkable bamboo bridge structure (Figure 9). However, the built environment in the Outer Baduy villages is allowed to gradually change in response to population growth and other socio-economic pressures.



Fig. 9: Bird eyes view of the Inner Village Cibeo.

- 1) The Traditional Leader House,
2) Meeting Hut, 3) Mortar & Pestle Hut, 4) Bridge Structure, 5) Granary

The houses in the Inner Baduy villages have typical characteristics as follows: 1) they stand on stilts without foundation; 2) each pillar has a stone as its base; 3) they have only one door but no window; 4) they use wood, bamboo, and leaves as its primary materials; 5) no nails used in its construction (Figure 10).

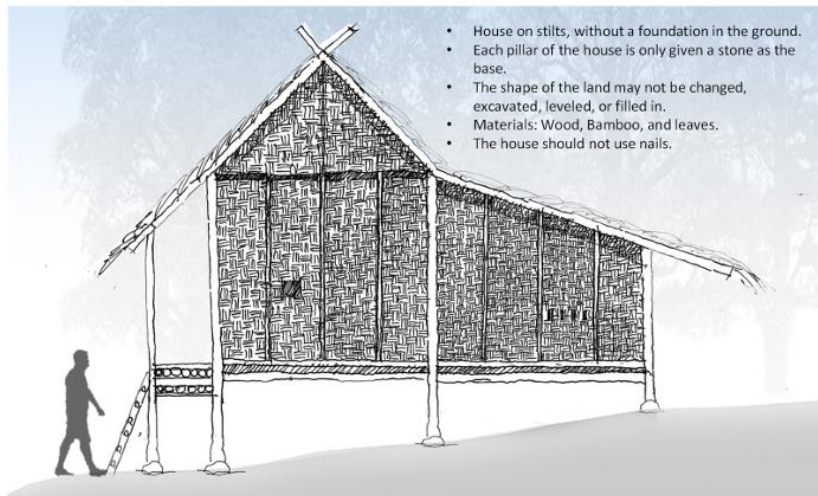


Fig. 10: The Typical house in Inner Baduy (Tangtu) villages

Indigenous Knowledge Related to Religion, Arts and Culture

The Baduy people have simple and essential religious, artistic, and cultural activities based on a principle of non-exploitative use of natural resources. This principle is reflected in the traditional attire of the male from the Inner Baduy, which consists of four main pieces (Figure 11): a white headband called "Telekung," a buttonless black or white shirt called "Jamang," a bracelet called "Kapuru" worn from birth, and a "sarong aros." They always wear this attire at any event such as religious rituals, weddings, funerals, and daily life. Certain accessories such as necklaces, bags, or machetes may or may not be worn depending on the occasion. Women from the Inner Baduy however, only wear "Jamang" and black sides as their main clothing. They have no special attire for any specific events.



Fig. 11: The Baduy Dalam's clothing

Concerning the spiritual, religious, and cultural events, the Baduy community also has strict rules. Only Baduy people from the inner village can attend the most sacred spiritual, religious, and cultural events; no recorded documentation is allowed. For the religious, art, and cultural events performed in the outer villages, outsiders can participate, except for specific spiritual or religious affairs.

Indigenous Knowledge of Baduy as a Comprehensive Strategy for Survival

The indigenous knowledge of the Baduy community has been developed piece by piece from generation to generation until it comprehensively covered almost all aspects needed by its community members to safeguard their survival. Figure 12 shows how the Baduy community maintain the order of their living environment using a hierarchical zoning system.

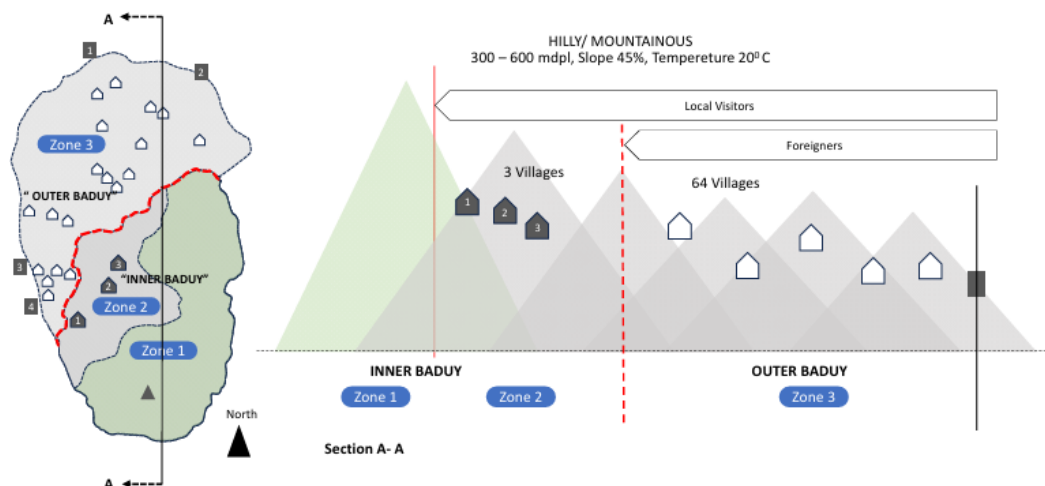


Fig. 12: Hierarchical zoning system of the Baduy to maintain the order of the living environment.

The Baduy people divide their living environment into 3 (three) successive zones, which have different levels of regulation and restrictions as shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Levels of regulation and restriction Zone Regulation and restrictions
Source: Field Studies

<p>Zone 1: Inner Baduy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covers the area of the Kendeng mountain range, the prohibited forests, and the primary sources of essential streams. These are the most sacred sanctuaries where holy spiritual and ritual activities occur once or twice a year. Access to this zone is very strictly regulated. No hunting and gathering of forest products for daily needs are allowed, except for specific ritual and cultural events as scheduled in the Baduy calendar system. 2. Only Baduy people are allowed to enter, and even then, for limited events.
<p>Zone 2: Inner Baduy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covers the settlement area of the Inner Baduy, cautiously preserved to maintain its integrity and authenticity. The villages' physical and nonphysical features represent an ideal settlement model for the Baduy people. 2. Land and water must not be changed. 3. Industrial plants are forbidden to be cultivated, including cassava, coffee, cloves, tobacco, and papaya. 4. Four-legged livestock are not allowed 5. Local tourists are allowed to enter and may stay only for one night. 6. Foreign tourists are not allowed to enter. 7. It is prohibited to use modern equipment and household supplies such as bath soap, toothpaste, and chemicals. 8. Taking photos and recording sound or video is prohibited.
<p>Zone 3: Outer Baduy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covers the settlement area of the Outer Baduy, which has gradually transformed in terms of density, population number, living sources, and lifestyles under the influence of the modernization process and development of the tourism industry. 2. More open to accepting tourists, both domestic and foreign, and there are no overnight restrictions.

Challenges and Threats Encountered by the Baduy People

It was revealed during the interviews that land scarcity for horticultural activities is a real and immediate challenge confronted by the people in the Outer Baduy zone for quite some time due to the steady increase in population and the creation of new villages to accommodate the new family units. Keck, Narendra, Sharma and Feder (1994) also confirm this. The tourism development program introduced by the government to the traditional villages of Baduy initially intended to help the local people to create economic opportunities and earn some additional income is also a potential obstacle.

In fact, regrettably, it also brings unintended side effects to the local community, such as introducing a modern lifestyle to the local youth. Today, the teenagers at the Outer Baduy villages have begun to possess cellphones and social media accounts and wear stylistic apparel, jewelry, and beauty products, primarily prohibited by customary regulations. In the long run, tourism activities that have flourished in the Outer Baduy villages tend to instigate disobedience toward customary rules among the youth. Another side effect of tourism activities is the incoming of non-degradable wastes derived from the packaging various industrial products. Every weekend, around 300 to 500 tourists visit Outer Baduy villages; some will stay a night at residents' lodges. The most severe threats recently encountered by the Baduy people come from unexpected directions, directly threatening their most sacred sanctuary and water sources due to the land encroachment for illegal mining, forest looting, and creation of wet rice fields operated by unlawful groups or syndicates (Figure 13).

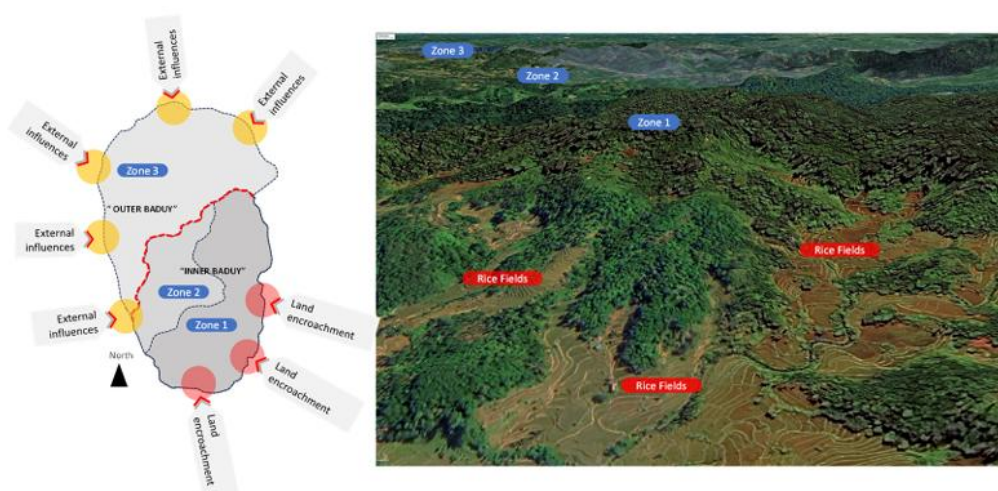


Fig. 13: Land encroachment threatens the most sacred zone of the Baduy settlement.

The Baduy people are aware that they cannot stop the number of tourists who come to the village. Indeed, they increase every day. To anticipate the negative impact of tourism, the Baduy community rejects the title of "Tourism Village" and demands the government turn off all telecommunications signals, including internet access, in their traditional area.

Conclusions

The indigenous knowledge of the Baduy community comprehensively covers all aspects its community members need to safeguard their survival and maintain their harmonious relationship with the supreme power: Nature, and the built environment. They practice a frugal way of life, use resources provided by Nature sparingly, and treat Nature with great respect. Their adherence to the customary rules and taboos is another way the Baduy people respect their predecessors, who had strived to ensure their well-being, safety, and prosperity. Through taboos and tiered rules, they heavily guard the most sacred sanctuary and the deepest zone. Through restrictions and limitations, they barricade themselves from various externalities that may threaten their survival.

Until now, the Baduy have survived by solely implementing the rules of their ancestors. However, as revealed, the future will not be as easy as the past for them. Challenges and obstacles continue to increase exponentially in line with the influx of external influences, which will bring certain complexities and paradoxes to the livelihood of the Baduy people. The only way for them to develop resistance and resilience is to consolidate internally to increase their indigenous knowledge and formulate innovative strategies for the survival of their culture.

Nevertheless, in the future, the Baduy may not be able to tackle the complex challenges they face single-handedly. Undeniably, collaborative efforts of the related stakeholders including national and local governments and relevant national and international cultural conservation bodies will be necessary to ensure their cultural survival.

In fact, the hardship currently experienced by the Baduy may become a warning for other vernacular communities in Indonesia to defend themselves from any external interests that potentially threaten their existence so that they can be anticipated and mitigated earlier.

This paper has divulged how a particular vernacular community construct and apply everyday knowledge to deal with their surroundings, people and the world in general and construct a meaningful culture and a way of life. It also revealed this in relation to the Baduy community in Indonesia. In this sense, this paper has made a significant contribution to knowledge about everyday knowledge: its production sustenance and recurrent developments in communities. However, this is only one case study. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized. More research is needed to understand the nuances of the production of knowledge in everyday life.

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