The Belief System Serves as a Disaster Mitigation Mechanism to Preserve the Local Wisdom of the Baduy Tribe

Afifatul A’la, Mukminan, Dedes Senja Anisfa, Anisa Priantari Putri, Wahyu Farida

Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Jakarta State University, Jakarta, Indonesia
Raden Intan Islamic State University, Lampung, Indonesia

Afifatulala.2021@student.uny.ac.id, mukminan.uny.ac.id, dedessa.dsa@gmail.com, priantari18@gmail.com, wahyufarida24498@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to explore the belief system that serves as a disaster mitigation strategy in preserving the local wisdom of the Baduy tribe. It is a qualitative study conducted through data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The research findings indicate that the Baduy tribe, residing in the Kendeng Mountains of Banten, faces an uneven and disaster-prone environment, including landslides, floods, forest fires, and environmental degradation. The belief system embraced by the Baduy tribe is known as “Sunda Wiwitan.” It is characterized by the presence of “pikukub” which serves as a guideline for the community’s interaction with the natural environment. These “pikukub” consist of rules that emphasize the importance of preserving the natural environment without any alteration. The philosophy contained within the “pikukub” includes statements such as “Lojor teu menunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung”, “Gunung teu meunang dilebur, lebak teu meunang di rusak”, and “Buyut teu meunang disombah, larangan teu meunang dirempak.” Each of these philosophies teaches the importance of preserving the environment as a form of disaster mitigation for the Baduy tribe.

Keywords: local wisdom, disaster mitigation, belief system, Baduy tribe.

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Introduction
Indonesia is located in Southeast Asia at the convergence of three active tectonic plates: The Eurasian, Indo-Australian, and Pacific plates. According to the World Risk Report 22, Indonesia ranks third among countries prone to disasters due to its geographical location and its position along the Ring of Fire, earning it the nickname “disaster laboratory” (Beck et al., 2022; Triastari et al., 2021). Disasters are events that threaten the lives and livelihoods of communities and are caused by natural, non-natural, and human factors, resulting in casualties, material losses, environmental damage, and psychological impacts (Hutagalung & Indrajat, 2020).

Indonesia is often referred to as “Gemah Ripah Loh Jinawi,” which means a land that is very fertile, prosperous, and densely populated (KBBI, 2021). Indonesia is rich in natural resources, cultures, ethnicities, religions, and customs. There are 633 ethnic groups in Indonesia (BPS, 2022), making it known as a diverse (multicultural) country that has experience in managing and accommodating its societal diversity (Arif & Lessy, 2022). This multiculturalism is a fact that has been faced by the people in the past, present, and future, guided by Pancasila as the founding principles (Lawelai et al., 2022; Madung & Mere, 2021). Each Indonesian ethnic group has its own distinct characteristics and customs based on their respective regions, leading to the process of nurturing and shaping individuals from biological entities into social entities (Majid & Sugiarto, 2022). Communities that strongly adhere to their customs and traditions are known as indigenous communities.

Indigenous communities live according to consistent customary values, traditional ways of life, and coexist with nature and diverse belief systems. Indigenous communities in Indonesia are recognized and protected by Article 18B, paragraph 2 of the amended 1945 Constitution, which states, “The state acknowledges and respects the unity of customary law communities and their traditional rights as long as they are still alive and in accordance with the development of society and the principles of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, as regulated by law” (MPR, 2000). This provision is further reinforced by Article 281, paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution, which states, “Cultural identities and traditional
communities are respected in line with the development of time and civilization” (Isra, 2016).

One of the indigenous tribes inhabiting remote areas of Indonesia is the Baduy tribe, who reside in Kanekes village, Leuwidamar sub-district, Lebak regency, Banten province. Based on their geographical location, they refer to their community members as “urang kanekes.” The Baduy community believes that the name “Baduy” comes from an ancient river called the Cibaduy River that flows through their area, as well as the Baduy Hill within their settlement. However, historical experts reveal that the name “Baduy” is derived from the term “Badawi” or “Badoin” in Arabic, which refers to people who live a nomadic life in the Arabian Peninsula. This perspective has similarities with the urang kanekes, who used to live a nomadic life (Banten, 2016), relying on nature, practicing shifting cultivation, and gathering fish or animals in their living areas (Asep Kurnia, 2010).

The Baduy community is known for its simplicity, obedience, sincerity, and strong commitment to maintaining and practicing ancestral traditions (Karna, 2010, as cited in Lestari, 2018). The Baduy community belongs to the Sundanese ethnic group, the largest ethnic group inhabiting the Java region. In their daily lives, the Baduy people prioritize the preservation of nature, believing that nature will provide the best outcomes if well cared for. The Baduy community is divided into two groups: Baduy luar and Baduy dalam, distinguished by their respective residential locations. Baduy community strongly upholds their traditional values, Baduy dalam chooses to isolate themselves from the rapid pace of modernization, as they believe that modernization can erode the cultural values they hold as their guiding principles for communal living. The efforts made by the Baduy community have resulted in local wisdom that characterizes the life of the Kanekes community.

Local wisdom refers to the attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives of a community that embody ancestral values in preserving the sustainability of their local resources and potentials. These values have been passed down through generations and form the foundation for striving towards a better way of life (KBBI, 2019). Living
in harmony with the environment and resolving issues based on binding customary rules are important aspects of local wisdom (Adidiarrahman, 2019). Local wisdom is considered a valuable asset for Indonesia as a multicultural nation, supporting sustainable development (Razak, 2019). The study that describes the welfare level of local community who take a sustainable business financing based on local wisdom in BMT As'adiyah Sengkang. The data was collected by questionnaires and interviews as research instruments. The data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed by a combination of the Keynes and Khan consumption equations. Findings from the questionnaires data were verified and explored with interview data. The results are:

The Baduy community lives by preserving their core values, including their religious, social, and economic systems, as well as their commitment to environmental conservation. The Baduy people maintain a strong belief in Sunda Wiwitan, a traditional Sundanese belief system that revolves around ancestral spirits and a supreme power known as Nu Kuwasa. This belief system is deeply rooted in the spirits of their ancestors, which is reflected in the adherence to pikukuh (customary rules) in their daily lives. The fundamental principle of pikukuh is the concept of “without any change or even the slightest alteration.” The rejection of change is often expressed through the philosophical outlook of the Baduy community. The topography of their mountainous surroundings in the Kendeng region poses a potential risk of natural disasters that can be experienced by the Baduy people at any time. However, the Baduy community’s ability to preserve their local wisdom is one of their strengths, keeping them detached from modernity.

**Methods**

This research is a qualitative study. The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interviews, and documentation. Documentation is necessary to complement the data and information obtained from other sources. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with key informants, such as the adat leader (Jarō), as well as core informants from the Baduy community and individuals from the surrounding community who work as tour guides. The data analysis techniques used in this research involve three main
Result and Discussion
This research focuses on the belief system as a disaster mitigation strategy within the Baduy community, also known as the Baduy tribe. The Baduy tribe is one of the contributors to Indonesia’s multicultural identity. They are considered a customary law community, a group of people bound by their customary laws as members of a legal association due to their shared place of residence or common ancestry (BPN, 1999). Their way of life is guided by *pikukuh* (customary laws) and the preservation of nature as a form of obedience to the ancestral mandate to maintain the harmony of the surrounding environment. The Baduy tribe intentionally avoids embracing modernity in their lives. Three elements characterize the lives of the Baduy community: a simple lifestyle, a harmonious relationship with nature, and self-reliance. It is their simplicity that captivates people's attention amidst the modernity found in other regions. For them, simplicity is not a deficiency but rather the true essence of a happy life (Suparmini et al., 2015).

The Emergence of the Baduy Tribe
The existence of the Baduy Tribe has different perspectives. The customary leaders state that they believe themselves to be the descendants of the first human on Earth, known as Adam Tunggal, who is tasked with meditated and maintaining the harmony of the world. The ancestral land is the core of their teachings in Wiwitan.

Historians suggest that the presence of the Baduy Tribe is related to the Padjajaran Kingdom. It is believed that during the 11th to 12th centuries, the Padjajaran Kingdom ruled over the entire Pasundan land, which included regions such as Banten, Bogor, Priyangan, and Cirebon. The kingdom was led by Prabu Siliwangi. In the 15th century, Islam spread to the archipelago through merchants from Gujarat and the Walisongo, including Sunan Gunung Jati from Cirebon. The rapid spread of Islam resulted in diminishing power for the king, as many people embraced the new religion. Loyal kings, commanders, and soldiers left the kingdom and ventured into the wilderness, traversing the river basins up to the upstream
areas. Their children and descendants are believed to be the Baduy Tribe, currently residing in the village of Cibeo, known as the Baduy Dalam community. The distinguishing features of the Baduy Dalam community are their white attire, white headbands, dark blue handwoven sarongs, resistance to external influences, and strong convictions. Furthermore, the emergence of the Baduy Tribe is also associated with intermarriages among several ethnic groups in the Pasundan land. Those who violated customary laws were exiled to specific locations, where they encountered the spread of Islam. They fled and separated, seeking safe locations to continue their lives according to their location. Although they dispersed, they maintained the same customs and traditions, and this group is known as the Baduy Luar community or Penamping. The distinguishing features of the Baduy Luar community are their black attire, blue batik headbands, shifting cultivation practices, ease of socialization, and steadfast adherence to their customs and traditions.

**Geographical Location of the Baduy Tribe**

The Baduy tribe is geographically located on the slopes of Mount Kendeng, in Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. Geographically, it is bordered by Muncang sub-district to the east, Cijaku sub-district to the south, Bojongmanik sub-district to the west, and Cisemeut village in Leuwidamar sub-district to the north. Kanekes Village is located far from urban areas and has no access roads, the only way to reach the village is by walking through the hilly forest terrain.

The total area of Kanekes Village is 5,136.58 hectares, with 3,000 hectares covered by forests and 2,136.58 hectares designated for settlements and agricultural purposes. The village is situated at an elevation of 300-1,200 meters above sea level, with temperatures ranging from 16˚C to 30˚C. The Baduy ancestral land is located 38 km away from Lebak Regency. The land in Kanekes Village is considered ulayat land, which means that the indigenous community has authority over a specific territory and can utilize natural resources for their livelihood based on the inseparable physical and spiritual relationship between the indigenous community and the respective territory. Customary law refers to a series of unwritten rules that bind the community and originate from customs that have
developed within the indigenous society (Abdulloh et al., 2022). The ancestral land of the Baduy tribe cannot be transferred to others, and this decision is supported by Regional Regulation No. 32 of 2001 concerning the Protection of the Ulayat Rights of the Baduy Community. This regional regulation is further supported by the Decree of the Regent of Lebak No. 590/Kep.233/Huk/2002, which specifies the detailed boundaries of the indigenous ulayat rights of the Baduy community in Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar, Lebak, Banten.

The Belief System of the Baduy Tribe

The belief system of the Baduy tribe is called Sunda Wiwitan, a monotheistic belief rooted in ancestral spirits (animism) and the belief in a supreme deity called Batara Tunggal (The Ultimate God), Batara Jagat (The Ruler of the Universe), and Batara Seda Niskala (The Invisible God) who resides in Buana Nyungcung (The Upper World). The teachings of Sunda Wiwitan are demonstrated through the adherence to pikukuh (customary rule) as passed down by their ancestors. The essence of pikukuh is the concept of maintaining traditions without any changes. The Baduy tribe also observes numerous mystical taboos, such as prohibitions against killing, stealing, lying, adultery, intoxication, wearing flowers or perfumes, and
accepting gold or silver. The religious ceremonies of the Baduy tribe specifically focus on four aspects that are of particular interest to anthropologists: (a) the location of religious ceremonies, (b) the timing of religious ceremonies, (c) the objects and ceremonial tools used, and (d) the ceremonial leaders.

An important objective of the Baduy religion is Arca Domas, a sacred location whose exact whereabouts are kept secret. The people of Kanekes visit this place for worship once a year during the fifth month according to their calendar. There is a belief that a particular tradition reflects the seasons, indicated by the volume of rainwater collected in mortar-like containers at Arca Domas. If the water level is high, it signifies abundant rainfall and a bountiful harvest for the year. Conversely, if the water is murky or dry, it is believed that there will be a poor harvest. The reverence and respect for ancestral spirits are manifested through the practice of maintaining balance in the natural world and preserving the environment (mountains, hills, valleys, forests, gardens, springs, rivers, and all ecosystems within them). Simplicity and tolerance towards the surrounding environment are the core teachings of the Baduy religion, which aim to create a harmonious coexistence with nature.

The belief of Sunda Wiwitan and the reverence for ancestral spirits have profound effects on the harmonious way of life in the community, their lifestyle is characterized by a natural and chemical-free approach, leading to a pristine environment with clean air and a serene atmosphere. The preservation of their forests has resulted in a high level of biodiversity, abundant water sources, and fertile land that supports agriculture. The Suku Baduy community has become an attraction for both local and international tourists who seek to visit and interact with them. However, it is important to note that many members of the community are reluctant to engage with visitors, only those who have established prior interactions or authorized representatives of the customary institution are more open to interaction. Their loyalty to the teachings of their ancestors makes them truly exceptional amidst the hustle and bustle of modernity.
Life Philosophy of the Baduy community

The philosophy of life of the Baduy community is rooted in their guiding principles, known as “pikukuh,” which provide behavioral guidelines for their daily lives and help protect them from various natural and non-natural dangers. Children in the Baduy community do not receive formal education because many parents believe that formal education would reduce their involvement in agricultural work. They believe that interacting with nature is more important as a concrete experience that enhances their understanding of the environment they live in (Muslim, 2021). Their understanding of nature is shaped by the philosophy that serves as their life guide. This life guide takes the form of disaster mitigation, a series of efforts to reduce disaster risks through both the physical conditions of the area and increasing awareness and capacity to face disasters that can occur at any time, taking into account the topography of the region (Damayani et al., 2022; Kamil et al., 2020).

The philosophy of life, “Lojor teu menunang dipotong, pondok teu menunang disambung,” translates to “the long should not be cut, the short should not be extended”. This philosophy signifies that the Baduy community is not allowed to add or subtract from what has been established and inherited from their ancestors. Regarding the flatness of the land, the Baduy people are not permitted to level or alter its original shape. By changing the inherited order, it can have significant impacts on their lives, especially considering their location on mountain slopes. Any alteration may lead to disasters that could affect the community, such as landslides, resulting in material losses and casualties. Therefore, in light of these circumstances, the community is obligated to preserve nature to maintain harmony and a peaceful existence. The adherence to this philosophy is reflected in the construction of their houses. If the location is on uneven ground, they build houses with high pillars to reach the flat land.

The second philosophy of life is “Gunung teu meunang dilebur, lebak teu meunang di rusak,” which means “Mountains should not be destroyed, forests should not be damaged”. Mountains and forests are the homes of the Baduy community. It provides resources for their daily lives. The activity of preserving mountains and
forests is solely carried out to conserve nature and maintain water sources as the lifeblood of the Baduy people. They will not allow anything to harm the sacred ecosystems and the forests they protect. They believe that the land, forests, and other natural resources have spirits, which are manifested through the preservation of water resources, mountains, and forests as the primary natural resources that must always be safeguarded. The Baduy people utilize and process natural resources in a traditional manner to fulfill their livelihood needs. For instance, they produce oil from the picung fruit (Pangium Edule) for use as lamp oil, serving as a source of energy for lighting (Zidny et al., 2021). They also process noni fruit as a biopesticide to protect rice crops from pests and practice ritualistic shifting cultivation in their agricultural system (Iskandar & Iskandar, 2017; Mohit & Sellu, 2013). Traditional medicinal plants are employed for healthcare purposes, and lime is used as a body cleanser, minimizing pollution and environmental contamination. These practices are undertaken as an effort to preserve nature amidst climate change caused by modern society, resulting in greenhouse gas emissions (Hu et al., 2018; Yue & Gao, 2018). Positive aspects are often overlooked. However, it is important to accurately estimate the long-run impact of these disasters. This study presents the first attempt to investigate the innovative response to climate disasters in modern and historical China. For modern China, using panel data of up to 31 provinces from 2005 to 2013 and the Generalized Methods of Moments (GMM). These conditions have an impact on the Baduy’s agricultural system, but they apply ethnoastronomy knowledge to mitigate the effects of seasonal weather changes during the planting season, thereby avoiding crop failure. This philosophy serves as a measure of disaster mitigation against environmental pollution, landslides, floods, and forest fires.

The third philosophy of life is “Buyut teu meunang dirobah, larangan teu meunang dirempak” which means “Nothing should be changed, prohibitions should not be violated”. This philosophy is realized through strict adherence to the rules of life, not everyone is allowed to enter the forbidden forest, and it is believed that nature possesses spirits that maintain the harmony of life. Those who violate the customary laws will face customary laws. The goal of
the Baduy community is to achieve a just, prosperous, safe, peaceful, and self-sufficient life. Discipline, obedience, and honesty are instilled in every member of the Baduy society who lives in strict adherence to various customary laws.

Conclusion
The Baduy community is an indigenous society that greatly values nature preservation. Their belief system is rooted in Sunda Wiwitan, which revolves around the spirits of their ancestors. This doctrine is embodied in the form of “pikukuh” (guidelines) that serve as a code of conduct to maintain the sustainability and balance of the environment. The pikukuh presented by the Baduy community bring forth the philosophies of life: “lojor teu menunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung” (long things should not be cut, and short things should not be extended), “gunung teu meunang dilebur, lebak teu meunang di rusak” (mountains should not be destroyed, and fields should not be damaged), and “buyut teu meunang dirobah, larangan teu meunang dirempak” (prohibitions should not be violated). These pikukuh offer a unique philosophy of life for the Baduy community, playing a role in mitigating natural disasters such as landslides, floods, forest fires, and environmental damage, thereby ensuring a harmonious and peaceful existence.

Bibliography


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