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Shift of *Pikukuh Karuhun* Values due to Communication Technology Exposure to Baduy Society

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ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to determine the reality in the shift of meaning and loyalty of cultural values in the current generation and the millennial generation of the Baduy Dalam Cibeo, Kanekes, Banten. On the basis of the consideration that no matter how strong the culture binds individuals in a certain ethnicity, it is difficult to stem the consequences of interactions with other individuals outside of the ethnic group. Moreover, it cannot be denied that exposure to communication technology has touched the Inner Baduy tribe which is known for their loyalty to upholding their ancestral customs, i.e. neither allowed to touch nor use the results of technological engineering. The phenomenological studies' methods used in this study were observation data collection techniques and interviews. The research subjects were 3-year-old children and 3 Baduy teenagers who had interacted with visitors from outside Baduy and had used digital media communication technology (Mobile Cellular). The results showed that social interaction with outside guests led to behavior that was contrary to *Pikukuh*, i.e. using a cell phone outside of Cibeo Village. This is a contradiction between the personal needs of adolescents in Baduy and the violation of cultural values.*

Keywords: Media exposure, communication technology, cultural values, cultural meaning Baduy

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui realitas pergeseran makna dan loyalitas nilai budaya pada generasi milenial Baduy Dalam Cibeo, Kanekes, Banten. Melalui dasar pertimbangan bahwa betapapun kuatnya budaya mengikat individu-individu dalam etnis tertentu, sulit untuk membendung konsekuensi interaksi dengan individu lain di luar kelompok etnis tersebut. Apalagi tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa terpaan teknologi komunikasi telah menyentuh suku Baduy Dalam yang dikenal dengan loyalitasnya dalam memegang teguh adat nenek moyang, yaitu tidak boleh menyentuh atau menggunakan hasil rekayasa teknologi. Metode studi fenomenologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teknik pengumpulan data observasi dan wawancara. Subjek penelitian adalah anak usia 3 tahun dan 3 remaja Baduy yang pernah berinteraksi dengan pengunjung dari luar Baduy dan pernah menggunakan teknologi komunikasi media digital (Mobile Cellular). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi sosial dengan tamu luar menimbulkan perilaku yang bertentangan dengan *Pikukuh*, yaitu menggunakan telepon seluler di luar Desa Cibeo. Hal ini merupakan kontradiksi antara kebutuhan pribadi remaja Baduy dengan pelanggaran nilai-nilai budaya.

Kata Kunci: Terpaan media, teknologi komunikasi, nilai budaya, makna budaya Baduy

INTRODUCTION

A new reality appeared among the youth and millennials of Cibeo Village, Benakes, Banten. A phenomenon where young people started to interact with communication technology to a certain extent (Gallivan & Srite, 2005). They did not refuse when asked to be photographed (as long as it is not in the *buyut* or forbidden zone). They also started using cellular phone to communicate with WhatsApp outside the vicinity of Cibeo Village. This phenomenon is interesting to study when we were there directly observing the young generation of Baduy on our visit to Cibeo Village. While observing, the researchers also conducted several deep interviews with the members of a team from Baduy Dalam (Inner Baduy). Among them are seven children aged 7 to 12 years old.

At first, a question flashed across our minds, why do these children come along to pick us up, are they part of the tour guide that would help us bring all of our luggage to Cibeo? We asked them about it, "*bade naon milu ngajemput rombongan?*". Their answer baffled us, "*milu turun bade nonton TV bu*". We then asked "*nonton acara naon kitu?*", and they answered in unison, "*nonton kartun boboy bu.*" They came all this way, 13 KM outside of their village, only to watch cartoon in television, a series called BoboiBoy to be precise. This pique our curiosity to learn more about how the young generation of Baduy in Cibeo interprets and stays loyal to their customs in this digital age.

As we all know, Baduy Dalam (Tangtu People) at Cibeo, Cikartawana, and Cikeusik, is an isolated tribe that keeps themselves away from outside world and the development of technology. Tangtu people is known to be strict in following their code, *pikukuh karuhun*, and have a lot of prohibitions, such as formal school, being photographed, wearing footwear, using transportation, using chemical substances for household uses, using cellphones, and other modern technology products. Tangtu people are also known for their dress code: natural white clothes with black sarong down to their knees and a white headband. According to their customs, they are also forbidden to meet with foreigners.

Inner Baduy tribe is led by a chieftain called *Pu'un*. *Pu'un* is a person with superiority above others and a descendant of *karuhun*—similar to a president in the outside world. His main job is to determine the right time to start planting and harvesting the fields, uphold the custom, and tend to those who are ill. Each of these three Tangtu villages has their own *Pu'un*. It is difficult for outsiders to directly meet them. All three of these villages, Cibeo, Cikartawana, and Cikeusik are still firmly keeping the *karuhun* custom under the leadership of their *Pu'un* chieftains, and this has become a unique characteristic that entices a lot of tourists to see it for themselves. Cibeo is the most frequently visited village because of their welcoming population.

There is an intercultural communication that is taking place between locals and tourists in this area. This provides ways for an exchange of information between the outside world and the sheltered world of Baduy people.

Intercultural communication only increased with the growing numbers of visitors that came to the Tangtu region from time to time (Kaba & Osei-Bryson, 2013). This brings a cultural shift in the Baduy society as they started to open themselves to the outside world, even though the basic idea of modernity is forbidden by their custom (Corner, 2016; Spitzberg, 2000).

This exposure with the outside world creates a lot of change in Inner Baduy youths especially the ones in Cibeo. They are more open toward outsider and their technology. The interaction between them brings about a change in Baduy youth behavior after knowing how the technology works and what they could do with it. Mulyana et al.'s (2019) study showed us that behavioral change is more active when a person is using a piece of media as a new culture like on how to enjoy a cultural industry. Digital media encourage and influence a person to be a fan, in this context a fan of cellular phone (Workman, 2014). This phenomenon that we could observe from Cibeo youth is their acceptance to being photographed as long as they are outside the vicinity of the village and there are no "no photography" signs nearby.

The youth of Inner Baduy has started to make use of cellular phone when they are outside the vicinity of their village. The kids loved it when they could accompany the adults outside the village because then they can watch their favorite shows on nearby non-Inner Baduy village's television. There is an occurring adaptation process about the differences of reality and social structure between the outside world and their world (Mulyana & Yaputra, 2020). This is the main interest of this current study, does the significance of *pikukuh karuhun* and the loyalty toward it has started to wear off in the hearts of Inner Baduy youth? This phenomenon encourages the writers to do more research about this particular topic through the qualitative approach in order to gain a deeper understanding on the available information and facts about this phenomenon on Baduy youth.

For the Inner Baduy people, their daily lives are dictated by unseen rules or customs. Inner Baduy is really strict on obeying said rules and the ancient rules of *pikukuh karuhun*). Even so, in reality, as a social being they could not completely ignore the influence of the outside world.

This study uses relevant concepts as a basis for the research, i.e. the theories of structure and social change. The point of view of this research is that culture and technological exposure are the main factors related to changes (U. Wahid, Usino, Vera, Hardjianto, & Budiyanto, 2021) in the values that exist in the Baduy community.

Giddens (1991) explained that actors or individuals in society are not individuals or groups who only accept a value and follow the flow, but individuals as agents who are able to express their human nature and change the existing social currents in the society. Therefore, even though individuals or actors in the society follow social currents, these individuals or actors (agents) have room for freedom to express their human existence (Reicher, 2004; Whittington, 2010).

Activities “are not carried out by social actors but are continually recreated through the means by which they express themselves as actors (Ritzer, 2004).” In and through their activities, agents produce a number of conditions that make these activities possible. Thus, activity is not generated by awareness of social constructions of reality, nor is it produced by social structures (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). However, when expressing themselves as actors, people practice, and it is through this practice that awareness and structure are generated (Briandana, 2019).

Meanwhile, social change views social interactions as dynamic social relationships and involves the relationship between individual people, human groups, and between individuals and groups of people (Caron, Raby, Mitchell, Théwissen-LeBlanc, & Prioletta, 2019). As a result of this intensive interaction, it is feared to cause social changes that can disturb changes in the customs of the Baduy people and if this really happens, there will be no more Baduy cultural systems in the future. Social change is a social process that occurs in society, which includes all aspects of life and human thought, when the map of social change is considered from the background of its demands (Hamid, 2016). From this definition it can be explained that the change is normal and continuing. Social change will be seen as an all-encompassing concept that points to change (Caron et al., 2019).

Several explanations have been given to explain why social change occurs (Rashid, Rahman, & Butt, 2017). Reicher (2004) provides the following explanation: Every social system constantly follows changes, because the environment always changes continuously. Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the reality of the shift in meaning and loyalty of cultural values to the current generation and the millennial generation of the Baduy Dalam Cibeo, Kanekes, Banten.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach by means of field research where the authors make direct observations into the field and also mingles with research subjects at a certain time. The research method used is phenomenology. Phenomenology is one type of qualitative research method that is applied to reveal the similarity of meaning which is the essence of a concept or phenomenon that is consciously and individually experienced by a group of individuals in their life (Giorgi, 2010).

Regarding the research method used, the authors determine the research subjects based on their needs. The research subjects were 3 Cibeo children aged 7-10 years and 3 young men who functioned as porters and receptionists aged 21-25 years old.

In this study, the data sources of the study were primary and secondary data. Primary data in this study are in-depth interviews and observations made directly to the Baduy community. Then, secondary data obtained were from previous studies that discuss the interaction between Baduy people and outsiders. Data collection techniques used were Direct Observation and In-depth Interview.

Researchers stayed in the research sites (Cibeo Village) for 3 days (8th until 10th of November 2020), observing subjects and conducting interviews regarding their experience as Baduy youths that have an obligation to adhere the *Pikukuh Karuhun* but also still have to interact with outsiders or guests and its effects on them and their behavior with technology like phones.

In determining the sources, there are ten subjects that the authors take in this study. The authors need sources who have the following criteria, i.e. the Inner Baduy people who have used cell phones and often become guides for tourists visiting Cibeo. In determining the research subject, the writer used the snowball method.

First, the authors conducted data collection technique by direct observation. The data collection technique is carried out so that the authors are more familiar with our own study. In this case, the authors see and hear how the conditions are happening in Baduy Dalam Cibeo. To facilitate this process, the observations obtained are stored through field notes and also through cellphones in the form of voice recordings and photos. Second, the authors conducted another data collection technique by means of in-depth interviews with research subjects. This was done so that the authors can get relevant data in accordance with the reality that occurs in the Baduy Dalam Cibeo community. This is relevant because the source that comes directly from the research subjects and the informants also provides descriptive information. In-depth direct observation and interviews were carried out by the authors,

where the authors stayed at the house of one of the residents of Baduy Dalam Cibeo, Yadi, who was also one of the subjects in this study.

Before conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher tried to approach the research subjects to make them feel more comfortable, earn their trust, and be able to provide the information clearly and precisely. In conducting this study, the authors interviewed several sources including the youth leaders of Baduy Dalam Cibeo. From the results of interviews conducted by the researchers from November 2019, there were six people who became the informants, i.e. three children and three young people working as guest guides/porters. In this study, the authors also used data collection technique of document study to strengthen the results of this study, i.e. through the analyzing Baduy photos. This document study serves as a foundation and also as a complement to primary data where the data source is obtained directly from observations and also Interview.

DISCUSSION

The Meaning of *Pikukuh Karuhun* values for Baduy Youth in Cibeo

Baduy people have a strong refusal to outsiders. They refuse to be called the descendants of Pajajaran Kingdom. According to Senoaji (2010), Baduy people were local population that officially made into *Mandala* by the king. Because of this they have the obligation to preserve *Kabuyutan*, neither Hinduism nor Buddhism. *Kabuyutan* in this region was also known as *Kabuyutan Jati* or *Sunda Wiwitan* (*wiwitan* means original or source). This is the reason why their religion is called *Sunda Wiwitan*. The king who made this population into *mandala* is King Rakeyan Darmasiska, the 13th king of Sunda, a descendant of Sri Jayabupati the 5th (Senoaji, 2010).

The moral basis for *Sunda Wiwitan* religion is reflected in Baduy's views on life that maintain the balance between human and themselves, human and nature, and human and their god—this concept in *Sunda Wiwitan* is called *sanghiyang* (M. Wahid, 2011). We can see this in their understanding of life that started from nature and in the end will return to nature also (Hakiki, 2015). There is an assumption between Baduy people that *Sunda Wiwitan* is not a religion, but the origin for every religion (Hakiki, 2015). Every existing religion will be reflecting the fundamental values of *katipan wiwitan* (the core values of *wiwitan* teachings). In addition, according to their beliefs, only Baduy people have the assignment to meditate, maintain, preserve, and enforce *wiwitan* as a religion (Indrawardana, 2014). Because of this, they assume that *wiwitan* belongs to everyone, not only Baduy people (M. Wahid, 2011). For them, every person have the responsibility to cherish, protect, and

strengthen *wiwitan* because if there is a change that alters the fundamental understanding of *wiwitan*, there will be a transformation that affect their whole lives (Isnendes, 2016).

The implementation of *Sunda Wiwitan* in Baduy people's daily lives shows in the form of honoring the ancestors and their beliefs in *Batara Tunggal (Nu Ngersakeun)*, the highest ruling being. However, they are also still glorifying their ancestors that they believe reside in *Arca Domas*, the monotheism of *Batara Tunggal* which is still a prevalent concept in Baduy society (Mulyadi, Prabowo, & Chrisnatalia, 2019).

The link between Baduy's rules, their beliefs, and *Arca Domas* produce a series of *pikukuh* that acts as guidelines for Baduy society to adapt with their surroundings (Sumaryadi, Hasan, & Lukman, 2020). This is very important because the more they could adapt the more they could live alongside their environment.

As a society, Baduy holds a firm belief of their tradition and ancestor where every social system must come from their religion system. Religion, according to their understanding, is a relation between the ways of thinking and behave that follow the *pikukuh* passed down by their ancestors. Every violation and violator of this rule must be cleansed through a ritual. The punishment will be passed accordingly with their crimes. These offenders will be exiled from *tangtu* village to *dangka* or *panamping* (companion) village. Offenders from a village can still live in the village, but they are punished with hard work and guilt (Garna, 1992).

To Baduy society, *buyut*, *teu meunang*, and *teu wasa* have become strong fence for their beliefs that will keep them far from actually breaking these rules. The sense of guilt and shame would keep haunting them if they did so. This leads to a uniformity of behavior in their society. The visage of iniquity and heavenly punishment caused them to calculate their behavior and action. All of these came from their firm beliefs that will always haunt their minds. If they consciously violate the rules, then they will accept their punishment and if they did it otherwise it will still castigate their souls. These are the unwritten rules of *pikukuh amanat karuhun* that guide the life of Baduy tribe.

All of this is relevant to what Asteria, Brotosusilo, Soedrajad, & Nugraha (2021) said that every individual of Inner Baduy society in Cibeo is an agent whose mind and activity is continuously monitored by themselves. This also included the physical and social of their life. On their search for safety, actor rationalized their world. Rationalization that Giddens meant here is the change of routine that not only brings comfort to them, but also helps them to live their social live efficiently. Actors also have their own motivations to act and this motivation involves their wish and desire to change their action. If rationalization and

reflectivity continuously involved in an act, then they are more appropriate to see motivation as a potential for action. Motivation provides a whole lot of plan for Baduy people to act (Hakiki, 2015). For them a lot of this motivation to obey *pikukuh karuhun* is going undetected.

The concept of *buyut* for Baduy people does not only stop in taboos. It is closer to the concept of *haram* in Islam—something that is heavenly forbidden. *Pikukuh* as a guideline has a lot to do with Baduy's religion, *Sunda Wiwitan*. To uphold *pikukuh*, Baduy people have to practice the teachings and principles of *Sunda Wiwitan*.

Baduy society in Cibeo led by their chieftain *Puun Janteu* could be seen as a traditional homely society that has been enriched by wisdom and could be a model society for everyone who visited them there. Their custom law of *pikukuh* that has been passed down for generations becomes the foundation of their local culture. This wisdom is a collective understanding and knowledge that influences their judgement and decision on problems in life. In this case, the wisdom is an embodiment of a set of knowledge that has been developed by a group of people, gathered from a long sequence of experiences in interacting with one system and one bond of relation with mutual benefits (Marfai, 2012). Local culture could be summed up as a cultural identity of group in the form of norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, and specific rules that have been accepted by them and have been tested to last a long time.

The majority of people in Cibeo have gotten used to interact with outsiders that come to visit them. They also have gotten used to visit the nearest city. This was strengthened by what Yadi, our guide, said in our visit. Yadi said that they usually form several small teams, some to collect honey and others to go to the city and sell it. The one who goes to the city also works as a guide and porter for tourists who want to visit their village. Safri, another member of his team, added that in a week they usually escort twice.

Our conversation with Yadi indicates that there has been a dynamic relation between Baduy society and the outside world. According to Yadi, the presence of outsiders in their village brings a special color. They also introduced them to communication technology like phones.

Earlier research by Widowati (2014) shows that interaction between the Baduy people and society outside their village is inevitable. These conditions where Baduy people have to communicate with the outside world day by day will affect their custom to the very core. The outside world with their access to technology have a superior advantage regarding the use of information. Such information could affect our cognition and affection and when the Baduy people caught this information their behavior would be affected like ours, either positive or negative.

Earlier research reinforce this research results regarding the emergence of new reality for Baduy youth that interacts with guest where they learn to own and use phone as a communication device, even though only outside their village.

Inner Baduy society still practiced their custom strictly. For their dress code, they still have to wear an all-black apparels and a white headband. Cibeo villagers still follow these rules. Their interaction with the outside world does not change that. While we were there, our observation still saw them wearing their characteristic wardrobe without footwear.

This shows that they still have a certain respect with their cultural values. It is in line with Jambak, Robyana, Budiman, Ahmad, & Subekti (2014) that value is something nice that will always be desired, wished for, and deemed important by every member of society. This is because this something could be said as valuable if it is useful and has a value of truth, aesthetic, moral, and religious.

The use of technology is clearly forbidden in Baduy society. Cibeo is no exception. There is a punishment waiting for those who break this rule. According to *Jaro Sami* of Cibeo village, there will be a punishment for those who use outside technology like phones ranging from warning, penalty, penitentiary, to exile. From our interview and observation results, we did not find any possessions of phones or any pieces of technology whatsoever. However, Yadi knows how to use it and how applications like WhatsApp works He also knows other currently popular social media like *Instagram* or *Facebook* (Briandana, Doktoralina, Hassan, & Wan Hasan, 2020). Yadi admitted that they have used their phones when they are outside the village, as stated by the following informant:

“teu meunang nganggo hape ku adat ejeung puun, tapi nya eta butuh keur tatalaponan ka semah nu hoyong ameng ka Cibeo jadi makena di luar Cibeo” (He explained that it is still forbidden to use phones and such according to their custom and chieftain but because they really need it to contact their would-be guests there is a leniency to use it outside the vicinity of the of their village).

He also has a sister who married an outsider and he said that he used to visit them in Cibuleger. Using phones and WhatsApp application, he frequently communicates with the contact numbers he saved in a little notebook he keeps. It is filled with numerous numbers of previous tourists that he guided to Cibeo. He used this to organize a pick-up or to exchange news if there is an order for honey and other crafts and fruits like durian. These will usually

be delivered to Ciboleger or Cijahe as a regular spot for picking up tourists who want to visit Cibeo.

Yadi learned this skill from tourists who came to him. They taught Yadi and his friends how to use a phone. According to Arja and Sedi, the tourists also taught them and other members of the team, but Yadi is the fastest learner and overall is smarter than the other. This is also the reason why he is the leader of the team.

This change on Yadi and his team is in tune with what Bahrudin & Zurohman (2021) that social interaction is a dynamic relation and involves individual-to-individual relation, group-to-group relation, and individual-to-group relation. An intensive interaction such as what Yadi experienced could result in a social transformation that can perturb local customs, even as a far as replacing it.

This is strengthened by an argument of Widyanarti, Sarwoprasodjo, Sihabudin, & Kinseng (2021) that social transformation is a social process that happens in society. It covers every aspect of their lives and their ideas. In other word, it is normal and will continuously happen. Social transformation will be regarded as an all-encompassing concept that guides to change.

So far, Yadi and his team have never used their phones while they are in the village. They always use it outside. They know that what they have done violates the rules of *pikukuh*, but they also admit that they need their phones in order to contact tourists who would visit them. This will make their job of organizing the meeting a whole lot easier. In addition, they also regulate their departure to the city twice a week to go to the house of their families who have been entrusted for keeping their phone.

The social transformation that is happening here occurred in the form of communication transformation into using cellular phones. It is in line with what Widowati, (2014) said that one the reasons why social transformation could occur is because of the change in communication device.

Another uniqueness that we found was Yadi's habit on writing tourist contact numbers in his little notes. This signifies that Yadi could write even if his writings leave much to be desired even though according to their customs Baduy people is forbidden to take part in school. However, if they could learn writing and reading informally, according to Yadi it would not be a problem. *Jaro sami* once stated that Baduy people is prouder of becoming an honest person rather than a smart one because, in their views, smart people have a lot of opportunity to lie.

When we interacted with the children from Cibeo village (age 7 to 10) who were also accompanying the group that picked us up, we were also able to observe and interview them as research subject. Their names are Sarpin, Sarif, and Ucal. They are quite cheerful when they meet us. They are sitting in one of the stalls in the emergency terminal of Cijahe village.

Cijahe village neighbors Outer Baduy village, Cisadane, where there are a lot of small stalls on the side of the road. The main purpose for them to accompany Yadi's group is to watch television. Sedi, one of Yadi's members, said that this is actually forbidden, However, kids will always be kids. If we warn them today, tomorrow they will go do the forbidden things by themselves.

From our conversations with those three kids while we walk to their village for about 3 hours, they told us about what they did back there.

“Angger ka Cijahe ngajemput seumah ngiring, hoyong ningali boboboy nu jagoan tea”
(every time we pick up guests in Cijahe, we would follow them because we want to watch the famous Boboboy cartoon).

Sarpin explained that while waiting for our luggage from the minibus, they watched boboy (BoBoiBoy) on the television. Knowing their origin as a child of Baduy tribe, who ever since they were born they have been taught about the rules of *pikukuh karuhun* and the concept of *buyut* or prohibition, this has become quite counterproductive. On one hand, the customs said that they are forbidden to watch cartoon but on the other hand they are psychologically called to enjoy this simple entertainment. Their curiosity overcomes their awareness of their ancestral customs.

Regarding their obligation to obey the laws of *pikukuh*, Yadi told us that for now their chief does not enforce it. They were given a choice either to follow it or not. For those who still want to and capable to follow it, they're welcomed to still live in Cibeo village. For those who do not, they are allowed to step outside out of Baduy society and live elsewhere outside the territory.

The change that Inner Baduy youth experienced is one of the effects of their interaction with the outside world that brings technology like phones or television. Yadi feels that as time goes by, Baduy youth would try to escape from the restrains of *pikukuh* especially

regarding the use of technology because he thinks that it is a necessity when they go to the town of Ciboleger either to communicate with possible tourists or sell their products.

The reality where a lot of youth in Baduy society are still claiming that they are obeying the law of *pikukuh* is interesting. However, on the other hand they are still admitting the necessity of technology as long as they are using it outside the village.



Figure 1. Research Subjects, Inner Baduy children

Source: Researcher, November 2020

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the shift in the meaning of the values of *Pikukuh karuhun* occurs in the Current Generation and Millennials of the Baduy Dalam Cibeo, Kanekes Village, Banten, as the influence of repeated social interactions with outside guests who taught the Baduy community how to use cell phones. The reason for the young people is that they cannot deny the need to use cellular phones to find additional income to meet their living expenses. This is considered by the ancestors as a violation of cultural values and the necessities of life which is a reality in today's Baduy community. In this context, technological exposure and the noble values of Baduy culture are important points of research findings. The need for economic value for the present generation in Baduy is a major factor in the shifting of cultural values in Baduy. It cannot be denied that technology also plays an

important role, plus the interaction between Baduy people and guests visiting Baduy makes the exposure to technology even higher.

This study suggests and expects that the government needs to re-evaluate the current realities of the Inner Baduy community as a result of interactions with various guests bringing social changes to their behavior on using digital technology which is contrary to Pikukuh Karuhun. It is necessary to bring digital media literacy for Baduy youth.

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