

Baduy Cultural Tourism: An Ethnolinguistic Perspective

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Abstract— This article discusses the dimensions of ethnolinguistic identity of Baduy people and their relationship to various aspects of cultural tourism, on the grounds that language is considered to be one of the central characteristics of Baduy identity, in addition to their traditional attire, customs, belief and way of life. In the context of tourism, as an ethnic group indigenous to the region where they reside, namely Lebak Regency, Banten, Indonesia, Baduy cultural identity plays an important role in the development of cultural tourism of the region. As an ethnic group, Baduy is known for its resistance against modernity, maintaining a secluded life without the use of any form of modern technology. From an ethnolinguistic perspective, this article sheds light on one difference (the absence of Sundanese language stratification, *undak-usuk*) that separates Baduy people from other Sundanese-speaking people in West Java. Upon looking at this aspect, this article adopts the concepts of one of the earliest ethnolinguistic studies conducted in the southern region of Chile as eloquently shared by Silva-Fuenzalida (1949). In the domain of cultural tourism, this article also adopts Sulaiman (2014) on a study of translating urban tourist icons within English–Malay perspective, underlining the contribution of ethnolinguistic view of Baduy people in promoting Baduy as tourist destination. In this light, this article suggests that due to its ethnolinguistic characteristics, Baduy has the potential to be one of Indonesia’s leading destinations for cultural tourism.

Keywords— Baduy, cultural tourism, ethnolinguistics, language, culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Baduy people, also known as Kanekes people, is a Sundanese ethnic group living in Lebak Regency, Banten. The name “Baduy” is the name given by the people on the outer skirt of Baduy region. It was originated by Dutch researchers who paralleled the Baduy people with the Arab *Bedouins*, due to its nomad nature. Another possibility is that the name is originated from the name of the river in the area, named the Baduy River, and also the

mountain, named the Baduy Mountain in the northern region. It is widely known that they prefer to be called *urang Kanekes* or Kanekes people, which is in line with the original name of the region.

There are two types of Baduy: the Outer and Inner Baduy. The people of the Outer Baduy are known to have left behind the tradition of the original Baduy, namely the Inner Baduy. The people of the Inner Baduy still uphold their ancestors’ tradition. To date, there are basically three names given to the Baduy people:

1. The Inner Baduy, whose location is in *Tiga Tangtu (Kepuunan)* namely Cibeo, Cikeusik and Cikertawana.
2. The Outer Baduy, whose locations spread in 27 neighborhoods in the village of Kanekes, who still uphold traditional laws under the command of a *Puun* (Chief).
3. Muslim Baduy, who are modernized and have converted to Islam and completely left their traditional laws behind.

These three are still present up to this time, living in tolerance despite the differences.

Like Sundanese ethnic group, the people of Baduy live in the western part of the island of Java, Indonesia. As one of Indonesia’s ethnic groups, Baduy has its own customs and tradition. From the point of view of cultural tourism, the customs of the Baduy people are interesting as a tourist attraction, for instance, because of their signature look: the traditional black or broken white attire and traditional head band that they wear every day. Due to its similarity in character in terms of refusing to use any modern technology, Baduy can also be referred to as the Amish people of Indonesia. Its people and way of life still maintain the tradition practiced for centuries. Since childhood, the people of Baduy have been taught to lead the life the way their ancestors lived it. They are bound to tradition and are expected to hand it down to their future generation.

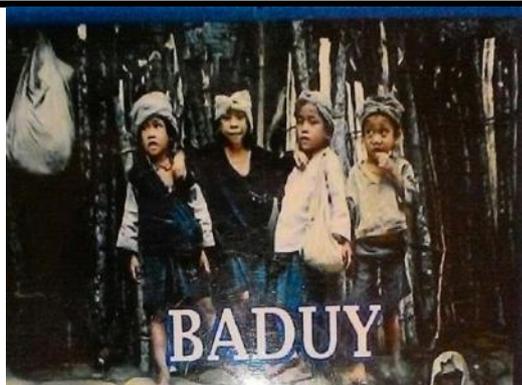


Fig 1. Baduy children in traditional attire (Source: Sumarlina, 2017b)

Another characteristic of Baduy is that the people still practice traditional health care, relying mainly on traditional herbs to tend to illness. They are also known for choosing to travel anywhere on foot. Furthermore, Baduy is also known as having a signature bridge construction called the *Rawayan* bridge, which is a suspended bridge made of bamboos.



Fig 2. Baduy Rawayan bridge (Source: Sumarlina, 2017b)

In addition, the village consists of traditional houses made of rocks, bamboos, and dried palm leaves as roofs.



Fig 3. Baduy house (Source: Sumarlina, 2017b)

All these reflect the cultural aspect of the Baduy people (Riley, 2008; Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c), and these, as this article proposes, can be considered as tourist assets for enhancing the economic welfare of the people while at the same time preserving tradition.

Another characteristic of Baduy is its language, since the language used by Baduy people is slightly different from that of Sundanese people all over the Provinces of West Java and Banten. In general, Sundanese people still use the language stratification of *undak-usuk*, with three different layers, namely the high, middle, and low types. The high language is used formally to show high respect, the middle is used with peers to whom the speaker shows respect or to refer to the speaker himself when talking with people who have higher social status, and the low type is used in everyday activities with friends or people of lower social status. However, Baduy people generally use this low type of language with anyone on any occasion. It does not mean that they do not respect people with higher social position, but that is the way they live and communicate with others.

These characteristics foreground the idea discussed in this article, within the context of cultural tourism. Systematically, this article will first of all discuss what distinguishes Baduy as an ethnic group; its distinct cultural elements and what type of identity they portray. Afterwards, the discussion will work its way towards an ethnolinguistic view of Baduy language system, and then move to the idea of Baduy cultural tourism.

II. BADUY IDENTITY

Identity can be briefly described as the qualities of a person or a group which make them different from others, and it is closely related to language and culture. Within this context, Baduy people are different from other Sundanese groups in West Java and Banten, among other things, is because of the way they communicate with others; their language which has no *undak usuk*, their repertoire and so on. The Baduy dialect is their unique way of building relationship with God, their fundamental tool to express their thought in a simple, straightforward manner. Their language is one of the characteristics of who they are. Without their unique dialect, it is very difficult to differentiate them from other Sundanese communities from the linguistic point of view. Besides, their identity is also constructed by their appearance, the imagination of their appearance to the other people.

People outside Baduy community often have in their mind Baduy identity on the basis of their own imagination, and this imagination can strengthen one's motivation to visit, understand or even experience the

way of life of the others' (Jourdan & Tuite, 2006; Riley, 2008; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017b). Based on the research that has been conducted, we are of the opinion that the Baduy identity with its uniqueness and authenticity and the images that have been constructed and reproduced are important to attract tourists. The image of natural and authentic rural region can enhance the tourism promotion of West Java and Banten on the national, even international tourist maps. In addition, based on our study, Baduy region is not only potential and very interesting as a tourism resort, but as an 'outdoor laboratory' for students and researchers who are interested in the study of [indigenous] cultures as well.

III. BADUY CULTURAL ELEMENTS

In general, culture is understood as the total social knowledge or information, beliefs, values and skills one needs to share and apply in his or her community or society and situations in which the individual lives. Baduy culture, therefore, comprises the ideas, customs, and art of the people. There are seven basic cultural elements related to Baduy people's daily life (Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017b), namely:

- a. The system of belief called the *Sunda Wiwitan* or *Selam Wiwitan* as their religion, which is believed to have been in existence before Hinduism came to West Java. The core of this belief is that they believe in one God, and it also emphasizes the responsibility on natural preservation and environmental maintenance. One stunning aspect of their belief is that they are not allowed to go to school, causing them to never experience formal education. This uncommon phenomenon is caused by the belief that if someone becomes clever he will cheat other people.
- b. The system of technology which is regarded as simple and traditional because they are strictly prohibited to use any form of modern technology. It does not mean that they cannot afford to buy modern devices and appliances; it is merely because of their strong belief that refrain them from using modern equipment, because being modern is also something they always avoid since it is not in line with their principles, which is to lead a simple and honest life.
- c. The system of economy or means of livelihood which is different from that of urban people. Most Baduy people are farmers, and they often move from one rice field to another as they practice shifting cultivation. They grow paddy or

rice on *huma*, or dry rice cultivation, the water for which mostly comes from the rain. Only a few of them sell handicrafts or other commodities. They neither buy nor sell modern commodities and sophisticated equipment.

- d. The system of social organization which is different from that of Sundanese people in general. Their social organization system, which is based on *Sunda Wiwitan* or *Selam Wiwitan*, has existed for hundreds of years. The most important thing is that they respect and obey the elders. They admire their ancestors and live a harmonious life with nature. Their highest leader is called *Puun*, and there are three areas or *Kapuunan*, namely *Puun Cikeusik*, *Puun Cikartawana* and *Puun Cibeo*. All these are based on their belief of the philosophy of *Tri Tangtu di Buana* or the three determining factors in life.



Fig 4. The elders of Baduy (Source: Sumarlina, 2017b)

- e. The system of knowledge which includes knowledge of various aspects of life related to know-that, know-of, and know-how. Know-that consists of what individuals believe to be true. Know-of consists of current events and preoccupations. Know-how consists of the individual's skills, capacities and competencies.
- f. The system of art, which is very traditional and reflects the authenticity of their culture. Because they do not use any modern equipment in all aspects of life, the Sundanese art is not far from traditional forms. Their music involves the Sundanese strummed stringed musical instrument called *Kacapi*, and bamboo musical instrument globally known as *angklung*, *karinding*, *gambang* (like a xylophone) (Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Riley, 2008; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017b and 2017c).

- g. The language system of the Baduy dialect, which is different from that of the standard Sundanese language in general. This dialect has no *undak usuk* system, and is still influenced by Old Sundanese or *Bahasa Sunda Buhun*, like the one used in the various Sundanese mantras extant in the Baduy people until now.

In terms of language and the way its usage is handed down by the people of Baduy, the act of preserving it occurs in a form of a reconstruction “by means of an analysis of the metaphoric expressions continually used at present” (Silva-Fuenzalida, 1949: 452), which is very similar to what was observed in a rural society in Chile. As such, language becomes problematic and advantageous at the same time, because as a sign system, it simultaneously keeps reconstructing and preserving. The language of Baduy people, thus, becomes the identity of Baduy people that inevitably keeps experiencing changes apart from its distinctiveness.

IV. THE LANGUAGE OF BADUY PEOPLE

The language used by Baduy people is a dialect of Sundanese language, the widely used language by Sundanese people who mostly live in the west part of the island of Java, namely the Provinces of West Java and Banten of the Republic of Indonesia. The Sundanese language is the mother tongue of most inhabitants of West Java, it is the *'jati diri'* or identity of the Sundanese people, and also an important part of Indonesian culture (Sumarlina, 2017c: 61). Sumarlina further explains that in general, Baduy people usually use *basa loma*, the dialect that does not recognize *undak usuk*, or language strata in the standard Sundanese (Sumarlina, 2017b: 81).

Nowadays, some words from outside Baduy culture are often heard in daily conversations, especially among *Baduy Luar* (Outer Baduy) such as *radio*, although they do not have or use that apparatus. In the following, we can see the differences between the Sundanese language in general and the Baduy dialect.

- *Pun bapa teu kagungan radio* ‘My father doesn’t have a radio’ (Sundanese).
The verb *kagungan*, the high type for ‘to have,’ is used here to show respect to fathers or elders. This high type is rarely or never used in the Baduy dialect.
- *Abdi teu gaduh radio* ‘I don’t have a radio’ (Sundanese).
The verb *gaduh*, the middle type for ‘to have,’ is used here to show politeness among the society, and it is rarely used by the Baduy people.
- *Kuring teu boga radio* ‘I don’t have a radio’ (Sundanese).

The verb *boga*, the *basa loma* ‘lower than the middle’ that is usually used with friends in everyday life to show intimacy or used with people from the lower social status. In the Baduy dialect, the acceptable sentence for ‘I don’t have a radio’ is as follows:

Kammi teu boga radio ‘I don’t have a radio’ (the Baduy dialect usually used with any person in any situation).

The dialect indicates the way of Baduy people’s life that is not bound to the stratification of the standard Sundanese language, and it shows that their dialect has never been influenced by any other language system, for instance the Javanese language which is considered to be older and has strict use of language strata. It may mean that they are the indigenous people of the region with a unique dialect which is also very often associated with the identity of the Old Sundanese people. Therefore, this dialect may become the central or significant attribute for the group’s identity and still exists in this modern world (Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Riley, 2008; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017b and 2017c). Upon reflecting and seeing this distinct feature, the discussion will be drawn by comparing it with the one that can be seen in Sarawak, for instance, where they have different local languages.

In a research on local languages in Sarawak, Mis (2012: 903) states that the language used to communicate is the one most often used in daily activities. In the case of Sarawak, there are various ethnic groups with their own distinct languages. At the same time, they also use a unifying language that is taken into account as a collective language which is understood by one another, and it is the one that does not cause any type of miscommunication. His findings show that the two main languages in Sarawak are the Iban language and Sarawak Malay dialect. He further highlights that either one of the two can be used, depending on the situation. For informal situation, they use the Iban language, whereas for formal situation, they use the Sarawak Malay dialect (Mis, 2012: 920). This goes to show that even in a smaller scale, the convention of language system differs, depending on the need and practicality. The people in Sarawak thus compromise with the situation, accommodating the two different sets of language (the Iban language and the Sarawak Malay dialect).

In the case of Baduy, the absence of *undak-usuk*, their distinct *basa loma* dialect, ethnolinguistically mark Baduy people’s identity. Different from Sarawak, the Baduy people do not give in to compromise their language with the Sundanese language, let alone with Indonesia’s national language, Bahasa Indonesia. This indicates that diversity is maintained at the same time to preserve Baduy’s one-of-a-kind tradition. By

compromising, the people of Baduy are risking their beliefs which has been handed down from their ancestors for hundreds of years. As problematic as it is, maintaining tradition means shutting themselves out of the world, which can potentially be counter-productive to the sustainability of Baduy people's life. Yet paradoxically, this can in fact be regarded as an advantage, as an important asset to Indonesia when it comes to promoting the diversity of the country to the world, in the form of cultural tourism.

V. ETHNOLINGUISTIC VIEW ON BADUY

Defined as "the study of the relationship between languages and the communities they help to define" (Underhill, 2012: 17), ethnolinguistics bridges the domains of language and cultural practices. As Underhill (2012: 11) boldly postulates, "[l]anguage is no prison house, and we are no prisoners. Each one of us takes his or her place within language and within the social relations in which we live." Language then enables a community, a group of people, to be distinct. In a similar tone, Silva-Fuenzalida echoes that "language, despite the internal consistency of its structure, provides a network of channels through which an individual may develop his own manner of expression" (1949: 450-451). In this sense, language thus can be perceived as a means of expression. Since ethnolinguistics is an important approach to understand integral human behavior on a synchronic level, it is then pivotal to use this approach to have a closer look at the significance of maintaining the language system of the Baduy people. In the discussion, this view is then juxtaposed with a case in Chile, as researched and shared by Silva-Fuenzalida (1949).

On one of the earliest researches conducted on ethnolinguistics, Silva-Fuenzalida shares the significant contribution on how linguistics can profit from the study of cultural phenomena. The cultural aspects of a society help in "assessing the problem of meaning in language, the problem of cultural definition," underlining that "the value of linguistic studies for ethnology resides mainly in the philological study of texts which provide the linguistic symbolism that will render significance and intelligibility to the data obtained from the analysis of cultural structures" (Silva-Fuenzalida, 1949: 446-449). Research shows that there is a verbal difference between the standards for patterns of etiquette in rural districts in the southern regions of Chile with the urban center of the country, which is the capital, Santiago. This difference marks the difference of social status; the urban population being the upper stratum, and the rural being the lower one. The people in the rural areas use obsolete Spanish structural features and vocabularies, which is an indication of an extensive use of language in personal

interrelationship. The level of formality used by those living in urban area is the opposite of the one used by the previous generation.

In ethnolinguistic studies, linguists go hand in hand with ethnologists who may benefit from the knowledge of cultural definitions of utterances, especially in dealing with the problems of social stratification (Silva-Fuenzalida, 1949: 450). What happens in rural the southern regions of Chile parallels with that in Baduy. Situated in an isolated area, Baduy retains its traditional, interpersonal relation with the secluded community. They consider themselves as rural, and they intend to remain that way. This interpersonal relation equalizes the social status of Baduy people. There is no segregation; there is no higher or lower status. Because they live a secluded life, they manage to maintain this tradition. Annihilating the *undak-usuk* rejects language stratification in Baduy's *basa loma*. As a principal, this reflects the Baduy people's commitment in preserving tradition. As a country, Indonesia in general suffers from what can be called as "a postcolonial cultural phenomenon," in a sense that Indonesia could easily gravitate towards "copying the West in a form of westernisation or ethnocentrism" (Adipurwawidjana, 1999: 92). Within this lens, an exception needs to be handed in to the people of Baduy, for standing strong in keeping their tradition. Yet, this is also still arguable, as Baduy people thrive to survive in this state.

As a form of traditional practice, even language has the potential to undergo changes, since language is associated with culture, then language, as a flexible instrument, contributes to culture changes. In its purest and natural mechanism, language provides a network of channels through which an individual may develop his own manner of expression (Silva-Fuenzalida, 1949: 450-451). Therefore, there is still a probability that Baduy's traditional *basa loma* will undergo changes as well. Exoticism sells, and Baduy's traditional *basa loma* can be considered exotic, particularly to the Western eyes. Interaction with the people of Baduy will give a sense of tradition in its natural manner. Having the chance to witness the way they communicate is a rare opportunity. In this light, as part of a traditional practice, the *basa loma* can be considered as an asset which can help promote Baduy as tourist attraction.

The idea of Baduy's cultural tourism has the potential of self-destruction. On the one hand, it can boost the region's economy, and on the other hand, it can also kill its tradition and values. Perhaps we need to look at it more like the one they have in Thailand, where tourists can visit the village of the Long Neck Karen Hilltop Tribe. In the village, during their visit there, the tourists are allowed to sit around and observe the tribe. They are

even allowed to try helping the locals to weave, for instance, or to try on their accessories. All these are unfortunately, disturbingly picture perfect. It is as if the locals are commodified and were put there as a spectacle.

Either way, there is always an argument behind every idea. The fact that Baduy people own this uniqueness can be an advantage to the local people of Baduy, regardless how this is going to affect their way of life. From ethnolinguistic perspective, visiting Baduy people enables the visitors to experience the place and the local people communicating the past and present traditions. Exoticizing Baduy may probably be inevitable, but this is the risk one must take in the business of tourism. In response to this, the following will highlight the symbiotic relation between language and cultural tourism.

VI. BADUY CULTURAL TOURISM

Language plays a very important role in the activities related to cultural tourism, both as a tool for communication and as a part of various cultural attractions. Besides, the local language may also become one of the new interests for the tourist as well. Phipps points out the importance of a local language for a tourist as follows:

Tourism concentrates multilingual and intercultural experiences significantly. It does so at times of great symbolic significance to tourists, times that are anticipated and that are associated, socially, culturally and often personally, with happiness. In order to survive in the multilingual, intercultural worlds of tourism, being able to speak the language is an obviously advantage (Phipps, 2006: 15).

In other words, tourism offers more than just pleasure, it can also make the tourists experience and taste the difference of socio-cultural atmosphere of the place that they are visiting. Besides being a tool of communication, the local language can also be regarded as something new for the tourist. New knowledge is one of the things that the tourist is looking for, besides, of course, new experience, leisure and happiness. Language as new knowledge and its benefit is the essence of the paragraph mentioned by Theobald as follows:

Education and training are communicative and interactive in nature, that is, both bring about developmental transfer of concepts, methods and models from the initial context of learning to the context of the classroom and on to the professional career context, where knowledge and competencies are applied in particular tasks (Theobald, 2005: 482).

This highlights the fact that tourism can be educational, in the sense that it can introduce the tourists to a new language. One of the advantages of learning a new language is that it will assist to understand the culture of the speech community, and it is very helpful to build a new relation with them. In the next turn, it will be very fruitful for a business, especially the global great business like tourism.

There are various tourist activities, but the most popular and universal one is cultural tourism. Cultural tourism tends to be long-lasting because every community or society has its own cultural background with its uniqueness and characteristics which are different from the cultural background of the tourists. This kind of tourism usually presents the images of the past of a certain community and their relationship with the modern life (Richards, 2005; Theobald, 2005; Sumarlina, 2017b). Baduy cultural tourism, including the indigenous knowledge of the people, is one of the examples. The tourists who come from other parts of Java, especially those who also have Sundanese cultural background will feel that the Baduy people are those who link them with their ancestors, the bridge that connects them and unites them with the past. It represents a lifestyle perceived to be more natural or closer to nature, far from the hustle and bustle of the metropolis. Language, landscapes, traditional Baduy houses, and woods are presented as embodying the essence of the old Sundanese ancestral culture. Thus, they provide visitors with both physical and experiential activities with a community and their culture. For tourists from other parts of Indonesia or outside Indonesia, this type of cultural tourism will broaden their horizon as has been stated by Richards as follows:

Travelling has long been a means of broadening human knowledge The concern with education is carried on in modern travel brochures, which often emphasize the educational benefits to be gained from a particular destination: a chance to learn about history, anthropology, foreign language and culture in general. Many new opportunities are now being offered to link tourism and education A specific attempt to link past and present is the creation of ecomuseums, which are open-air anthropological museums, presenting a picture of the life or technology of a specific region. (Richards, 2005: 118)

In an attempt to broaden their knowledge, the tourists take travelling to a different level. Travelling can be considered as educational, as it offers new experiences and the chance to meet new people with completely different cultural backgrounds. This opinion can be applied in the development of Baduy cultural tourism

where the stakeholders can provide and enjoy a picture of the culture through a collection of traditional Baduy houses, typical of the region, workshops demonstrating old crafts, daily cultural events and so on.

Baduy cultural tourism is often related to the history of these people that is regarded as one of the elements that forms an identity, that is the identity of the old Sundanese culture, and it is often employed to promote tourism. Thus, words such as historic, nostalgia and heritage are frequently seen in this kind of tourist brochures. These words create tourism images of a community that reflect the lifestyles of the past in relation to the present-day way of life: their characteristics, uniqueness and authenticity that are very important in the activities of cultural tourism. The objective of presenting various aspects of heritage, among other things is to preserve the heritage itself for the sake of future education (Richards, 2005; Riley, 2008; Sumarlina, 2017b). Picturesque and native Baduy are only some of the qualities that are expected to allure tourists to come.

Arguably, like any other tourism prospects, there is always a downside. Promoting Baduy as cultural tourism can potentially erode the traditions upheld by the Baduy people. Exposure to the outside world may jeopardize their traditional sustainability. Ironically, to be one of Indonesia's tourist destinations, Baduy's iconicity has to be constructed by the potential tourists, since "tourist icons are not iconic in themselves, but emerge as such in the mind of the beholder" (Sulaiman, 2014: 160). Baduy, therefore, has to be perceived as a community which is untouched by the modern world, which is highly rare in this millennial era. The cultural background and world knowledge of the would-be visitors also influence their decision on whether or not to visit Baduy, for instance.

VII. CONCLUSION

The dimensions of ethnolinguistic identity of Baduy people and their relationship to various aspects of cultural tourism are based on the grounds that language is considered to be one of the central characteristics of Baduy identity. Due to its ethnolinguistic characteristics, Baduy has the potential to be one of Indonesia's leading destinations for cultural tourism. Ethnolinguistically, Baduy stands out due to the people's distinct social interaction mechanism. Social stratification is eliminated, making the people living within this community equal in status. In this light, discussing the ethnolinguistic aspect of Baduy is therefore necessary. As such, Baduy culture plays an important role in West Java and Banten tourist promotion. It is not merely in the sense of tourism business, but more than that, it encourages further exploration on how man and nature have worked together side by side, hand in hand to create environmental

preservation. Baduy culture represents a lifestyle to be more natural or closer to nature.

This tourist destination is not only ideal for tourist who only seek for pleasure and happiness but also for those who want to learn and experience the uniqueness and authenticity of the region. The culture does not only go to the heart of the Baduy people, but also to the visitors. Upon being there, visitors can experience the place and the local people communicating the past and present traditions.

Despite all these potentials, the danger of commodifying Baduy's tradition and values and reducing it to merely a spectacle needs serious consideration. Baduy cultural tourism might endanger the way Baduy people live. It can also potentially erode their cultural practices and beliefs as more and more visitors tamper with the locals' activities. For this, strict regulations need to be implemented to prevent future damage to Baduy's priceless cultural assets.

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