




# Sacred Harmony: Exploring *Pikukuh Tilu* Philosophy in the Spiritual, Social, and Environmental Practices of the Baduy People

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## Abstract

This study explores *Pikukuh Tilu*, a fundamental philosophical belief system within the Baduy Tribe in Banten, Indonesia, and its role in shaping the community's social, spiritual, and environmental practices. Rooted in the interconnectedness of God, humans, and nature, *Pikukuh Tilu* is a guiding principle that governs the Baduy people's way of life, ensuring cultural continuity and ecological sustainability, particularly in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 13 (Climate Action), and 15 (Life on Land). This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing ethnographic fieldwork, in-depth interviews, and participant observation to analyze the practical applications of *Pikukuh Tilu* in governance, rituals, and daily conduct. To provide a comprehensive theoretical framework, the study integrates perspectives from Structuralism, Functionalism, Local Wisdom, and Deep Ecology, offering a multidimensional understanding of how *Pikukuh Tilu* functions as both a belief system and a mechanism for cultural resilience. The findings reveal that *Pikukuh Tilu* is crucial in reinforcing social cohesion, moral values, and environmental ethics, enabling the Baduy people to maintain their traditional identity despite external pressures from modernization and globalization. Furthermore, the study highlights how *Pikukuh Tilu* embodies a sustainable indigenous knowledge system that aligns with contemporary environmental discourses on conservation and deep ecology. This research contributes to broader discussions in anthropology, cultural studies, and environmental philosophy, emphasizing the significance of indigenous belief systems in fostering sustainable living. By shedding light on the enduring relevance of *Pikukuh Tilu*, the study advocates for preserving Baduy's cultural heritage. It offers insights into how traditional wisdom can inform modern ecological and social sustainability approaches.

**Keywords:** *Pikukuh Tilu*, Baduy Tribe, Indigenous Philosophy, Cultural Resilience, Environmental Sustainability.

## Introduction

The Baduy people or Baduy tribe, is a designation or term from outsiders for the indigenous people living in the Kendeng Mountains in the village of Kanekes, Leuwidamar, Lebak,



Banten. Tradition and culture are two things that are still to a very large extent maintained by the Baduy people. The Baduy people themselves were not very happy to be called Baduy people at first. They refer to themselves as *urang Kanekes*, *urang Rawayan*, *urang Tangtu* for Baduy who live in the inner Baduy region and *urang Panamping* for Baduy who live in the outer Baduy. It was not until around the 1980s that the people living in the area did not mind being referred to as Baduy people (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). Nowadays, residents who live in the inner Baduy region, more often refer to themselves as *urang Tangtu* or *urang Kanekes*, but for the outer Baduy, lately they actually prefer to be called the Baduy people or the Baduy tribe.

The Baduy people have a belief in the existence of a very powerful person whom they refer to as the *Batara Tunggal*, a revered and worshipful deity. Nevertheless, the basis of the Baduy people's belief is respect for the spirits of ancestors (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). They call their religion or belief stream *Sunda Wiwitan*, which refers to the earliest beliefs, origins and true ones. Meanwhile, many people think that *Sunda Wiwitan* is a belief stream that was embraced by the original Sundanese from ancient times to the present. There is some archaeological evidence regarding the *Sunda Wiwitan* faith stream, such as the Cipari site in Kuningan regency, and the Domas Statue site in Kanekes, Lebak regency (Lubis, 2019). Considering that the religion adopted by the Baduy tribe is the same as the first Sundanese religion, scholars and historians, such as Lubis (2019) and Ramadah (2018), strongly suspected that the Baduy people are from the Sundanese tribe.

The results of several studies state that the *Sunda Wiwitan* faith stream also known as *Ajaran Djawa Sunda* (ADS), has existed before Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity entered Indonesia. *Ajaran Djawa Sunda* were then better known as the *Sunda Wiwitan* religion (Ramadah, 2018). The *Sunda Wiwitan* followers believe that the man who was first created in this world was the prophet Adam and he was the Baduy (Lubis, 2019). What adherents of the *Sunda Wiwitan* followers believe about the first man, namely Adam, is also believed by the Baduy tribe. They believed that the Baduy people were descendants of Adam. If the Sundanese who adhered to the *Sunda Wiwitan* faith or the earliest faith recognized that the first humans they referred to as Adam were the ancestors of the Baduy tribe, then it should be suspected that the Sundanese also came from the Baduy tribe, even though the evidence supporting the assertions has not been found.

The leader of the Baduy tribe community, called *Puun*, is tasked with preserving the traditions of the ancestors of the Baduy people. *Puun* also plays a role in representing the Baduy community in communicating with their ancestors, to convey the wishes of the Baduy people to their ancestors. Their ancestors would also convey their wishes or messages to the Baduy people through *Puun* (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). There are three *Puuns* in the Baduy tribal community, each leading a *tangtu* named Cikeusik, Cikartawana and Cibeo (Prawiro, 2013). The three *tangtu* are known as *Tri Tangtu* or *Tangtu Tilu*, where each *tangtu* is inseparable from the other. *Tangtu tilu* is then translated into *pikukuh tilu*, which is a concept used to maintain balance and harmony as well as good relations with the Almighty, the community, and the surrounding environment. The Baduy people believe in the existence of an Almighty being, whom they refer to as *Batara Tunggal*, as the supreme ruler in their spiritual belief system. Lubis (2019) further explained that the philosophy of *tri tangtu* and *pikukuh tilu* is three for unity and one for three, where these three things are actually one thing and vice versa. *Tangtu tilu* and *pikukuh tilu* are definite and concrete laws, because they cannot be changed by anyone, including *Puun* oneself. *Puun* must not change *pikukuh* by increasing or decreasing the items of the law, but only can obey it by practicing *pikukuh* to the best of one's ability.

There have been several studies conducted related to the values of *pikukuh tilu*. In 2008, Ujang Ma'mun (2008) conducted a research titled "*Pikukuh Tilu: The Path to Human Authenticity (Study of Sundanese Javanese Religious Kebatinan Teachings)*". The research was conducted in Cigugur sub-district, Kuningan regency, where the value of *tangtu tilu* is



associated with human authenticity. Ma'mun does not explain in detail the philosophical value of *pikukuh tilu*, but rather emphasizes the consciousness of man as a true human being who will return to the origin called *purwawisesa* (Ma'mun, 2008). Human beings from birth, until adulthood undergo a life journey. They must obey all the rules called *pikukuh* in order to achieve authenticity as human beings. If they are able to obey all the principles, then they will become real people, so that when they die, they will enter the world above, or Heaven.

Another study conducted by Jovi Nuriana Putra in 2015, also located in Cigugur sub-district. The research focused on the pattern of inheritance of traditional *pikukuh tilu* values in the *Madrais Sunda Wiwitan* belief. The study explained the patterns of inheritance of *pikukuh tilu* values so that they can continue to run for generations (Putra, 2015). So the study focused on the pattern or procedure of inheritance from generation to generation.

In 2017, Yogi Setiawan Febriansyah (2017) also conducted research in Cigugur sub-district, with the research title, "Enculturation of Character Education on the Customary Values of *Pikukuh Tilu* in the Socio-Cultural Life of the *Sunda Wiwitan* Cigugur Community (An Ethnographic Study on the Adherents of *Sunda Wiwitan* Beliefs in Wago Village, Cigugur Village, Kuningan Regency)" (Febriansyah, 2017). The study placed greater emphasis on the relationship between *pikukuh tilu* values and character education in the community adherents of *Sunda Wiwitan* (Febriansyah, 2017). The study discussed *pikuku tilu* as local wisdom that can affect the characters of the adherents of the *Sunda Wiwitan* faith stream.

Then in 2018, Ilham Ramadah conducted a research titled, "The Role of *Paguyuban Adat Cara Karuhun Urang* (PACKU) in the Inheritance of Customary Values of *Pikukuh Tilu Sunda Wiwitan* Belief", also located in Cigugur district, Kuningan. The study emphasized the analysis of the role of *Paguyuban Adat Cara Karuhun Urang* (PACKU), in preserving the custom of *pikukuh tilu*. Ramadah (2018) said that the traditional value of *pikukuh tilu* in the generation of Sundanese people in Cigugur sub-district was almost extinct. *Paguyuban Adat Cara Karuhun Urang* as a formal institution must get support from the government in order to be able to continue and increase its role in passing on the values of *pikukuh tilu* from one generation to the next, so that *pikukuh tilu* as a culture can be preserved.

As explained earlier, *pikukuh tilu* is the description of *tangtu tilu*, and the *tangtu tilu* is located in the village of Kanekes. *Tangtu tilu* is three *tangtu* found in the inner Baduy region, namely Cikeusik *tangtu*, Cikartawana *tangtu*, and Cibeo *tangtu*. However, no research has ever been conducted on the values of *tangtu tilu* in Kanekes village, especially in the *tangtu tilu* area, inner Baduy region. This is most likely due to the difficulty of obtaining information from the Baduy tribe. The Baduy people are a very closed tribe, and do not want to provide information about their history or beliefs (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). That is why, there has been no in-depth research on the teachings of the *Sunda Wiwitan* belief stream found in Baduy, specifically in the inner Baduy region.

Another thing that makes it difficult to conduct research in the inner Baduy region, which discusses *tangtu tilu* is the customary provisions of the Baduy tribe, which do not allow others to stay in the *tangtu* area for more than three days (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). This restriction is legally recognized under Indonesian law, as the government acknowledges and respects Indigenous customary laws (*hukum adat*), mainly through laws such as Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, Article 96, which grants Indigenous communities the right to self-governance, including the regulation of access to their ancestral lands. Furthermore, Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Agrarian Principles (UUPA), Article 3, affirms the recognition of *hak ulayat* (customary land rights), allowing indigenous groups such as the Baduy to enforce traditional territorial regulations. Meanwhile, a researcher needs much time to conduct research in the *tangtu* area.

Researchers find it is easier to obtain information from the outer Baduy region about their life



values and beliefs, but the information obtained from the outer Baduy region is less accurate when compared to information from the Baduy people living in the *Tangtu* area. In addition, they will only provide general information or information that is not prohibited from being conveyed to outside parties. In general, Baduy people do not want to be open in conveying information to outsiders. They have the term *teu wasa* or do not have the power or do not dare to convey information (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). This secrecy is rooted in their deep adherence to *pikukuh* (customary laws) and their commitment to preserving ancestral traditions, which emphasize maintaining harmony by limiting external influences. The Baduy believe that certain knowledge, particularly regarding spiritual matters and traditional customs, should remain within the community to ensure its purity and continuity. Meanwhile, from among them, there are also those who say *teu elok* or it is not good to tell outsiders about the Baduy lifestyle. These facts are the reasons why research on the values of *tangtu tilu* in the inner Baduy area is difficult to execute, and it is a challenge for the author.

This study explores *Pikukuh Tilu's* philosophy as a central belief system within the Baduy Tribe in Banten Province, Indonesia. By examining its foundational principles, the study seeks to understand how *Pikukuh Tilu* shapes the social, spiritual, and environmental practices of the Baduy people. The research intends to analyze the triadic structure of *Pikukuh Tilu*—the interconnectedness of God, humans, and nature—to uncover its significance in maintaining cultural identity and ecological sustainability within the community.

Additionally, this study aims to investigate the practical implementation of *Pikukuh Tilu* in daily life, including its role in rituals, governance, moral conduct, and environmental conservation. Through a qualitative research approach that includes field observations, in-depth interviews, and active participation within the Baduy community, this study sought to provide an in-depth understanding of how *Pikukuh Tilu* functions as an enduring belief system despite external pressures from modernization and globalization.

Furthermore, the study utilized multiple theoretical frameworks, including Structuralism, Functionalism, Local Wisdom, and Deep Ecology, to comprehensively analyze *Pikukuh Tilu*. By integrating these perspectives, this research aims to contribute to broader discussions in anthropology, cultural studies, and environmental philosophy, highlighting the relevance of *Pikukuh Tilu* as a sustainable indigenous knowledge system. Ultimately, this study aspires to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary academic discourse. It fosters a greater appreciation for the Baduy Tribe's unique way of life and its enduring philosophical heritage.

### **Structuralism and Triadic Relationships**

Claude Lévi-Strauss's the French anthropologist and ethnologist's structuralist approach provides an insightful framework for analyzing *Pikukuh Tilu* as a structured belief system. Structuralism posits that all cultures share fundamental cognitive frameworks manifest in myths, kinship systems, and religious structures (Pazos, 2010). The triadic structure of *Pikukuh Tilu*, which emphasizes the unity of God, humans, and nature, aligns with Lévi-Strauss's concept of binary oppositions and mediation. This perspective suggests that the Baduy people's worldview is structured through symbolic and cognitive frameworks that reflect universal human patterns (Kubica, 2014). Lévi-Strauss's approach helps uncover the deeper meanings of *Pikukuh Tilu*, demonstrating how its principles guide spiritual, social, and ecological harmony within the Baduy community.

Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach fundamentally reshapes the understanding of cultural phenomena by emphasizing the underlying structures that govern human thought and social organization. His methodology seeks to uncover the universal patterns in myths, kinship, and art, positing that these structures operate independently of individual intentions. This





perspective has influenced various fields, including anthropology, visual arts, and consciousness studies. One of the key aspects of Lévi-Strauss' structuralism is the concept of binary oppositions, which suggests that human cultures organize their understanding of the world through contrasting pairs such as raw/cooked or nature/culture (Brenner, 1977). These oppositions help to reveal deeper cultural meanings and structures that shape social practices and belief systems. Within *Pikukuh Tilu*, this concept is evident in structuring the Baduy worldview, where harmony between spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions is achieved through a balance of oppositional yet interdependent elements.

Another central aspect of Lévi-Strauss' theory is myth analysis, which posits that myths reflect the collective unconscious, operating beneath the surface meanings recognized by storytellers and audiences (Okpewho, 1979). This notion is particularly relevant to the oral traditions of the Baduy people, where stories and rituals encode deeper philosophical meanings that reinforce the community's belief in the interconnectedness of divine, human, and ecological domains. Likewise, his comparative studies on kinship structures highlight the logical frameworks that govern familial relationships, suggesting that these structures are foundational to social organization (Boon & Schneider, 1974).

Lévi-Strauss' theory has also been applied beyond social anthropology, extending into the analysis of visual arts and consciousness studies. In the realm of visual arts, structuralism has been utilized to analyze artistic expressions and reveal how cultural narratives are constructed through structural elements (Brenner, 1977). Within the Baduy community, the woven patterns, clothing restrictions, and architectural forms align with structuralist principles by serving as symbolic representations of their philosophy and way of life. Furthermore, recent explorations in neuroscience have adopted structuralist methodologies to investigate the neural encoding of consciousness, emphasizing the structural properties of experiences (Kob, 2023).

While Lévi-Strauss' structuralism has been influential in deciphering the foundational structures of cultural beliefs, some critics argue that it may overlook cultural narratives' subjective and emotional dimensions (Okpewho, 1979). Structuralism's emphasis on universal patterns sometimes neglects individual agency and the fluidity of cultural practices in response to external changes. In the context of *Pikukuh Tilu*, structuralist analysis helps uncover the enduring logic behind Baduy traditions. This more integrative approach considers structure and agency and could provide a fuller understanding of how these traditions evolve in response to modernization and globalization.

By applying Lévi-Strauss' structuralist framework, this study explores how *Pikukuh Tilu* functions as both a belief system and a mechanism for cultural resilience within the Baduy community. Structuralism allows a deeper understanding of the cognitive frameworks that sustain their worldview while shedding light on the symbolic meanings embedded in their rituals, social structures, and environmental ethics. Integrating this perspective with functionalist, local wisdom, and deep ecology approaches will provide a multidimensional analysis of how *Pikukuh Tilu* continues to shape the Baduy people's spiritual, social, and ecological practices.

### **Functionalism and Social Harmony**

As articulated by Bronislaw Malinowski, a Polish anthropologist and ethnologist whose writings on ethnography, social theory, and field research have wielded a lasting influence on the discipline of anthropology, functionalism posits that every cultural element serves a specific purpose in maintaining social equilibrium (Husa, 2014). Within the Baduy community, *Pikukuh Tilu* is a governing principle that ensures social stability, moral adherence, and ecological balance. The strict adherence to traditional practices and rituals reinforces social bonds and collective identity, fostering a sense of unity among community members (Lantremange,



2024). Furthermore, sustainable environmental practices observed within the Baduy society align with functionalist principles, demonstrating how *Pikukuh Tilu* regulates resource management to ensure the community's long-term survival (Kashima, 2019). By adhering to inherited customs, the Baduy people demonstrate functional adaptation to their ecological and cultural environment, reinforcing their traditional way of life.

Bronislaw Malinowski's functionalist perspective is foundational in social anthropology, emphasizing the role of cultural practices in maintaining social order. His work, particularly in *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (Malinowski, 1926), (Malinowski, 2013), illustrates how social institutions fulfill the needs of individuals and the community, thereby ensuring stability and continuity within societies. Malinowski argued that customs and practices serve essential functions in social life, such as conflict resolution and social cohesion, which help maintain order and prevent societal disintegration (Malinowski & Donovan, 2018). His studies in Melanesia further emphasized the importance of understanding cultural practices within their specific social contexts rather than applying universalist theories, a shift that has significantly influenced modern anthropological approaches (Sausdal & Vigh, 2019). Moreover, Malinowski acknowledged that societies are not static; they adapt to external influences and challenges, a theme echoed in contemporary anthropological studies that examine globalization and cultural contact (Richards, 1935). While his functionalist approach has been instrumental in shaping social anthropology, some critiques suggest that it may overlook the complexities of power dynamics and social change, particularly in rapidly evolving societies where cultural transformations are accelerated (Clignet, 1981). Despite these critiques, Malinowski's functionalism remains a crucial framework for analyzing how cultural systems persist, evolve, and contribute to societal cohesion. However, from the perspective of George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism, culture is not just a set of functional structures. Still, it is actively created and maintained through social interactions and shared meanings (Mead, 1967). Unlike functionalism, which emphasizes stability and structure, Symbolic Interactionism focuses on the dynamic process in which individuals construct, interpret, and modify cultural symbols through everyday interactions.

### **Local Wisdom and Cultural Resilience**

The concept of local wisdom, as articulated by Clifford Geertz's *Interpretive Anthropology*, provides a valuable lens for understanding how *Pikukuh Tilu* has been preserved within the Baduy community despite pressures from modernization. Local wisdom manifests through unwritten laws, oral traditions, and daily practices, ensuring that cultural integrity is maintained over generations (Rahayu et al., 2025). The Baduy people's strict regulations on community behaviour, ritual adherence, and environmental stewardship exemplify this principle. Studies have shown that traditional communities like the Baduy maintain cultural resilience by reinforcing social constructs and prioritizing heritage preservation (Jalal et al., 2024). Additionally, sustainable resource management strategies, as seen in Sesaot Village, illustrate the practical applications of local wisdom in economic and environmental governance (Pariani & Sarjan, 2024). However, as globalization and external influences encroach upon Baduy society, challenges emerge in balancing tradition with modernity, raising concerns over the future sustainability of *Pikukuh Tilu* values (Polin, 2024).

Clifford Geertz's concept of local wisdom emphasizes the intricate relationship between culture, knowledge, and community practices, highlighting how indigenous and local traditions serve as adaptive strategies for their environments. Local wisdom is crucial in various domains, including corporate social responsibility (CSR), religious tolerance, and environmental conservation (Susanto et al., 2022). The local wisdom fosters inter-religious harmony by promoting kinship and togetherness, which is essential in mitigating religious radicalism (Pajarianto et al., 2022). Traditional and religious leaders are pivotal in reinforcing these values through community activities and ceremonies, strengthening social cohesion (Pajarianto et al.,



2022). In environmental conservation, indigenous knowledge systems are vital for biodiversity preservation, encompassing traditional practices in forest management, water conservation, and sustainable land use (Abas et al., 2022). Integrating local ecological knowledge into conservation strategies can enhance decision-making processes, where indigenous practices contribute to habitat sustainability (Whitmore, 2016). While local wisdom is often recognized as a valuable resource for addressing contemporary challenges, some scholars argue that it may be perceived as outdated or limited to specific local contexts, potentially undermining its broader applicability in global policy frameworks (Vandebroek et al., 2011). Despite these critiques, Geertz's perspective underscores the enduring relevance of local wisdom in shaping sustainable social, economic, and environmental practices.

### **Deep Ecology and Environmental Stewardship**

As developed by Arne Naess, deep ecology promotes an intrinsic and holistic relationship between humans and nature. This philosophy closely aligns with the Baduy worldview, wherein nature is not merely seen as a resource but a sacred entity deserving of respect and preservation (Islam, 2024). *Pikukuh Tilu* embodies these principles by enforcing environmental ethics that promote sustainable living and discourage overexploitation (Waluya & Wiyanarti, 2024). Additionally, deep ecology criticizes the human-nature dualism that fosters environmental degradation, emphasizing an interconnected web of life (Olausson, 2024) instead. In Baduy society, traditional land-use practices and forest conservation efforts reflect this ethos, reinforcing collective responsibility for ecological sustainability. However, the expansion of materialistic influences and deforestation poses a significant threat to Baduy's environmental ethics, highlighting the necessity for integrative strategies that merge traditional ecological wisdom with modern conservation efforts.

Arne Naess's deep ecology is a philosophical framework that emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and the interconnectedness of life. It challenges anthropocentric views, advocating for a shift towards a more holistic and egalitarian relationship with nature. This perspective asserts that all life forms possess intrinsic worth, independent of their utility to humans, a principle reflected in various literary and cinematic narratives. For instance, trees and ecosystems are portrayed as central characters in *The Overstory*, challenging human-centered storytelling and reinforcing biocentric equality (Ghafoor et al., 2024). Similarly, animated films such as *Epic* and *The Ant Bully* illustrate protagonists who gradually learn to value all living beings equally, mirroring the core tenets of deep ecology (Ghafoor et al., 2024). Naess's framework also advocates for a non-anthropocentric perspective, positioning humans as integral participants in nature rather than its dominators. This perspective is evident in the analysis of *Genduk*, which highlights human compassion towards nature and the importance of symbiotic relationships, reinforcing the idea that sustainability is rooted in coexistence rather than exploitation (Tsabita et al., 2024). The eco-feminist lens further critiques anthropocentrism, promoting an ethic of care and harmonious interactions with nature (Islam, 2024).

Beyond philosophy, deep ecology encourages individuals to recognize their ecological selves and embeddedness in the natural world. This process of ecological self-realization is depicted in *The Overstory*, where characters undergo transformative experiences that lead them toward environmental activism and a heightened awareness of their ecological responsibilities (Ghafoor et al., 2024). Deep ecology is a theoretical framework and a call to action, inspiring environmental ethics and activism. Literary narratives such as *The Overstory* are catalysts for redefining ecological ethics and mobilizing resistance against environmental degradation, reinforcing the idea that deep ecology necessitates real-world engagement (Ghafoor et al., 2024). The eco-feminist perspective complements this approach by advocating for an ethic of care and love towards nature, emphasizing emotional and moral connections to the environment (Islam, 2024).



However, the ecological crisis is not solely an environmental issue but also a cultural and existential challenge, as explored in discussions of Naess's work. Addressing this crisis requires a balance between ecophilia—the innate love for nature—and ecojustice, ensuring that environmental sustainability aligns with broader principles of equity and fairness (Haukeland, 2024). While deep ecology presents a transformative vision for reimagining human-nature relationships, its practical implementation faces challenges, particularly in overcoming entrenched anthropocentric worldviews. Another key proponent of deep ecology, Edward Goldsmith, in his seminal work *The Way: An Ecological Worldview* (1992), argues that achieving true sustainability requires a profound shift in human consciousness—one that moves beyond mechanistic and reductionist thinking to embrace an ecological worldview that recognizes the interdependence of all life forms (Goldsmith, 1992). His perspective aligns with the principles of deep ecology by emphasizing restoring traditional and indigenous ecological wisdom to counter modern exploitative tendencies. Integrating deep ecological principles into literature, film, and cultural discourse fosters ecological consciousness and inspires meaningful environmental action. It inspires meaningful environmental action, a notion Goldsmith supports by advocating for a return to holistic and spiritual connections with nature.

### **Methodology employed in the study**

The method used in this study was a qualitative research method. In obtaining accurate and in-depth data, the author got acquainted and lived with the Baduy tribe in the *tangtu* or in the inner Baduy area since 2018, or for almost 5 years. The Baduy tribe began to open up after the third year of establishing friendships, and they began to explain their values, which was further deepened through observation as they performed their rituals. Through this qualitative approach, the author sought to study, develop and formulate concepts and values adopted by the Baduy tribe (Taylor et al., 2016).

The technique and analysis used is narrative analysis because this research uses a socio-culturally oriented approach in conceptualizing humans as meaning givers who use narratives in interpreting, directing, communicating life as well as configuring experiences and feelings and explaining about their lives. Narrative analysis focuses on what and how the conversation takes place (Smith, 2016). Through narrative analysis, all the dynamics of life and how it is structured will be revealed, as well as placing them as actors and how they form and function. Through narrative analysis, beliefs, beliefs, and how they are related to life in the community and customary rules that must be obeyed together, in maintaining the continuity of the community. Therefore, the questions focus on open question and observation, so we can explore their belief, thought, feeling and deed in community.

The author also compared and confirmed the findings from the field, with relevant literature, academic articles or previous research results on the Baduy tribe, so as to provide a clearer picture of the beliefs of the Baduy tribe (Leavy, 2017) and further provide a more comprehensive and in-depth explanation and depiction of the Baduy tribe (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Through observations, in-depth interviews, living within the community, studying their habits and daily life, the author explained and formulated the nature of the philosophy of *pikukuh tilu* in the culture of the Baduy community, specifically for the Baduy people who live in *tri tangtu*, systems and sub-systems, called Cikeusik, Cikartawana, and Cibeo.

Writers conduct interviews at home or in the fields where they work. There were four groups that were interviewed to get accurate and in-depth information. The first group is the *Puun* who is the highest leader in the Baduy tribe. They are key informants, since they are the ones who carry out their religious rituals and who have the ability to talk to the gods and spirits of their ancestors. In addition, they are the ones who make rules and orders to be obeyed for the Baduy community. We conducted interviews with Cikeusik's *Puun* and Cikartawana's *Puun*.





The second group is *Jaro Tangtu* who is the commander who ensures that all customary rules are implemented by the community. Their main task is to supervise the implementation of customs, culture and even the work system in agriculture in the Baduy tribal area. The *Jaro* interviewed were *jaro* Alim and *jaro* Tati.

The third group is the *kokolot* or elders of the Baduy tribe. They are the people who give consideration and support for the implementation of customs and culture to the *Puun*. The *kokolots* are very expert in the beliefs, customs, culture, rules and prohibitions that are applied to the Baduy people. *Kokolot* who was interviewed as an informant were Ki Nadip, Ki Atsi and Ki Dare.

The fourth group is the Inner Baduy community, which carefully implements the orders and obeys the prohibitions conveyed by the *Puun*. This fourth group is also a very important informant to see how dynamic is in obeying all rules and prohibitions in their daily lives. There were fifteen people interviewed, and they gave relatively similar answers to each of the questions asked. The name of these informants are Ata, Suha, Pulung, Isman, Nardi, Asep, Sarta, Maman, Bima, Aji, Arpen, Jamir, Sarwadi and Oapik. The interviews were conducted in different periods, and all information was collected from 2022 to 2024

## Results

### Beliefs of the Baduy Community

The Baduy believe that the man who was first created by the Almighty, was in Kanekes. They believe that Kanekes is the core of the universe or the center of the Earth (Wahid, 2012). The Baduy tribe believes that they are the oldest descendants who have the duty and responsibility of maintaining the Kanekes region, which they also believe is a sacred land. People who live outside Kanekes are the younger descendants (Prawiro, 2013). The belief of the Baduy people that they are the oldest tribe which is not only on the island of Java, shows that they reject the assumption that the Baduy people are from the Sundanese tribe.

In carrying out their responsibility to maintain the preservation and balance of nature, they perform *tapa*, which is the actions and work that are in accordance with the principles of *karuhun* or rules, which are set by their ancestors (Prawiro, 2013). They believe that if the Kanekes region which is considered a holy land is well maintained, then the whole world will be in harmony, and avoid natural disasters. But if they do not take good care of the nature of Kanekes, there will be a very devastating natural disaster, not only in the Baduy region and its surroundings, but also all over the world. In addition to performing *tapa* shown through the way of life and work, Baduy people also perform rituals or worship at Sasaka Domas. Sasaka Domas is a place of worship of the Baduy tribe, which is located in the southernmost region or upstream of the Cijung river. They perform worship at Sasaka Domas, because they believe that the first man was created at Sasaka Domas (Wahid, 2012). The worship event is only carried out by certain people, not by the entire Baduy community. The worship ceremony is led by *Puun* Cikeusik. *Puun*, the oldest lineage, that plays a role not only as the highest traditional leader of the Baduy tribe, but also as a spiritual leader. The ritual is performed to purify the centre of the world, namely the Kanekes region and also to honour the spirits of their deceased ancestors.

In carrying out one's functions, *Puun* is assisted by three groups referred to as *Baresan* or the advisory council, *Tangkesan* or a fortune teller, and *Girang Seurat* or a ritual helper (Wahid, 2012). *Puun* has the ability to communicate with the spirits of the ancestors, because it is believed that *Puun* is a direct descendant of the ancestors. The Baduy people believe that *Puun* is a representative of their ancestors to convey and exercise *pikukuh* in their daily lives. As explained earlier, the Kanekes region is the center of the Earth, and the place of the



beginning of human creation. The place of creation is also known as *tangtu*, and those who live in that region are known as *urang tangtu*. *Tangtu* means certain, and it is a belief system for the Baduy people that if they die they will definitely enter the top of the world which can be interpreted as Paradise (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). There are three *tangtu* in the Kanekes region, namely the Cikeusik *tangtu* which is also referred to as *Pada Ageung*, the Cikartawana *tangtu* which is referred to as *Kadukujang*, and the Cibeo *tangtu* which is called *Parahyang*. The three *tangtu* or those three region are also known as *Sanghyang Daleum*.

Baduy people believe that they will be protected from various problems if they always obey the principles, which are rules that have been set by their ancestors. When they carry out the *pikukuh* with their best efforts, Batara Tunggal or the supreme ruler will protect them. Vice versa, if they do not obey or practice the *pikukuh*, then they will experience suffering in life (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). Therefore, *pikukuh* is a rule that must be upheld and implemented as well as possible if they want to live peacefully and happily on Earth. Indeed, the principle of *pikukuh* is that nothing can change anything, or everything must remain as before. This principle makes the Baduy people unwilling to make changes in their lives and unwilling to accept new things from outside Baduy. The attitude to continue to maintain the traditions of the Baduy community is expressed through the proverb, "*lojor teu meunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung*" which means the long ones should not be cut and the short ones should not be spliced (Prawiro, 2013). By understanding the essence of the *pikukuh*, someone can understand why the Baduy tribe who live in the midst of the modern world still maintain their way of life, which is always to be one with nature and always maintains the balance and preservation of the nature where they live.

### **The Meaning of *Pikukuh Tilu***

*Pikukuh tilu* is a description of *tri tangtu* or *tangtu tilu* which is the principle of behaviour of the Baduy community and covers three aspects of life, namely: 1. *tri tangtu dina salira* is a regulation or guidance related to the person oneself, which leads humans to become good and useful human beings, so as to achieve their ultimate goal, which is to become a true human being; 2. *tri tangtu di buana* is the rules or guidelines for behaviour related to the world or the environment in a broad sense, so as to create balance and harmony between humans and nature; and 3. *tri tangtu nagara* is the regulations that control relations between individuals and community groups in a territory (Lubis, 2019). Thus, *tri tangtu* can be interpreted as a regulation or guidance for the Baduy community which concerns itself as a person, its relationship with nature and its relationship in society, so that harmony is established in oneself, with others and additionally with their environment. All these things must be carried out while living in this world, until they return to their creator which is called *purwawisesa*.

Etymologically, *pikukuh tilu* is derived from two syllables, namely *pikukuh* and *tilu*. Then *pikukuh* originates from the root word *kukuh* which is added with the prefix "*p*", which changes the function of adjectives into nouns. The word "*kukuh*" can be interpreted as strong, firm, consistent and fixed. Thus, *pikukuh* can be understood as something that is certain, fixed, firm, and consistent. Meanwhile, the word *tilu* means number three. So literally, *pikukuh tilu* can be interpreted as three things that must continue to be upheld as a certainty in life. *Pikukuh tilu* means three holds which are certain that will never change.

When viewed from its cultural values, *pikukuh tilu* are the values, concepts and all the rules that guide the Baduy community in their lives, in accordance with the rules handed down by their ancestors to be obeyed consistently (Wahid, 2012). The Baduy people assert that the philosophy of *pikukuh tilu* has not changed until this modern era. The main question is, what is meant by three to unite and one for three in the philosophy of *pikukuh tilu*, and how is it implemented in Baduy society today? The implementation of the philosophy of *pikukuh tilu* in the life of the Baduy community will be discussed in the next sub-chapter.



## The Implementation of *Pikukuh Tilu* in the Life of the Baduy Community

In order to understand the implementation of *pikukuh tilu* in the life of the Baduy community, first of all, the concept of God will be discussed and studied. Then the concept of *buwana* or the world will be covered. This will be continued by examining the belief in *Ambu*, and followed by the concept or nature of humans. Finally, it will end with a discussion about marriage in accordance with the *pikukuh karuhun* or ancestral regulations.

When some-one carefully studies the beliefs of the Baduy tribe, they will arrive at the conclusion that the Baduy tribe is not really pure animism in the sense that they worship spirits. They do believe in spirits, but but they do not worship them. The Baduy people respect the spirits and maintain harmony in order to coexist with them. The Baduy tribe believes that there is one being who is the sole ruler and the absolute ruler in the world, and the Baduy people believe that the world has three territories. They worship a single ruler who rules over the three worlds and they give three titles to that being. The first title is *Batara Tunggal* (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). *Batara Tunggal* is a title they give to the sole ruler of the entire universe. The Baduy believe that although there are many rulers throughout the universe, there is one supreme ruler, the absolute ruler and the sole ruler, called *Batara Tunggal*. There-fore, the title *Batara Tunggal* emphasizes and explains the absolute power by one being, known by modern society as God. *Batara Tunggal* is a title for the Almighty One who is the absolute and the only ruler. The name *Batara Tunggal* emphasizes the image of oneness.

The absolute ruler also has another title or vocation called *Sang Hiyang Karesa*, which describes the Almighty One. While *Batara Tunggal* emphasizes oneness or the only oneness, the title *Sang Hiyang Karesa* underlines His omnipotence or absolute power. The Baduy people believe that *Sang Hiyang Karesa* is the same person as *Batara Tunggal*, but the title or name emphasizes His character as a very powerful person. Indeed, the meaning of a sole ruler and the most powerful person has the same meaning and refers to the same person, even though they have different nicknames or titles.

The third title or term for the absolute ruler is *Nu Ngersakeun*, which means that whatever He wants will be done. The title also expresses omnipotence by explaining that He is able to do what He wants. Whatever that person desires, it will definitely happen. The description also shows that this third title has the same meaning and refers to the same person as the first and second titles.

The Baduy people believe there are three worlds, namely *Buwana Panca Luhur*, *Buwana anca Tengah*, and *Buwana Panca Handap*. *Buwana Panca Luhur* is the world where the Creator and ancestral spirits live, who always observe and pay attention to the lives of the Baduy people. They believe that the Creator and the ancestral spirits live in the highest place, and life in that place is eternal life.

Meanwhile, *Buwana Panca Tengah* is a world where humans and other creations live. People who live in *Buwana Panca Tengah* have an obligation to make strong choices for the sustainability and future of *Buwana Panca Tengah*. Humans who live in *Buwana Panca Tengah* must obey the principles or commandments and stay away from their great-grandparents or prohibitions inherited from their ancestors. All the deeds or actions they do while living in *Buwana Panca Tengah* will determine which world they will live in after death. It also shows that the Baduy believe that there will be life after death.

The third world called, *Buwana Panca Handap* is the region in the underworld where demons and spirits of evil people live (Prawiro, 2013). As explained earlier that the deeds or actions of people in *Buwana Panca Tengah* will determine the ends of their lives after death, *Buwana Panca Handap* is a place for bad people or for those who do not behave well. This condition



shows or reaffirms that the Baduy people are serious in practicing *tapa*, so that they can live in *Buwana Panca Luhur* after death and not end up in *Buwana Panca Handap*.

The concept of the world as described before clarifies the belief of Baduy people which is also related to the starting point, the journey of life to the end of human life (Prawiro, 2013). *Buwana Panca Luhur* which is also called *Buwana Nyungcung* or the upper world, namely Heaven is an infinite place. All humans were created in *Buwana Nyungcung* and placed in *Buwana Panca Tengah* to live a life that must be taken, called *ngamandala* or living life in *mandala*. The term *ngamandala* describes a life that performs *tapa*, which is work that obeys rules or is firm and avoids great-grandparents or prohibitions (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). If the *tapa* they do are good, then when their lives end in *Buwana Panca Tengah*, they will enter *Buwana Panca Luhur* or *Buwana Nyungcung*, which is also called *Mandala Hiyang*. If their *tapa* are bad while in *Buwana Panca Tengah*, then when they die, they will be put in *Buwana Panca Handap* or also called *Buwana Larang*.

*Ngamandala* by carrying out *tapa* which is obeying the *pikukuh* and staying away from *buyut* or prohibitions is useful for maintaining harmonious relations between community members, or creating a peaceful atmosphere of life. Practicing *tapa* by obeying the rules and avoiding prohibitions is also useful for creating harmony between humans and the nature in which they live. For example, they are not allowed to use modern tool or technology in farming, and also not allowed to use fertilizer in their farm. The Baduy people are also prohibited from smoking, because in addition to damaging health, it also damages the environment. Staying away from *buyut* also aims to protect the purity of the human soul, protect the purity of *mandala*, and protect the traditions (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). The soul or spirit of man comes from *Buwana Nyungcung*, and if the task has been completed in *Buwana Panca Tengah*, he will return to *Kahiyangan* if his *tapa* is good or his soul is in a good condition.

The concept of *buwana* or the world according to the beliefs of the Baduy tribe is implemented in spatial planning located in the Kanekes region. As the world is divided into three parts, the area or spatial layout in the Baduy community is also divided into three parts or three layers. The main part or the innermost layer is called *Tangtu*, the second layer or the middle is called *Panamping*, and the third part is the outermost layer called *Dangka*. The *Tangtu* region is a manifestation of *Buwana Nyungcung*, while the *Panamping* region is a manifestation of *Buwana Panca Tengah* and *Dangka* is a manifestation of *Buwana Panca Handap* or *Buwana Larang* (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007).

Furthermore, the *tangtu* is also divided into three parts, namely the Cibeo *tangtu* which is also referred to as the Parahiyang *tangtu*, the Cikartawana *tangtu* is called the Kadu Kujang *tangtu*, and the Cikeusik *tangtu* is called the Pada Ageung *tangtu* (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). Because the *tangtu* area consists of three parts, it is also called *tangtu tilu*, which is also believed to be the core of the life of the Baduy community.

Each *tangtu* is led by a *Puun*, as the highest leader in both cultural and spiritual matters. The three *Puun* also jointly maintain the unity of all *tangtu*, and they play a role in accordance with the *tangtu* decrees and centered on the three figures, namely Rama, Resi and Prabu. *Puun* Cikeusik who leads *Tangtu Pada Ageung* acts as *Puun* Rama, *Puun* Cikartawana who leads *Tangtu Kadu Kujang* acts as *Puun* Resi or *Pandita*, and *Puun* Cibeo who leads *Tangtu Parahiyang* acts as *Puun* Ponggawa or Prabu (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007).

The implementation of *pikukuh tilu* as a description of *tangtu tilu* is clearly depicted when carrying out punishment for *tangtu* residents. The ceremony of *panyapuan* or imposing a customary punishment for the inner Baduy people, who will be expelled from the *tangtu*, involves all officials from the *tangtu tilu*. The ceremony is performed at *Bale Kapuunan Cibeo*, but the one who carries out the ceremony of determination and execution of punishment is





*Puun* Cikeusik. The ceremony shows the unity of *tangtu tilu*, where the three *Puun* are three inseparable units.

The implementation of *pikukuh tilu* is also clearly shown in the veneration of the three holy mothers whom they refer to as *Ambu*. There are three *Ambu* who are highly respected by the Baduy people, whom they believe to be holy women who care for and protect the Baduy. The first *Ambu* is referred to as *Ambu Luhur* who lives in *Buwana Luhur*. *Ambu Luhur* is tasked to receive the spirits of the deceased, as well as take care of their place in *Buwana Luhur*. In addition to this, *Ambu Luhur* is also tasked with helping the Baduy people who are facing problems. *Ambu Luhur* is believed to be a powerful holy mother. Therefore, *Ambu Luhur* has the ability to solve every problem that occurs in *Central Buwana* just by saying her name or by reading a spell to ask for her help.

The second *Ambu* is *Ambu Tengah* who lives in *Buwana Panca Tengah*. *Ambu Tengah* is believed to be a holy mother who maintains daily life. The Baduy people respect *Ambu Tengah* by obeying and practicing their *pikukuh* seriously, and avoiding any *buyut* or prohibitions from their ancestors. *Ambu Tengah* plays a role in maintaining life in the world as well as helping the Baduy people in their work and daily lives.

The third *Ambu* is *Ambu Rarang* who live in *Buwana Handap*. *Ambu Rarang* has a duty to receive the bodies and spirits of the Baduy people who have died and will be taken care of for seven days, before being handed over to *Ambu Luhur* to be collected with the *karuhun* who have settled in *Buwana Luhur* (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). From this description, it is clear how the roles of the three *Ambu* in their respective worlds are interrelated.

The implementation of the *pikukuh tilu* is also clearly manifested in the burial of the Baduy people who have died. The funeral ceremony of the Baduy People is carried out for seven days, by burning offerings every day. After the deceased person is buried, a bamboo stick is attached to the grave. Then a shirt or headband is hung up on bamboo stick if a man dies, and a breastband is hung up if a woman dies. On the top of the grave, offerings like food and meat are placed in honor of *Ambu Rarang* who will take care of the body and spirit of the deceased person (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007).

For seven days, offerings are given and incense is burned. After seven days, the offerings are stopped and the burning of the incense is also stopped. Baduy people do not use tombstones on the graves of deceased people. They only plant red *hanjuang* trees or banana trees on the graves at the heads of the deceased people. They do all of these actions as a sign that the deceased has been buried in that place. After the seven-day ceremony, they will not do pilgrimage. The tomb will not be cared for and it will be left alone by the deceased person's family, so that it will no longer be recognized where the grave is because the mound-shaped grave has been razed to the ground. Baduy people do not make pilgrimages after seven days or do not care for the graves of their relatives, not because they do not respect or love their deceased relatives. The Baduy people leave the graves of their relatives alone, because they believe that *Ambu Rarang* has brought the spirits of the deceased Baduy people to the *buwana Nyungcung* or *buwana Luhur* to stand before *Ambu Luhur*.

*Pikukuh tilu* is also implemented in the course of human life since they are born. In this discussion there are some interesting aspects, because they have similarities with Jewish faith and culture. When a baby is born, he or she will be given a name on the seventh day, similar to Jewish culture which gives the name of a child on the eighth day or after the seventh day. However, in Jewish culture, the naming is done at the same time with circumcision, but for the Baduy tribe, even though there is the practice of circumcision, it will be done a few years later. According to *Pikukuh*, the first syllable for a baby boy's name should be the same as the first syllable of his father's name, while for baby girls, the first syllable of her name should be the



same as the first syllable of her mother's name (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). The name given to him will be his nickname until he grows up, gets married and has children. As long as he has no children, even though he has married or has gotten old, the nickname given to him will remain the same as the name given to him when he was a baby.

Every child in Baduy, both male and female, must be circumcised. Boys are usually circumcised at three to five years old, while girls are circumcised at ten years old. The circumcision ceremony in Baduy is called *nyelamkeun*, whose literal meaning is submerged. The purpose of the ceremony is to declare that the child has officially become a Baduy citizen. Thus, the *nyelamkeun* event is also interpreted as a ceremony to confirm a child's membership as a Kanekes. After circumcision, the children are given bracelets made of *kanteh* in their hands at the age 11 to 12 years of age. This is also done to show that children who have been circumcised are no longer children, and they are considered as responsible persons, because they are allowed to work in the fields. Baduy's children are prohibited from attending school. They learn about life in the field from their parents.

The rules or *pikukuh* that have been explained earlier make the birth of a child for the Baduy people who have settled down a very important occurrence. The birth of a child for married people largely determines their position in society and at the same time their parents will gain new names or new titles. On the other side, Baduy people who do not have children cannot occupy particular positions in society. Even though they have getting married for 30 years and their age has been 70 years of age, but because of they have no child, he could not become the member or *kokolot*. In addition, Baduy people who have not had children are also considered as people who have not been trusted by *Nu Ngersakeun* or "Who Wants".

When the first child is born to a Baduy family, the baby's name will replace the parents' names. One example Sarpin, a long-married Baduy, is still called Sarpin. After his wife gives birth, and their baby is named Maman, Sarpin changes his name to become Maman's father. Everyone then calls him Maman's father. It also shows that his social status has changed. The person will continue to be called Maman's father until he has a grandson. When Maman's father has a grandson and is named Sarta, then Maman's father's nickname will change to *Aki* Sarta. That change will also change his social status in the Baduy tribal community. Only people who have been born with the name or title of *Aki* can serve as *kokolot* or elders in Baduy society. From the description above, it is understood that a Baduy will potentially have three names, and the name owned is closely related to his social status. One person has three nicknames, and the three names refer to one person, and it is also denoted as *pikukuh*.

*Pikukuh tilu* is also implemented strictly in the weddings for the inner Baduy community, who live in the *tangtu tilu* area. For the inner Baduy people who *ngamandala* or live their lives in *tangtu tilu*, the wedding that they practice is called a soul marriage or a marriage in spirit, or a lifelong and eternal marriage that can only be done by *Puun* (Sucipto & Limbeng, 2007). *Puun* as the spiritual supreme leader who can be in direct contact with the spirits of the *karuhun*, recites prayers affirming that they should not divorce or be separated except because of death.

The soul marriage performed by the prospective husband and wife in the presence of *Puun* as the representative of the *karuhun*, is a vow to be faithful to each other throughout their lives, and has the consequences if they are divorced. A divorce is a violation of the constitution and is an act of sin. For the Baduy people, a marriage is sacred and holy, involving the Almighty One, represented by the *Puun*; therefore, it should not be ruined by anyone through a divorce. People who are divorced will be punished, and they will be expelled from inner Baduy or *tangtu tilu*. The evicted party or *ditamping* is the one who asks for a divorce.

Another consequence of an eternal and lasting soul marriage is a monogamous marriage. Baduy people should not have more than one wife or husband. Polygamous marriages are not



allowed in inner Baduy, as it is a taboo or *buyut*. The inner Baduy who *ngamandala* or live their lives in *tangtu tilu*, will be expelled from the inner region or *tri tangtu* if they perform polygamous marriages. Soul marriage only apply to the inner Baduy people who *ngamandala* or spend their lives in the *tangtu tilu* area. For the outer Baduy people living in the Panamping area and Dangka area, the soul marriage law does not apply. Because of this, there are many Baduy people who live outside the *tangtu tilu* region who practice polygamy and also quite a lot of divorce and re-marriages. Although polygamy is very rare in outer Baduy, the rate of divorce and re-marriage is quite high. It should be understood that, even though the Baduy community carries out eternal soul marriages which prohibit divorce, it does not mean that there are no divorces for married couples in the inner Baduy community. A divorce can still occur, although it is a very rare occurrence, but the divorced person will be expelled soon from the inner Baduy region.

## Discussion

The *Pikukuh Tilu* philosophy reflects a profoundly ingrained triadic belief system that governs the spiritual, social, and environmental aspects of Baduy's life. Theoretical perspectives from structuralism, functionalism, local wisdom, and deep ecology collectively provide a nuanced understanding of how *Pikukuh Tilu* shapes cultural identity, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship. While structuralism uncovers the underlying symbolic and cognitive structures, functionalism demonstrates its role in maintaining social order. Simultaneously, local wisdom theory highlights the resilience of Baduy traditions, and deep ecology reinforces the Baduy people's commitment to environmental balance. However, as modernization and external pressures challenge these long-standing traditions, it is crucial to explore adaptive strategies that preserve Baduy's cultural identity while allowing for sustainable development.

The philosophy of *Pikukuh Tilu*, a triadic belief system emphasizing the interconnectedness of God, humans, and nature, can be effectively analyzed through Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach. As a theoretical framework, structuralism focuses on understanding the underlying structures that shape cultural phenomena. In the context of *Pikukuh Tilu*, this approach can reveal the symbolic and cognitive frameworks that define the Baduy worldview. By examining the triadic relationships within *Pikukuh Tilu*, structuralism can uncover the deeper meanings and functions of these beliefs within Baduy society.

Lévi-Strauss' structuralism emphasizes the importance of binary oppositions and mediating concepts in understanding cultural structures (Carroll, 1977). The *Pikukuh Tilu* triadic structure can be seen as a complex interplay of oppositions and mediations, reflecting the interconnectedness of its elements. The structuralist approach can help identify how these relationships are symbolically represented and cognitively processed within Baduy culture. Structuralism posits that cultural phenomena are shaped by underlying cognitive structures that are universal across human societies (Carroll, 1977). In *Pikukuh Tilu*, the triadic belief system can be analyzed to understand how the Baduy people perceive and organize their world. This analysis can reveal the symbolic meanings attributed to God, humans, and nature and how these meanings influence daily social practices and interactions.

The structuralist method identifies patterns and structures within cultural narratives and practices (Carroll, 1977). By applying these principles to *Pikukuh Tilu*, researchers can uncover the fundamental structures that govern the Baduy worldview. This approach can also highlight the role of *Pikukuh Tilu* in maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity within the Baduy community. While structuralism provides a valuable framework for analyzing *Pikukuh Tilu*, it is essential to consider other theoretical perspectives that may offer complementary insights. For instance, examining the historical and social contexts in which *Pikukuh Tilu* developed can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its significance and evolution. Additionally, integrating perspectives from anthropology and sociology can enrich the analysis by



considering the dynamic interactions between cultural beliefs and social structures.

As articulated by Bronislaw Malinowski, functionalism posits that every cultural element serves a purpose in maintaining social equilibrium. In the Baduy community, *Pikukuh Tilu* exemplifies this theory by promoting social harmony, spiritual adherence, and ecological balance. The principle of *Pikukuh Tilu* emphasizes the interconnectedness of social, spiritual, and ecological aspects, ensuring that community practices align with their cultural values. Each cultural practice within the Baduy community reinforces social bonds and collective identity, which is essential for maintaining stability and cohesion (Husa, 2014). The Baduy community's adherence to sustainable practices reflects a functionalist approach, where cultural traditions are designed to sustain the environment, ensuring long-term survival (Lantremange, 2024). Their cultural elements also serve as adaptive responses to environmental challenges, illustrating the functionalist view that culture aids in navigating ecological niches (Kashima, 2019).

While structuralism provides a valuable framework for analyzing *Pikukuh Tilu*, it is essential to consider other theoretical perspectives that may offer complementary insights. For instance, examining the historical and social contexts in which *Pikukuh Tilu* developed, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its significance and evolution. Additionally, integrating perspectives from anthropology and sociology can enrich the analysis by considering the dynamic interactions between cultural beliefs and social structures.

Clifford Geertz's concept of local wisdom provides a framework for understanding how *Pikukuh Tilu* values are preserved within Baduy society despite the pressures of modernization. This resilience is evident in the community's adherence to traditional practices and beliefs that guide their interactions with the environment and with each other. The preservation of cultural values is demonstrated through traditional practices and community regulations. The Baduy community maintains rituals and customs that reflect their local wisdom, serving as guiding principles for sustainable living and environmental stewardship (Rahayu et al., 2025). Additionally, local wisdom manifests as unwritten laws that govern behaviour, ensuring that practices detrimental to their cultural and environmental integrity are avoided (Polin, 2024).

In terms of resilience against modernization, social constructs reinforce local wisdom, enabling communities to adapt while preserving their identity amidst external influences, as seen in the Kajang community (Jalal et al., 2024). Furthermore, sustainable resource management is evident in communities like Sesaot Village, where traditional knowledge is applied to manage natural resources sustainably, demonstrating the practical use of local wisdom in economic development (Pariani & Sarjan, 2024). Conversely, while local wisdom plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural identity, the encroachment of globalization poses significant challenges, potentially diluting these values and practices over time. For example, the increasing influence of modern consumer culture and digital media has led younger generations in many indigenous communities, including the Baduy, to adopt external lifestyles, clothing, and technology that diverge from traditional customs. This tension highlights the need for ongoing efforts to balance tradition with modernity to ensure the continued preservation of *Pikukuh Tilu* within the Baduy community.

As articulated by Arne Naess, deep ecology advocates for a profound interconnectedness between humans and nature, emphasizing the intrinsic value of all life forms. This philosophy resonates with the *Pikukuh Tilu*, which embodies principles of environmental equilibrium and sustainable practices, underscoring a holistic approach to ecological stewardship. Deep ecology posits that nature should not be viewed merely as a resource for human exploitation but as an interconnected web of life where all entities hold intrinsic value (Islam, 2024). The *Pikukuh Tilu* reflects this ethos, promoting environmental awareness and moral values such as honesty and simplicity, which are essential for sustainable living (Waluya & Wiyanti,





2024). The dualistic perception of humans and nature hinders sustainability, fostering exploitation rather than care (Olausson, 2024). By dissolving this duality, as suggested in profound sustainability discourse, communities can foster a sense of empathy and interconnectedness, leading to more responsible environmental practices (Olausson, 2024).

Baduy's Indigenous wisdom serves as a possible model for integrating environmental ethics into education, promoting character-building through contextual learning (Waluya & Wiyanarti, 2024). This aligns with the idea of deep commons, which emphasizes ontological empathic relationships with the environment and advocates for collective responsibility toward ecological preservation of natural resources and practices, moving well beyond a purely economic or resource-based view of commons to include the social, cultural, and relational aspects of communal life.

While deep ecology and the Baduy community's practices offer a promising framework for sustainable living, challenges remain in addressing broader systemic issues, such as materialism, greed and exploitation, that threaten the ecological balance. A collective shift in worldview toward a more inclusive understanding of our relationship with nature is critical for achieving lasting sustainability.

## Conclusions

The philosophy of *Pikukuh Tilu* is deeply embedded in the spiritual, social, and environmental fabric of the Baduy community, serving as an enduring framework that guides their way of life. Rooted in the triadic principles of God, humans, and nature, this belief system fosters harmony, sustainability, and cultural resilience, reinforcing the Baduy people's commitment to preserving their traditions amidst external influences. Through a structuralist perspective, *Pikukuh Tilu* can be seen as an intricate system of binary oppositions and mediations that shape the community's worldview, highlighting its role in maintaining social and ecological balance. From a functionalist standpoint, *Pikukuh Tilu* is crucial in sustaining social cohesion, governing moral conduct, and ensuring environmental preservation. The strict adherence to customary laws and rituals reinforces the Baduy's sense of identity and collective responsibility, demonstrating how tradition stabilizes their society. Furthermore, local wisdom theory underscores the resilience of Baduy cultural practices, emphasizing the role of unwritten laws and oral traditions in safeguarding indigenous knowledge. This resilience is further reinforced by profound ecology principles, which align *Pikukuh Tilu* with sustainable living, ecological conservation, and a holistic relationship with nature. However, while this study highlights the strengths of *Pikukuh Tilu* in cultural resilience and environmental ethics, one limitation is the difficulty in accessing deeper insights from the inner Baduy due to their closed society, which may limit a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives. Additionally, as modernization intensifies, further research is needed to explore adaptive strategies for cultural preservation while enabling necessary socio-economic development. In practical terms, the findings of this study can inform conservation policies, sustainable tourism strategies, and indigenous rights advocacy, ensuring that traditional ecological wisdom continues to be integrated into modern environmental governance.

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