



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

From respected hermits to ordinary citizens: The conversion of the Baduy, ethnicity, and politics of religion in Indonesia (1977 - 2019)
Suryani, A.J.

Citation

Suryani, A. J. (2021, January 28). *From respected hermits to ordinary citizens: The conversion of the Baduy, ethnicity, and politics of religion in Indonesia (1977 - 2019)*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3134744>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3134744>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3134744> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Suryani, A.J.

Title: From respected hermits to ordinary citizens: The conversion of the Baduy, ethnicity, and politics of religion in Indonesia (1977 - 2019)

Issue Date: 2021-01-28

Introduction

A. Background

Not long after Indonesia proclaimed its independence the government tried to develop the nation through various development policies. Two important programmes were transmigration and resettlement. The transmigration programme was the continuation of the previous policy conducted by the Dutch and Japanese. From 1905 until 2005 there had been no less than 2,142,984 families relocated mostly from Java to sparsely populated areas in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua. By the transmigration, the government intended to increase the welfare of the people (Departemen Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi 2008: 2-3, 20-30).¹

Unlike the transmigration programme, the resettlement programme was designed to move isolated societies into more developed ones. The isolated societies are defined by the government as societies that are isolated, scattered, dependent on nature, stagnant, less differentiated, illiterate, and undeveloped. In 1973 there were around 1,586,148 people categorised as isolated. They lived mostly in mountainous

¹ Departemen Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi (2008: 2-3, 20-30) makes the periodisation of transmigration in Indonesia as follows: the Dutch government (1905 – 1942), the Japanese government (1942 – 1945), the period of 1945 – 1950, the *pra-pelita* (*pra-pembangunan lima tahun* / pre-five year development) (1950 – 1968), the first *pelita* (1969 – 1974), the second *pelita* (1974 – 1979), the third *pelita* (1979 – 1984), the fourth *pelita* (1984 – 1989), the fifth *pelita* (1989 – 1994), the sixth *pelita* (1994 – 1999), the reformation period (1999 – 2000), the mutual cooperation/ *gotong royong* period (2001 – 2003), and the period of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono 2004 – 2008. Since the booklet published in 2008, it does not cover the onward period.

areas in West Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Maluku, East Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi and Papua (Direktorat Pembinaan Masyarakat Terasing 1975: 4-8, 30-34; Fathuddien *et al.*, 1978/9: 8-11).

The effort to resettle such people has been begun since 1951, but its official project just began in 1964 in West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Jambi, and Riau. A more serious effort to resettle the isolated societies was conducted in 1974 when the government issued Law No. 6/ 1974 about the Main Guidelines of Social Welfare (Direktorat Pembinaan Masyarakat Terasing 1997: iv, v). The Department of Social Affairs (henceforth the Depsos), now the Ministry of Social Affairs, then issued the decision letter No. 10/ 1975 about the organizational structure and working procedure of the department. The decision letter mentions that the Directorate of the Development of Isolated Societies is responsible for the implementation of Law No. 6/ 1974. The law and regulation became the legal basis for the resettlement programme of the isolated societies in Indonesia. Two of many agendas of the resettlement programme were to develop peoples' socio-economic lives and to convert them to religions recognised by the state. The latter purpose was rendered to the Department of Religious Affairs (henceforth the Mora) (Direktorat Pembinaan Masyarakat Terasing 1975: 36, 38, 39, 67, Fathuddien *et al.* 1978: 3).

The reason behind the resettlement programme was that the isolated societies, according to the government, were not in line with the government's hope: they were dependent too much on nature, not religious, and socio-culturally underdeveloped. To bring them in line with the government's hope, it created *Program Pembinaan Masyarakat Terasing* (Programme of the Development of Isolated Communities). Through this programme the Depsos resettled isolated societies in Indonesia, built houses, roads, schools, worship places, sports squares, and so on for the peoples (Direktorat Pembinaan Masyarakat Terasing 1975: 38, 67-68, 160-163, 295). To make the programme successful the Depsos created a standard process from pre-resettlement to post-resettlement which lasted for 3-7 years (Direktorat Pembinaan Masyarakat Terasing 1975: 17-24, 62).

One of the isolated societies, or later renamed as *adat* (traditional) societies, that followed the resettlement programme was the Baduy. Being part of the wider Sundanese ethnic group, the Baduy live in the *desa*² of Kanekes, the *kecamatan* (sub-

² Indonesian-English dictionaries, such as Alan M. Stevens and A. Ed. Schmidgall-Tellings, *A Comprehensive Indonesian English Dictionary* (2010: 239), often translate '*desa*' and '*kampung*' as village. Actually, *desa* and *kampung* are two different concepts. *Desa*, as the opposite of city, means rural area. In the governmental system, *desa* is the lowest level (centre/ national> province> regency> sub-district> *desa/ kelurahan*). A *desa* consists of many *kampung*. A *kampung* is more properly defined as a hamlet where a small community shares their daily basis. In 2010 the *desa* of Kanekes, for example, consisted 58 *kampung* (Kurnia and Sihabudin 2010: 71).

district) of Leuwidamar, the regency of Lebak, Banten province. The Baduy are divided into two groups: the Inner Baduy (Baduy *Jero/Dalam*) and the Outer Baduy (Baduy *Panamping/Luar*). The first group lives in the three villages Cibeo, Cikertawana and Cikeusik and the second lives in many other villages. In 2010 the number of the outer Baduy villages was 58 villages and kept increasing (Kurnia and Sihabudin 2010: 68). In 2018 the number of the Baduy population was 11.699 or 3.413 families (BPS Lebak 2018: 7, 25).

Both the Outer and Inner Baduy live in one community land (*tanah ulayat*, *adat* land) and under the same systems: the *adat* and the *desa*. In the former system, three *puun* (leaders) from the three inner villages occupy the top position. Because the *puun* of Cikeusik is the most authoritative among the three, he is the leader of the *puun* and the whole society of the Baduy. The later system, the *desa*, is headed by a *desa* leader which is called *jaro pamarentah* and is part of the formal government. Different from other *desa*, the *desa* head of the Baduy is appointed by the *adat* leaders, not by the society.

In terms of religion, the Baduy embrace Sunda Wiwitan. Based on their duties in the world, they believe that humans are divided into two groups: those who become hermits³ (*nu napakeun*) and those who manage the world (*nu ngaramkeun dunia*). The Baduy believe that they are destined by God to play the first role and the non-Baduy play the second. As the expression of being hermits, their religion prohibits them to attach themselves to modernity and use its products. However, change or adaptation of the Baduy, especially the Outer Baduy, has been identified since the 1950s (Saputra 1959).

The fact that the Baduy change, adopt modernity and some of them convert to Islam or Christianity is influenced mainly by their religion and ethnicity, the limited size of the *adat* land, the increase of the population, Muslim preachers and Christian missionaries, and the politics of religion and development in Indonesia. To be clearer, the Baduy believe that they are hermits (Indonesian: *petapa*). As an expression of being hermits they have to live in the *adat* land and refuse modernity. Problems start to appear when the number of population increases while the size of the *adat* land is constant. In 2010 alone, if the farming area in the *adat* land was divided evenly, each family would obtain 0.7 hectare. This means that in the following years the family will get less land for farming. To solve the problems, the Baduy have managed the non-Baduy's farms outside the *adat* land since at least the 1950s. In this period the government of Lebak also tried to relocate the Baduy, but failed.

Changes were more visible when some Outer Baduy accepted the resettlement

³ The special meaning of being a hermit in the Baduy context will be discussed in chapter 2.

programme of the Depsos in 1977. By referring to the definition of isolated societies provided by the Depsos, the Baduy were and are actually not an isolated society (Danasasmita and Djatisunda 1986: 9, 63, Persoon 1994: 345, 371). It is an open society which means its members have contact with wider societies. The Baduy land and people are also open to be visited by non-Baduy. That their economy is not “developed” and that their interaction with the non-Baduy is not too intensive, according to the Baduy, happen because they intentionally isolate themselves (Kurnia and Sihabudin 2010: 8). As hermits they have to detach themselves from modern life and are taboo to develop their farming system. However, the limited *adat* land and the increase of the population eventually forced some of them to accept the resettlement programme and opened their land for tourism. Supported by the government, tourism attracted more and more people to visit the *adat* land. In the end, tourism has driven them to break more taboos by, for example, having cell phones and toilets.

In 1977 the Depsos began to open resettlement villages for the Baduy. This was one of many resettlement programmes which were run by the Depsos in 13 provinces (Sumintardja 1979: 35). Until 1999 no less than 600 Baduy families were relocated to the villages (Bakels and Boevink 1988, Persoon 1989, 1994; Anggraeni 2000). What the Baduy probably did not know about the resettlement programme was that the state, through the Depsos, intended to ‘develop’, ‘modernize’ and convert them to the religions recognised by the state.

Since the first five years of the resettlement the Baduy have gradually broken the taboos. They, for instance, wore t-shirts, had an electricity network and electronics, and managed wet rice fields (*sawah*). By adopting the taboos the *adat* leaders deemed that the Baduy in the resettlement villages were in an obscure position like sitting in a doorway where a part of his body is inside the house and another one is outside. They were also like a man whose one foot on a boat and another foot on another boat. The *adat* leaders could not accept this situation. The Baduy in the resettlement villages had to choose to remain as Baduy by returning to the Baduy land or to live in the resettlement villages by abandoning Sunda Wiwitan. Many of them returned to the Baduy land, while those who remained in the resettlement villages converted to Islam and some others to Christianity. Muslims and Christians, supported by the politics of religion in Indonesia, were involved actively in the process of their conversion.

The *adat* leaders suggested the Baduy who chose to remain in the resettlement villages to convert to Islam. This suggestion was related to the historical-religious relations between Sunda Wiwitan and Islam: (1) Cicakal Girang in the Baduy land is a Muslim village which is believed to date back to the 16th century, (2)

the Outer Baduy proclaim the *shahāda*⁴ (the confession that Allah is God and Muhammad is His messenger) in front of a Muslim official (*‘amil*)⁵ when they will marry, (3) the Baduy men are circumcised and they believe that this practice is from Islam, (4) and the marriage rules, such as the practice of *‘idda*, is the same as that of Islam. The *jaro pamarentah* Saija also states that the Baduy, because of the *shahāda*, are Muslim; but their Islam is different from Islam of other Muslims. Islam of the Baduy does not require them to perform the other four pillars of Islam. Besides the *shahāda*, the pillars of Islam include *ṣalāt*, *zakāt* (almsgiving), fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, and the *haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) if he can do so once in his lifetime. From these beliefs the name ‘Islam’ is attached in front of ‘Sunda Wiwitan’ and becomes ‘(I)slam Sunda Wiwitan’. Because of these connections, a Baduy who does no longer want to be a Baduy is recommended by the *adat* leaders to convert to Islam.

Although the Baduy were suggested to choose Islam when they would abandon their religion, in fact, more than a hundred of them chose Christianity. The Christian missionaries and students have come to the resettlement villages, especially in Gunung Tunggal (Cipangembar 1 and 2), since the 1970s and 1980s. They came there as sports trainers and fieldworkers, stayed there for months, and converted the Baduy. The missionaries and the students are supposed to be linked, although unofficially, to Universitas Advent Indonesia in Bandung where some Christian Baduy were brought to and live in the city. Another missionary who came to the Baduy villages, not specifically to the resettlement villages, was Kharel Budiman Silitonga. In his book *Saya Dijuluki Nomensenya Baduy* (I am Called as Nomensen of the Baduy)⁶ (1998) he accounts his mission to the Baduy land and claims to have converted 120 Baduy and Muslim families to Christianity.

Tension, contestation and religious conflicts started to happen when the

⁴ The *shahāda* أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ means “I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

⁵ *‘amil* means agent, tax-collector, administrator, government official, and finance officer. Look at A.A. Duri, “*‘amil*” in Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Vol. 1 A-B, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 435-436. The term *‘amil* as an official who manages the *zakāt* is mentioned in the Qur’an (9:60).

⁶ The full title is *Saya Dijuluki Nomensenya Baduy: Profil dan Kesaksian Pendeta Kharel Budiman Silitonga, Tokoh Penginjil dan Perintis Gereja Banten* (I am Called the Baduy’s Nomensen: the Profile and Testimony of Pastor Kharel Budiman Silitonga the Missionary and Initiator of the Banten Church). The author mistyped the name of Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen (1834-1918). He should have written ‘Nommensen’ with double ‘m’. Born in Nordstarnd, Germany, on 6 February 1834, Nommensen departed Amsterdam in December 1861 for the Dutch East Indies and arrived in Padang on 14 May 1862. Until 1876 he had baptised more than 7,000 people. On 23 May 1918, after spending 56 years of his age in the Batak land, he died and buried in Sigumpar, North Sumatra. More details about Nommensen, read Patar M. Pasaribu, *Dr. Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen Apostel di Tanah Batak*, (Medan: Universitas HKBP Nommensen, 2005) and Karel A. Steenbrink and Jan S. Arintonang, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, (Netherlands: Brill, 2008). A university in Medan is named after his name, Universitas Nommensen.

Muslims could not accept the Christian missionary activities in the Baduy land and resettlement villages. According to the Muslims, converting the Baduy is the right of Muslims because of the historical-religious relations between the Baduy and the Muslims. Responding to the missionary activities, Muslim individuals and organisations intensified their *da'wa* activities. Muhammadiyah was and is the most active. Having a national programme of *da'wa* to the isolated societies in Indonesia, the organisation sent some preachers to introduce Islam to the Baduy and invited the people to the religion. Kiyai Zainuddin Amir, one of the preachers, claimed to have been successful in converting about 500 Baduy to Islam.⁷ To support his *da'wa*, in 1986 he built a *pesantren* in Palopat. Muhammadiyah also sent the preacher Ahmad Hidayat to Cicakal Girang, a Muslim village in the Baduy land, where he and his wife manage *madrasah* (Islamic schools) and a mosque. Other preachers were sent by the organisation to Kumpul, Nagari and Leuwidamar where they also run *madrasah*. To convert the Baduy and to counter the Christianisation of the people, Muhammadiyah even would build a mosque in a Baduy village. To do all of these, Muhammadiyah obtained fund from foreign countries.

To do the same thing, Al Washliyah has existed in Banten since 1969 and started to send its preachers to the resettlement villages in 1988⁸, converted the Baduy to Islam, and built a *madrasah* in Margaluyu. Al Washliyah also sent some Muslim Baduy youths to Medan to study at universities organised by the organisation. The preachers themselves have left the resettlement villages and bequeathed the *madrasah* to Suparta, a Muslim Baduy who was taught by the Al Washliyah preachers in the early 1980s. Many children of the Muslim converts in Cihaur, Cipangembar, and Margaluyu study Islam and general subjects at this *madrasah*.

Jamaah Tablig, a Muslim missionary organisation⁹ originated from India, also claimed to have been active in the surrounding villages of the Baduy land since ten to fifteen years ago. A number of Muslim Baduy confessed as the followers of this organisation. Some of the members claimed to have converted several Baduy to Islam. They often conduct a *halaqa* (Arabic: meeting, circle) from one house of its members to another. One of the common places is the house of Haji Adung in Cikapek. As a form of support, a businessman bought a field in 2017 where

⁷ He gave me a bundle of religious conversion certificates consisting of more than 230 sheets. Some sheets contain more than one convert's conversion, like a father and his child(ren).

⁸ <http://kabarwashliyah.com/2013/02/27/pw-al-washliyah-banten-resmi-dilantik/>, accessed on 5 March 2016.

⁹ The followers of Jamaah Tablig whom I met during my fieldwork refused Jamaah Tablig to be called an organisation because, they said, it did not have a fixed managerial structure. For the reason of practicality, I deploy the term 'organisation'.

some Muslim Baduy families would be relocated to this area. Besides the reason that the families did not have land on which a house could be built, the Jamaah Tabligh people also thought the importance of isolating the converts from the un-Islamic ambience of the Muslim society. In addition, the businessman also planned to buy a quite large field bordering with the land owned by the Christian group to counterbalance the Christianisation of the Baduy.

After becoming Muslims or Christians the Baduy have to soon leave the *adat* land which is only for the adherents of Sunda Wiwitan. For the Baduy in the resettlement villages, because they already moved, they did not need to move again. When converting to Islam some Baduy changed their names, although the new ones are not always completely different from the old ones. For instance, Sali became Muhammad Sali. Unlike converting to Islam, the name change rarely happened in the Christian circle. Moreover, the Muslim and Christian converts gradually learned Islamic or Christian teachings. They termed it as in the Sundanese proverb “*beda cai beda tampian*” which literarily means “different water, a different place to take a bath”. Simply, when they change something, the attributes of and the practices in the place also change. After the conversion, their distinct dresses, the style of the house, and accents and vocabularies of their language have gradually disappeared. Nowadays, one would not notice that the people in the ex-resettlement villages are Baduy. The distinct Sundanese accent which is the easiest way to identify the Baduy is already gone.

In fact, changes do not only occur in the resettlement villages, but also in the *adat* land. Starting from the 1980s there were increasingly more visitors coming to the Baduy land. It was, among others, due to the promotion carried out by the government of Lebak regency. Even it believes that the Baduy community will become a world tourist destination.¹⁰ The Baduy man Karman said that in December 2015 almost one thousand tourists came to the Baduy land to spend their year-end holidays.¹¹ Like the Muslim and Christian preachers, tourists who visit the Baduy land raise great challenges to the people and their religion. During their visits the tourists converse with the people, introduce new ideas, and show how ‘modern’ people live. It is not rare that the Baduy visit back their (tourist) friends in towns and cities. The intensive contact among them has led the Baduy to change. For example, some Inner Baduy have become Outer Baduy to live more modern and many Outer Baduy have cellular phones. Some Outer Baduy have radios, motorcycles, and toilets which are all forbidden for the Baduy. On

¹⁰ <https://travel.kompas.com/read/2016/07/24/134600527/Pariwisata.Baduy.Bisa.Mendunia.Asal.?page=allon> 20 May 2016.

¹¹ A personal conversation with Karman in March 2017.

top of that, not few of them have left the *adat* land by converting to Islam or Christianity.

The Baduy society is actually not the only *adat* group which experiences changes and religious conversion. This is a common phenomenon occurring in almost all *adat* communities throughout Indonesia. For instance, many people of Suku Anak Dalam have converted to Islam (Depsos RI 1989: 46, 61, 62, Persoon 1994, Handini 2005: 58, 107, 108) and of Mentawai to Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam (Depsos Sumatera Barat 1979: 4, 8, 11, 22, Persoon 1994). As written in the reports published by the government, converting the people was part of the government's agenda to bring them in line with the state's ideology: the belief in the one and only God. As it occurs in Banten, the government involved religious organisations existing in the regions of the isolated societies. Besides the Baduy, the Suku Anak Dalam, and the Mentawaians, two other examples are the Tobelo in North-eastern Halmahera (Duncan 1998) and the Dayak in East Kalimantan (Connolly 2003). They were targeted by the development programme and Islamic and Christian missionary activities.

Likewise, the indigenous peoples of Southeast Asian countries were targeted by development policies and missionary activities (Ghee and Gomes [eds.] 1990 and Duncan [eds.] 2004). Liana Chua (2012) who studied the Bidayuh of Malaysia describes how this indigenous community was developed by the government and targeted by missionaries. Before the 1960s, the Bidayuh "were relatively self-sufficient, rice planting communities, practising shifting cultivation on the vertiginous slopes and jungles...." But after 1963, when Sarawak gained independence, the Bidayuh were targeted by the "state-led program of development and modernisation..." and in the 2000s most of the people had converted to Christianity (Chua 2012: 3, 5). Commenting on the process of development, modernisation and conversion of the indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia Duncan (2004: 3) states:

"These [Southeast Asian] governments want to bring indigenous ethnic minorities into the modern age, to move from more traditional or "tradition-bound" local world into larger national and regional networks. The trademarks of this modern world include fluency in the national language, conversion to a recognised world religion, and entrance into the cash money."

In summary, what occurs in the Baduy land is a common phenomenon experienced by all *adat* societies in Indonesia and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the Baduy community can be a very good entrance into the study of *adat* communities, development and modernisation, the impacts of the

politics of religion on citizens, and religious conversion in Indonesia. Let alone, this community has specificity which is being respected by the rulers. The Baduy were respected by the kingdom of Pajajaran, the sultanate of Banten, and the government of Indonesia. The Baduy had capabilities to ask President Soeharto who was authoritarian not to involve them in the development programme (see Ekadjati in Danasasmita and Djatisunda 1986: i, Garna 1988: 366, and Persoon: 1994: 333, 369). The important position of the Baduy community is very well stated by Persoon (1994: 314-315):

“But the Baduy play an important role in Sundanese and Indonesian religious life: they consider themselves the centre of the world, the cosmic centre. Their well-being is of great importance to life in Indonesia. And this is directly linked to a continuation of the tradition handed down, full of limitations regarding the change processes imposed on them. They also play a role, albeit passively, within the Indonesian environmental movement, in which they are repeatedly brought forward as an example of a society that lives in harmony with the environment through self-imposed restrictions on the exploitation of natural resources. Finally, the Baduy are a controversial case in development planning not only of West Java but also that of Indonesia as a whole. Concerning their total number or the size of their area, the Baduy receive a lot of attention from planners and politicians, an attention that contrasts unfavourably with what is actually achieved in terms of ‘classic’ and physical development activities.”¹²

“Maintaining this traditional way of life has always been accepted and respected by the political rulers both in pre-colonial times and during the Dutch and Japanese periods in Indonesian history. These rulers did not impose taxes on them and the Baduy were also released from corvee.”¹³

¹² “Maar de Baduy spelen een belangrijke rol in het Sundanese en Indonesische religieuze leven: zij beschouwen zich als het centrum van de wereld, het kosmische middelpunt. Hun welzijn is van grote betekenis voor het leven in Indonesië. En dit is direct gekoppeld aan een voortzetting van de overgeleverde traditie vol beperkingen ten aanzien van veranderingsprocessen die hen worden opgedrongen. Ook spelen ze, zij het passief, een rol binnen de Indonesische milieubeweging waarin ze telkens naar voren worden gehaald als een voorbeeld van een samenleving die in harmonie leeft met de omgeving door zelfopgelegde beperkingen ten aanzien van de exploitatie van de natuurlijke hulpbronnen. Tenslotte vormen de Baduy een controversieel geval binnen de ontwikkelingsplanning niet alleen van West-Java maar ook van die in Indonesië als geheel. In verhouding tot hun totale aantal of de omvang van hun gebied ontvangen de Baduy veel aandacht van planners en politici, een aandacht die ongunstig afsteekt bij wat er werkelijk bereikt wordt in termen van ‘klassieke’ en fysieke ontwikkelingsactiviteiten.”

¹³ “Het handhaven van deze traditionele manier van leven is altijd geaccepteerd en gerespecteerd door de politieke machthebbers zowel in de pre-koloniale tijden als gedurende de Nederlandse en Japanse periode in de Indonesische geschiedenis. Deze machthebbers legden hen geen belasting op en ook werden de Baduy ontheven van de ‘heerendiensten’.”

In addition, as we will see right below, in the academic circle the Baduy community has attracted scholars. By putting their works chronologically, we can see easily the changes in research topics of the Baduy community for almost two centuries. In tourism, the Baduy community and its villages, which are very close to the city, can attract thousands of visitors every year. Even when speaking about “culture” the government and people in Banten will directly point their fingers to the Baduy community. Finally, it is not surprising that it gets extensive media coverage, including from international media.

B. Previous Studies: From an Archaic Image to Development and Conversion

By reviewing the literature on the Baduy community it can be seen clearly that the research topics of the Baduy society change over time. Initially, it is portrayed as archaic, as the remnant of the past; followed by the issues of the population growth and the problem of access to land, which urged them to adopt modernity. Afterwards, sources from the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s discuss the resettlement programme which is followed by the Baduy’s conversion either to Islam or Christianity.

Ota Atsushi (2006: 14, 174) whose dissertation is about Banten in the 18th and 19th centuries states that there is no (Dutch) reference about the Baduy from the 18th century. The earliest source on the people is probably a report by C.L. Blume in 1822. Since that year there have been no less than 85 reports and books and 45 articles where the word ‘Baduy’ (or in other spellings) appeared in their titles. Among the most important sources, to which the later studies of the Baduy often refer, are by Blume (1822), Meinsma (1869), van Ende (1889), Jacobs and Meijer (1891), Pennings (1902), Pleyte (1909), van Tricht (1929), Geise (1952), Saputra (1959)¹⁴, Garna (1973, 1980, 1987, 1988), Danasasmita and Djatisuna (1986), Djoewisno (1987), and Kurnia and Sihabudin (2010). They try to provide a general description of the people especially the Baduy’s origin, political structure, economic life, and religion.

In terms of the topics, however, sources which were published later are more diverse. Some focus, for instance, on music (Suryadi 1974, Van Zanten 1995, 2020), architecture (Barendregt and Wessing 2008), development (Bakels

¹⁴ On the cover of the book it is mentioned that the book was printed in 1950, but on page III-3 the author narrates his visit took place in January 1959. Moreover, on page VI-3 he refers to the work of Geise which was published in 1952. From these facts, the book could not be printed prior to 1959.

and Boevink 1988, Persoon 1994, Suryadi NS 2015), environment (Permana 2006, Sutendy and Huriyuddin 2010, Permana 2010), health and medication (Iskandar and Iskandar 2005), folklore (Marzuki 1968, Lembaga Sejarah dan Antropologi 1975), language (Marzuki 1984), forestry (Senoaji 2004, 2010, 2012, Suparno *et al.* 2005), politics (Ulumi 2009, Hamidi 2015), clothes (Bakels 1991, Hasman *et al.* 2012), agriculture (Tjakrawiralaksana 1986, Iskandar 1992, 1998), and religion (Qoyim 2003, Sucipto 2007). The Baduy community is also documented in literary works including the works of Undang Odjoh (1967), Rukmana (2006), Soekardi and Syahbudin (2006), and Sutendy (2015).

Unlike the earlier sources which portray the Baduy society as the representation of the earlier culture and that the people have preserved their culture for centuries, the sources from the 1950s mention that the Baduy have broken their taboos. In 1954 the weekly magazine *Pesat* reported the visit of the government to the Baduy land. The reporter who followed the visit wrote that the Baduy had broken the taboos. Besides, the reporter also asked the government whether it would develop the Baduy. The government, according to the magazine, has not taken a decision. Suria Saputra (1959) also mentions that many Baduy have adopted modern products and when travelling to cities some of them got on the train.

Almost two decades later, in 1975, the Depsos issued a report about the possibility to resettle the Baduy. In the same year Bapeda (*Badan Perencanaan Daerah* the Body of Regional Planning) and the Department of Anthropology of Universitas Padjadjaran wrote a report about the possibility of the Baduy “to join the development”. Reports about the Baduy’s acceptance of modern products increased in the second half of the 1970s, including the studies by the Depsos (1975), Fargan (1975), and the Department of Anthropology of Universitas Padjadjaran (1975a, 1975b). In 1977 the Depsos started the resettlement programme to relocate about 300 Baduy families to Gunung Tunggal. The acceptance of this programme could be said as strong evidence that the Baduy community was changing, not stuck in time as the remnant of the past. Starting from this period onwards the breaking of the taboos by the Baduy became more visible. The following studies show how the Baduy experience changes by breaking the taboos and accepting modernity, mostly the resettlement programme: Sumadinata (1978), Sitepu (1978), Sumintardja (1979), the Departement of Anthropology of Padjajaran University (1980), Muliahati (1981), Mustofa (1981), the government of West Java (1982), Direktorat Masyarakat Terasing (1985), Tjakrawiralaksana (1986, 1987), Garna (1987), Bakels and Boevink (1988), Persoon (1989, 1994), the Depsos of West Java (1996), the Central Depsos (1996), and Anggraeni (2000).

Here we look at some of their views about the resettlement programme. Sumintardja (1979) in his *The Badui of West Java: on the Crossroads of Development* states that the Baduy were believed by many people to have preserved themselves for centuries. In fact, he found that “adoption of new customs has been already happening in the past decades, although perhaps in a very slow pace” (Sumintardja 1979: 39). Because of the increasing number of the population, access to land became more limited. Responding to this situation, the Baduy’s leader in the resettlement village expressed that the younger generation had to be allowed to progress. And accepting the resettlement programme was a preparation for their children to face the problem of access to land and to welcome the development.

About seven years after the Baduy moved to the resettlement villages the attitude of the Baduy towards the taboos and development had changed. Garna (1985) reports that they have broken the taboos by planting various plants, utilising hoes in the cultivation, having fishponds and electronics. The people also tended to speak in ‘polite’ Sundanese and Indonesian and participated in the 1982 General Election. The adaptation of the Baduy to new agricultural tools and techniques was facilitated by Abas Tjakrawiralaksana and friends from Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB)/the Agriculture Institute of Bogor. Abas Tjakrawiralaksana *et al.* (1986: 3, see also 1987) state that their involvement in the Baduy community was based on an agreement between the IPB and the Agency of Agriculture of West Java to “increase the income and the welfare of the Baduy, to increase their productivity, especially in agriculture, and to increase the participation of the people in development.” This project was proposed to last for three years and was intended for 30 Baduy as a pilot project. Each participant would manage an area of 1000 m² for the planting of corns, soya beans, and peanuts. Tjakrawiralaksana *et al.* (1985: 81-83) conclude that the Baduy have been able to adopt new techniques of agriculture.

De Baduy van West Java of Bakels and Boevink (1988) is an important study about the resettlement programme of the Baduy. They conclude that the Baduy society was changing as a response to the population growth and the agrarian policy. These changes have pressed the Baduy to break the taboos. Bakels and Boevink also conclude that the resettlement programme failed because the Baduy still kept their identity. Djoewisno (1987: 188-189) has a different impression. He thinks that the resettlement was as a positive step taken by the government to elevate the life quality of the Baduy. Persoon (1989) also demonstrates that the Baduy at the resettlement changed, few broke the taboos by having modern tools, and the *adat* leaders opposed the resettlement programme.

Persoon (1994) expands his research about the resettlement programme of the

Baduy in his *Vluchten of Veranderen: Processen van Verandering en Ontwikkeling bij Tribale Groepen in Indonesië*. Besides the Baduy, here Persoon discusses the Suku Anak Dalam and Mentawai peoples as well. He explains that the government wanted to develop isolated societies. To do it the central government involved various ministries and government authorities at the lower levels. Which is more important from this research is how the isolated societies responded to the development policies. It seems that they had no choices except to flee (*vluchten*) or to change (*veranderen*), as Persoon uses these two words as the title of his research. Finally, more than one thousand Baduy chose to change by joining the resettlement programme. The Central Depsos (1997/8: 20-21), as later confirmed by the Baduy in the resettlement villages, emphasises that the Baduy wanted to change. Not long after the Depsos' report, Anggraeni (2000) who studied the resettlement programme of the Baduy concludes that the Baduy have changed which was marked by, for instance, the adoption of agricultural technology, formal education and religious conversion.

Besides the access to land and development, another issue which arose in the resettlement villages was the Islamisation and Christianisation of the Baduy. Persoon (1989) has shown the presence of a mosque and Muslim figures in the resettlement village of Gunung Tunggal, but Persoon (1994) did not notice that Christian missionaries were also present there. *Metode Dakwah Bagi Suku Baduy di Banten* (*Da'wa Methods for the Baduy in Banten*) by Suminto (1975) and *Saya Dijuluki Nomensennya Baduy* (1998) by Kharel Budiman Silitonga is a strong indication that Muslims and Christians were interested in inviting the Baduy to Islam and Christianity. In fact, the missionaries are interested not only in the Baduy but also in other *adat* societies in Indonesia (Zubir and Siandes 1997, 1999a, and 1999b).

The conversion of the Baduy to Islam actually has happened since centuries ago. The regent of Serang Achmad Djajadiningrat (1877-1943) narrates in his autobiography *Herinneringen van Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat* (Memories of Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat) ([1936] 1996: 3-4) that his paternal ancestor was a Baduy who converted to Islam in the period of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (1631-1692). Even Djajadiningrat himself had a foster son, a Baduy who converted to Islam (Saputra 1959). The conversion of the Baduy Sarmedi to Islam in 2000 is accounted by Suhada (2003: 73-83). His conversion was driven by his experience of travelling to many cities in Indonesia. He said that the decisive moment of his conversion occurred when his Muslim friends went to a mosque for a Friday prayer while he was waiting for them in the car. Sarmedi's conversion will be explained further in chapter 6.

Kurnia and Sihabudin (2010: 73-84) are other authors who mention the

relationship between the Baduy and Muslims. By referring specifically to the village of Cicakal Girang, the Baduy leader Ayah Mursyid states that the Muslims in the village are connected to the period when the Baduy ancestors proposed to the Sultan of Banten to send a man who could manage the marriage of the Baduy. The Muslims in the village, according to Ayah Mursid, are the descendants of the sultan's envoy, Ki Ahum. The former *jaro pamarentah* Daenah confirms that Ki Ahum managed the marriage of the Outer Baduy. The Baduy leader Jaro Sami has a different view about Ki Ahum. He thinks that Ki Ahum was invited to live in Cicakal Girang in case there was a Muslim who died in the Baduy land and needed to be purified before being buried.

Moreover, the conversion of the Baduy in the resettlement villages to Islam, according to Anggraeni (2000), had three dimensions: family, economy, and the government's agenda. When they were still the adherents of Sunda Wiwitan, the Baduy were united in the concepts of family and Sunda Wiwitan. In other words, as it is obvious in their ancestral narrative, the Baduy are from the same family and they adhere to the same religion Sunda Wiwitan. In the later development, they faced the problem of the economy where not every person had access to the economic source: land. Therefore, they sought it outside the *adat* land and finally in 1977 accepted the resettlement programme. The looser social and geographical relation between the Baduy in the resettlement villages and their leaders in the *adat* land, in the end, met the agenda of the government to convert them to the religions recognised by the state. As proven later, most of the Baduy converted to Islam and a hundred something to Christianity.

While the connection between the Baduy and Muslims started from the 16th century, the encounter between the Baduy and the Christians goes back to the 19th century (Mufti Ali 2009: 60, 107-124). F.L. Anthing was 'the mastermind' of the first Christianisation of the Baduy. He sent his cadres Stepenus, Sondjat, and Petrus to the Baduy community. Unlike Sondjat and Petrus who came later, Stepanus is said to be successful in converting a Baduy family consisting of Kamat, his wife and their children. Ali states that the family of Kamat was the first Baduy who converted to Christianity.

The missionary Silitonga (1998) accounts his mission to the Baduy in his *Saya Dijuluki Nomensennya Baduy*. He states that he came to Pandeglang 1978 to study Sundanese of Banten. After mastering the language he went to Lebak and did missionary activities until 1983. He claims that during the mission he was successful in converting the Baduy and Muslims, including a *kiyai* (religious teacher) and his *santri* (students), to Christianity. The ex-*kiyai* even built a church in Wanasalam, Lebak, in 1982. At the end of the book, he suggests Christians and churches to follow up what he already did by providing some important

missionary methods. Anggraeni (2000:118-124) also shows how missionaries came to the resettlement villages and converted the Baduy to the religion. The conversion of the Baduy to Christianity, according to her, was connected to family, economy and church.

In fact, the resettlement programme started in 1977. It means that to the present it has lasted for more than 40 years. During this period many things have changed in the resettlement villages. Except those who returned to the *adat* land, most of the Baduy in the villages have converted to Islam and about a hundred to Christianity. Some of the Christian Baduy converted to Islam and the rest remain as Christians. Their houses are no longer the same as when they were just built by the Depsos. The distinct accent of their Sundanese can hardly be detected even by native speakers of Sundanese. Their appearance is completely the same as that of other people in the area. The term 'Baduy' is no longer used to refer to the people in the resettlement villages. It only appears when one asks about the history of the villages. These changes, especially their conversion to Islam or Christianity, have not discussed thoroughly. My research emerges to fill this void, mainly to see why and how they converted, who was involved in their conversion, in what ways the Christian missionaries and the Muslim preachers persuaded the people to their religions, how both groups contested, and how the Baduy responded this situation.

C. Focus, Questions, Methods, and Contribution of This Study

This research focuses on how the population growth has affected the Baduy's access to land, how the government imposed the politics of religions and development, how Muslims and Christians took advantage of the politics for their missionary activities, how the Muslims and Christians were involved in tension, contestation, and religious violence, and how the Baduy responded all of these situations. This research will answer the following questions: (1) Why did the Baduy convert? (2) What conditions have led them to conversion? (3) Why and how did the government impose the state's religious ideology upon *adat* communities in Indonesia, including the Baduy? (4) How did the Muslim and Christian groups utilise the politics of religion to gain more converts from the Baduy? (5) Why and how did the Muslims use the same politics of religion to do *da'wa* among the Baduy and to counter the Christianisation? (6) And how did the Baduy respond to the government's policies on religion and development and the missionary activities?

To answer these questions, first I used the available data from previous

researchers in the forms of articles and books. Besides, in a certain section, I rely on journalistic reports. Sources on the Baduy society, especially on the description of the Baduy and the resettlement programme, construct the foundation of this research. Because the sources about the resettlement pay little attention to the conversion of the people either to Islam or to Christianity, I needed to do fieldwork to collect the data about, for example, who the actors of the *da'wa* and mission were, why and how the Baduy converted, how the relationship between the Muslim and Christian Baduy was, and how the Muslim and Christian preachers contested and conflicted. To obtain the information I did fieldwork twice: the first was from March – July 2017 and the second was from October – December 2018.

When doing fieldwork I visited *adat* and resettlement villages of the Baduys. More importantly, I have interviewed Baduy people, Muslim and Christian Baduy, Muslim preachers, Christian missionaries, the officials of the Kanekes *desa*, the leaders of Offices of Religious Affairs (*Kantor Urusan Agama/ KUA*), and the leaders and or the preachers of Muhammadiyah of Banten, the Council of Indonesian Ulama (*Masjlis Ulama Indonesia/ MUI*) of Banten, *pesantren*, Al Washliyah, and Jamaah Tabligh. To recheck the accuracy of the data or to ask something I forgot to ask in the field I often sent WhatsApp messages to my informants. From the interviews, I have produced a more-than-200 page transcript covering various aspects, but all are centred in the issues of the conversion of the Baduy either to Islam or Christianity.¹⁵ The issues around the conversion of the Baduy include Sunda Wiwitan, ethnicity, modernity, development, citizenship, politics of religion and conversion. Since the phenomena of religious mission and the conversion of Baduy have not been investigated yet, data of my fieldwork occupy the major part of this research. Interviews themselves were conducted in Sundanese and Indonesian. When interviewing the Sunda Wiwitan, Muslim and Christian Baduys I tried to speak in Sundanese with the Baduy accent, but they preferred “polite” Sundanese or Indonesian.

Moreover, when I first heard from the Muslim group that the Muslims once conflicted with the Christians, I was really worried that the Christian Baduys would not like to be interviewed because I am a Muslim. I was worried that they would think that I would take the Muslims’ side. In fact, like the Muslim Baduy, the Christian Baduy were very open. They, for instance, allowed me to attend their religious service. Also when I needed to interview the Christian Baduy Narja in Bandung, he welcomed me. Even he decided not to work until late

¹⁵ The document is in my possession.

afternoon because I would come to and sleep in his house. Narja's daughter and her husband also answered my questions without any hesitation. The Muslim and Christian Baduys stated that conflicts happening between the Muslims and Christians a few years ago were driven by missionary motives. Among themselves, the Muslim and Christian Baduys did not have a problem. They were bound by one commonality as the Baduy.

I have encountered the Baduy since my childhood in the 1980s. At that time a small group of people crossed in front of my parents' house in Cibaliung, Banten. They wore black clothes and headgear and walked without footwear. I asked my father who they were. He told me that they were the Baduy and lived in a jungle. Until more than ten years later I hardly met and heard about them. When I studied at Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School) Mathla'ul Anwar in Menes, I once or twice saw the people selling honey. Their appearance was the same as when I saw them for the first time. I began to meet them more often when I studied at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), now the State Islamic University (UIN), of Banten in Serang. I also repeatedly read news about the Baduy in local newspapers. Their yearly *Seba* (visit) to Serang always draws people's attention and obtain wide coverage of mass media. At the following times, I visited their villages and stayed at their houses for one or two nights. After a visit in 2009, I wrote an article entitled *Modernity in the Mind of Baduy Children* which was published by The Jakarta Post.¹⁶

Furthermore, this research is located in the time frame 1977-2019. The year 1977 is when hundreds of Baduy families joined the resettlement programme and moved to the resettlement villages. This marks that the Baduy land could no longer accommodate the increase of the population and some of them had to be relocated. The Baduy's acceptance of the resettlement programme, therefore, also means that they had 'surrendered' to the power of the state. The development programme itself, or any other development programme, was contrary to the Baduy's notion as hermits who have to detach from development and modernity. Afterwards, in 2017 the Constitutional Court (*Mahkamah Konstitusi*, MK) passed the lawsuit against the Law No. 23/ 2006 and the Law 24/ 2013¹⁷ on Population Administration. This success has levelled up the political bargain and position of the followers of belief systems in Indonesia's politics. One of the impacts of the MK's decision is that the names of belief systems, like the six official religions, may be printed on the identity cards of their followers. The

¹⁶ The link to the article is already dead and can no longer be accessed.

¹⁷ The Law No. 23/ 2006 on Population Administration and the Law 24/ 2013 on the Amendment of the Law No. 23/ 2006.

year 2019 is determined as the final year of my research to see the response of the followers of the belief systems, *adat* societies, and Muslim-Christian groups to the decision of the MK.

As has been mentioned that most of the data in this dissertation were collected from fieldworks. Most personal names, especially public figures, are real and cannot be anonymised. For example, when I write “Muslim Baduys who are active in politics”, people will directly know that they are Haji Kasmin and Haji Sarmedi. Likewise, when I mention “a Christian Baduy who became a pastor” and “Muslim preacher who converted (*meng-Islamkan*) a lot of Baduy” people will point Windu Nurgojali and Kiyai Zainuddin Amir respectively. But in certain cases which are sensitive like a reversion to Sunda Wiwitan and religious violence, the names of my informants are made fictitious. Before the interviews I always explained to my interviewees that I was researching my PhD study. To ensure that I would not make a mistake in referring and quoting their statements I recorded all of the interviews in the mp3 format.

This research is hoped to contribute to the study of the Baduy society, conversion studies, and the politics of religion in Indonesia. Many sources on the people tend to provide general information about the people, without critically asking the why questions. I also hope that this research will contribute to the conversion studies where scholars from various disciplines have tried to answer why and how people convert. Because the conversion of the Baduy is placed in the political context, this study will show how the government imposed the state’s ideologies to its citizens and how they, especially the adherents of local religions, reacted to the imposition through conversion. This study will also show that the privilege gained by the religions recognised by the state has brought their followers, especially Muslims and Christianity, into tension, contestation, and religious violence.

D. Understanding the Baduy’s Conversion

1. *Theories of Conversion*

Scholars from various disciplines, especially from psychology, sociology and anthropology, have tried to explain why and how people convert. Every discipline approaches conversion from its perspective and, therefore, it has its strength and weakness. Psychology, for example, tends to see conversion as a way to cope with psychological problems. Sociology, anthropology and theology, respectively, see conversion as the result of social networks, a cultural phenomenon, and belief in God (Gooren 2010: 41-42, 45-46). Although they have different views about conversion they share some intersecting ideas, like the significance of stress/crisis,

context, potential converts, and preachers. The approaches can explain some issues, but not all aspects, of the conversion of the Baduy. We will look at two examples below.

In psychology, the American William James (1842-1910) in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* defines conversion as "... the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self-hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities" ([1902] 2002: 150). As a psychologist, here he focuses his attention on the self and tends to see conversion as an emotional process which moves from the negative to the positive mental situations: from being unhappy to be happy, from being divided to be unified.

The second example is the rational choice of conversion. Proposed by Gartell and Shanon (1985: 33), this theory states that conversion starts from a problem which cannot be solved with common ways. The potential converts then think from a religious perspective and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of conversion. The first could be "... approval, love, respect, and cognitive outcome." Then they think that converting to a religion would solve their problem. If the problem is solved after their conversion, they will remain in the new religion. If not, they will search for another religion. Gartell and Shanon (1985: 42) also state that those who have a close and strong connection with religious movements have a greater possibility to convert.

Because of the limitations of every discipline, scholars suggest approaching conversion from various disciplines. The American Lewis R. Rambo who wrote a lot of works on conversion suggests researchers examine conversion from anthropology, sociology, psychology, religious studies, phenomenology, history, and psychology (1989: 49; [1993, 1995] 2010). Being aware that a single theory cannot explain all dimensions of conversion, I will not rely on a certain theory and simultaneously will not examine all aspects of the Baduy's conversion. In studying the conversion of the Baduy either to Islam or to Christianity, I will benefit from religious studies, history, social anthropology and political science.

Now we look at Rambo's theory of conversion further by which I frame my research. By basing on anthropology, sociology, psychology, and religious studies, Rambo (1993) names his theory as the holistic theory of conversion which consists of seven stages of conversion: (1) context, (2) crisis, (3) quest, (4) encounter, (5) interaction, (6) commitment, and (7) consequences. Developed from the previous theories of conversion (Gooren 2010: 34-40), these stages, in reality, can be a sequence (moving from one stage to other stages) or go back and forth between the stages. Moreover, as can be seen in the last section below, I do not follow the stages chronologically.

The first stage in Rambo's theory of conversion is the context which he defines as "the total environment in which conversion transpires." A context is dynamic, subjective (inside the converts), objective (outside the converts), and multifaceted and continues to influence the whole process of conversion. The objective dimensions of conversion can be social, cultural, religious, and personal. In addition, Rambo expresses the importance of explaining the context of the future converts. For example, the so-called animists are a fertile field of conversion (Rambo 1993: 20-21, 47, 165-166). In the conversion of the Baduy, historical, economic, geographical, and political contexts have a very strong influence in determining the decision to convert and what religion would be chosen.

The second stage of Rambo's theory of conversion is the crisis which commonly precedes conversion. The crisis itself can be driven by, for example, mystical experiences, near-death experience, illness, the search for the meaning of life, altered states of consciousness, pathology, apostasy, and externally stimulated crises. However, what makes the scholars of conversion disagree is whether the crisis appears before or after the future converts contact with the preachers. Moreover, he divides crises into two kinds: existentialism and cumulative problems which finally lead to the reinterpretation of life (Rambo 1993:44-48).

The third stage of Rambo's theory of conversion is the quest. This stage is to answer the problem of crisis the potential convert is experiencing. It suggests that the potential convert is an active agent in determining his future: to convert or to keep his faith. Rambo advises the researchers of conversion paying attention to structural, emotional, intellectual, and religious availabilities. The various availabilities mean that the future converts have options which are compatible with them structurally, emotionally, intellectually, and religiously (Rambo 1993: 69-63). Friendship with Muslim neighbours, the geographical border shared by the Baduy and Muslims, and the religious intersection between Sunda Wiwitan and Islam in the forms of the *shahāda*, *'idda*, and circumcision are very strong reasons why most Baduy chose Islam rather than Christianity. Since most of the Baduys are illiterate, the quest stage in the conversion of the Baduys cannot be understood as reading books, doing research, or asking religious experts.

The next stage is the encounter between the future converts and the options through the missionaries which bring the converts closer to the options (Rambo 1993: 167). The preachers, or the advocates in the word of Rambo, play a very crucial role in determining a future convert's decision. Rambo (1993: 75-76) also suggests assessing the advocate's motivation to become a missionary, his missionary strategy, the degree of proselytizing, the mode of contact, and the potential benefit offered by the new religion. Rambo explains further that the majority of the target of conversion rejects conversion. Conversion will happen,

according to him, when there “is a confluence of the “right” potential convert coming into contact, under proper circumstances at the proper time, with the “right” advocate and religious option” (Rambo 1993: 87).

The fifth stage of Rambo’s theory of conversion is the interaction between the potential convert and the advocate. This stage, according to him, is important because the potential convert can decide to convert or not. That is why “the advocate works to sustain the interaction to extend the possibility of persuading the person to convert” (Rambo 1993:102). Practically, to achieve the goal the advocate designs the so-called encapsulation, the detachment of the potential convert from the influence of the outer environment, physically, socially, and ideologically (Rambo 1993: 103, 105, 167).

The sixth stage is conversion itself which Rambo calls commitment, a stage where the potential convert crosses the boundary by leaving the old and entering the new religion. This stage is often marked with rituals like baptism, testimony, and circumcision. In Islam, the conversion testimony is marked by the declaration of the *shahāda*. Testimony, according to Rambo, is a common sign of statement that one has been committed to a new religion (Rambo 1993: 124, 130, 168-9, 137). Besides the *shahāda*, circumcision sometimes marks the conversion of a man to Islam. Which is interesting in the conversion of the Baduy is that after conversion the Baduy perform a farewell ceremony to the *adat* leaders which this kind of ceremony will probably never happen in Islam or Christianity.

In this conversion stage, Rambo emphasises the importance to study the motives of the converts to change his religion. Referring to Lofland and Stark (1965), the motives of conversion could be intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalism, and coercive. Every convert, Rambo says, has its motive, and the motive can be multiple; a group can have a different conception which motive is right and wrong, and the motive may change during the process of his involvement in the new religion (Rambo 1993: 140-141). In the conversion of the Baduy, their conversion was initially impelled by the problem to access to the land. The government, the Muslims, and the Christians then tried to solve this problem by offering a resettlement programme or land. At the individual level, their conversion was also motivated by more reasons such as to marry a non-Baduy, to gain more freedom, and to become modern.

And the final stage of Rambo’s theory of conversion is consequences. Conversion, as many other decisions, may arise sociocultural, historical, psychological and theological consequences. Rambo reminds that the consequences of conversion “are not always direct, radical, or total”. Besides, he suggests evaluating the cumulative effects of conversion by broadening the time span of the conversion process. The theological consequence is very

fundamental because conversion itself is rooted in theology. The first consequence of conversion is the ritual dimension, like the declaration of the *shahāda* in Islam, which marks their conversion (Rambo 1993: 150-1, 159, 170, see Dutton 1999: 151-165). In the conversion of the Baduy, the most visible consequence is that they must leave the *adat* land. Generally, after conversion, they would join the society of the same religion. The Muslim Baduy would live at a Muslim village and study Islam to religious leaders of the village. In Cihaur, for example, the Muslim Baduy study Islam to Abah Ewong, in Palopat to Kiyai Zainuddin Amir and in Kompol to Ustad Kasja. The Christian Baduy lived in the same neighbourhood of Cipangembar or in Bandung.

2. *From Hermits to Citizens: the Baduy's Conversion as the Process of Becoming Citizens*

Because the politics of religion is among the most powerful elements in the conversion of the Baduy, their conversion is best understood as the process of becoming citizens. Other studies on conversion in Indonesia also show similar features. Avery T. Willis Jr. ([1977] 1978: 5) who studied the conversion of Javanese to Christianity in the 1960s and the 1970s found the state as the main factor behind their conversion. He claimed that around two million Javanese converted to Christianity during 1960-1971. By studying five Javanese churches in Central and East Java, he found that the membership of the churches grew 232 per cent during the period. This growth was statistically driven 25.5 per cent by the political turbulences happening in the country. Thirty-seven per cent of the 500 interviewees stated that the political reason as the first motivation to convert to Christianity. And 55 per cent of the interviewees mentioned the political situation as the influence of their conversion to the religion. From his research, Willis Jr found that the second of many factors that had influenced the Javanese to convert to Christianity was the government (Willis Jr. 1978: 6-8, 13, 24, 63-64). He states:

“The political situation in Indonesia profoundly affected the rapid growth of Javanese churches. It provides the crises that triggered the decisions of a majority of those deciding for Christ during the decade of the 1960s. it even appeared that most of the conversions could be traced to the political motivations.” (Willis Jr. 1978:63).

Tasdik (1970:11) who studied the conversion of 576 people in the aftermath of the 1965 event in Besowo and Mojokerto in East Java found more or less the same. By focusing on the motives of their conversion, he explained that the

murder in the 1965 event and its aftermath “created chaos and disorder, fear, distress, suspicion, and so on” and to release themselves from this situation people attached themselves closer to religion. At the same time, the government forced people to adhere to one of the six religions as mentioned in the 1965 Prevention of Abuse and/or Religious Desecration Law.

How politics has influenced people to convert is also evident in interreligious marriage cases. Myengkkyo Seo (2013, 2015) and M. A. Kevin Brice (2015), for example, found a connection between interreligious marriage and conversion. Seo (2015) who studied Christianity in Surakarta and Yogyakarta states that one of the reasons why Muslims converted to Christianity was the politics of religion. In this respect, the 1974 Marriage Law forbids people from different religious backgrounds to marry. When there were a Muslim woman and a Christian man, or vice versa, wanted to marry, one of them chose to convert to the religion of the other so that their marriage was in line with the law.

Brice (2015: 5-11, 16-18) who studied the conversion of Westerners to Islam in Indonesia finds a connection between marriage and conversion. For example, 75 per cent of converts who are recorded by the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia converted to Islam to marry a Muslim. In Bandung, one-quarter of converts who are recorded by Masjid Istiqamah married a Muslim after their conversion. The 1974 Marriage Law article 59 (2) regulates that foreigners who marry a local, which is called mixed marriage, in Indonesia have to follow the law. In addition, the Indonesian Council of Ulama (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or MUI) issued two *fatwa* stating that inter-religious marriage is forbidden. By referring to the 1974 Marriage Law, the same prohibition also appears in the Compilation of Islamic Laws in Indonesia (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*) article 4. Without denying sincere conversions, Brice notes, the conversion of the Westerners to Islam in Indonesia is part of a political or legal process: to make their marriage in line with the Marriage Law.

This was also what happened to the Baduy. They believe that they are hermits. As the practice of being hermits they have to detach themselves from development and modernity. In the past, they even asked the government not to involve them in the development programme. But this concept of being hermits has been challenged since at least the 1950s and 1960s. In these periods the number of the Baduy increased almost three times. In 1928 the number of the Baduy was 1,521 people, but in 1966 the number increased to 3,935 people. This growth has pushed the Baduy to seek livelihood or fields (*huma*) outside the *adat* land. The peak was in the 1977 when the *jaro pamarentah* of the Baduy,

Samin¹⁸, came to the government to ask fields to manage. The government then included them into the resettlement programme. In the following years, the Baduy in the resettlement villages converted to Islam and Christianity – as hoped by the government. Likewise, the Baduy in the *adat* land also changed. They opened their *adat* land as a tourist destination. As an expression of respect to the government, the Baduy also began to join the General Elections and the participation rates increased from period to period. In line with the respect they give to the government, the Baduy demand the government to recognise and protect them. Here, the Baduy have redefined themselves not only as hermits but also as citizens of Indonesia.

E. Some Fundamental Issues in Categorising of the People

The Baduy explain that the Baduy are people who embrace Sunda Wiwitan and live in the Baduy land. Now the question is: how about the Baduy who converted to Islam and Christianity? Can they still be called Baduy? When a Baduy converts and therefore lives outside the *adat* land, the *adat* leaders mind to recognise him or her as a Baduy. For them, “rice which has become porridge is no longer rice”.¹⁹ Likewise, a Baduy who has left Sunda Wiwitan can no longer be called a Baduy.

The Baduy converts to Islam and Christianity, however, have a different view. They say that they are still Baduy. The Muslim Baduy Haji Sarmedi and Ustad Kasja, for instance, think that they are Muslims and the Baduy at the same time. The same argument was said by the Christian Baduy Narja and Windu. According to the converts, ‘Muslim or Christian Baduy’ is a proper designation for them. They are Muslims or Christians because they have converted to Islam or Christianity and they are Baduy because they were born on the *adat* land and experienced living as Baduy. Therefore, according to the converts, the place of birth and experience are two fundamental factors in determining whether a man or a woman is a Baduy or not. The children of the converts, like the children of Haji Sarmedi and of Eman, who were not born on the *adat* land reject to be called Muslim Baduy.

Bakels, Boevink, and Persoon who studied the Baduy in the resettlement villages also found this claim of identity. Bakels and Boevink (1988: 118) mention that the Baduy in Gunung Tungga were still Baduy. Persoon (1994: 360) who studied the same people mention that there were “a felt ethnicity and

¹⁸ Bakels and Boevink (1988) in their study about the resettlement programme of the Baduy identify Samin as Sapin.

¹⁹ Interview with Jaro Saija on 10 May 2017.

recognition of ethnicity”. In other words, the Baduy who joined the resettlement, and also those who converted, feel that they are Baduy, but the Baduy leaders in the *adat* land have their own definition of being Baduy—which is called recognition. Although the Baduy of Sunda Wiwitan object the Baduy converts to claim that they are also Baduy, for the sake of identification, in this research I use ‘the Baduy’ to refer to the adherents of Sunda Wiwitan, Christian Baduy as the Baduy who converted to Christianity, and Muslim Baduy as the Baduy who converted to Islam.

Another fundamental issue is related to the outer Baduy who declare the *shahāda*. According to Islamic theology, anyone who confesses that Allah is his God and Muhammad is His messenger is a Muslim. As will be explained in chapter 2, the outer Baduy declare the *shahāda* in front of a Muslim official when they will marry. They believe that marriage without declaring the *shahāda* is invalid, and the marriage is therefore considered adultery. Because of the *shahāda*, the current *jaro pamarentah* Saija states that the Baduy are Muslim, but their Islam is different from Islam of the Muslim majority. Their Islam, according to him, does not oblige the people to perform the other four pillars of Islam.²⁰ Although the Baduy claim that they are Muslim, the Muslim majority and the state do not recognise them as Muslim. The state, as is clear in the books published by Statistics Indonesia (*Badan Pusat Statistik* BPS), classifies the Baduy as the followers of the belief system of Sunda Wiwitan. Since the religion of the Baduy is Sunda Wiwitan as the majority of the Baduy say so, and the state and the Muslim majority do not recognise the Baduy as Muslim, in this research the Baduy are identified as non-Muslim. In other words, I ignore the perspective of Islamic theology about the declaration of the *shahāda* as the evidence of becoming a Muslim.

F. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters: an introductory chapter, six main chapters that will answer the research questions, and a final chapter with conclusions. *Chapter 1 Introduction*, consists of the background of the research, previous studies of the Baduy, the focus of the study, research questions, and research methods, theoretical framework of the research, and some issues in the naming of the Baduy, and categorising the Sunda Wiwitan, Muslim, and Christian Baduy.

²⁰ Interview with Jaro Saija on 10 May 2017.

Chapter 2 The Encounter Between the Baduy and Muslims and Its Influence on Sunda Wiwitan describes the Baduy especially their identity as hermits, how the name “Baduy” has come into existence, their religion, the structure of the society, the calendar and rituals, and the divisions of the Baduy into the Inner, Outer, and Dangka Baduy. Besides, this chapter also discusses the sanctuaries of the Baduy, and the Muslim village of Cicakal Girang which is located in the *adat* land. This village is very important in the making of the Islam-Sunda Wiwitan narrative which is later used as a medium of *da’wa* and countering the Christian mission. More importantly, chapter 2 discusses the encounter between Sunda Wiwitan and Islam and how Sunda Wiwitan is influenced by Islam especially in the form of the *shahāda*, the stories of the prophets, the practice of circumcision/incision, marriage, and the jurisprudence of purification, and the use of Islamic vocabularies.

While in chapter 2 the Baduy define themselves as hermits who have to detach from modern life, in *Chapter 3 Resettlement Programme of the Baduy: Development, Religious Missions, and Negotiation between Adat and Modernity* the Baduy negotiated their concepts of *adat*, especially hermitage, with modernity. Attention will be paid to the population growth which affected the Baduy’s access to land, the acceptance of the resettlement programme, and the emergence of Islamic and Christian missionary activities. Also, this chapter will address the Baduy who did not follow the resettlement programme. Like the Baduy who joined the programme, they negotiated their concepts of *adat* with modernity in the form of the acceptance of tourism and the use of electronic devices, fashion, modern medication and ‘polite’ Sundanese.

Chapter 4 Islamic Da’wa Activities Among the Baduy: Muslim Organisations, Local Narratives, and International Interests is dedicated specifically to the practice of *da’wa* activities conducted by Muslim individuals and organisations. The Muslims’ views on the Baduy and the meaning of *da’wa* will be provided first. The Muslim village of Cicakal Girang which is located in the *adat* land will also be explored because it has a special meaning in the making of the narrative that converting the Baduy is the right of Muslims. Afterwards, this chapter will provide quite details of how the Muslim individuals and organisations run their *da’wa* activities, including the foundation of Islamic schools and mosques. The Muslim organisations include Muhammadiyah, Al Washliyah, Jamaah Tablig, Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), and Pesantren Al Amin which is connected culturally to Nahdlatul Ulama. Besides, how the Baduy community has attracted international interests will be mentioned very briefly.

Moreover, Christian missionary activities will be presented in *Chapter 5 Christian Missionary Activities Among the Baduy: Religious Violence, Politics of*

Religion in Indonesia, and Purchases of Land. This chapter will pay attention to Christian missionary activities, the politics of religion in Indonesia, mainly on local religions, religious mission and the foundation of worship places. The existence of Christian mission which targeted not only the Baduy but also Muslims has caused tension, contestation, and religious violence. Tension and religious violence were marked by the attacks conducted by Muslims to Christian missionaries and Christian converts. Contestation between Muslims and Christians appeared in the form of the purchases of land which was intended for the (potential) converts.

The accumulative impact of the problem of access to the land, the population growth, religious missions and the politics of religion is religious conversion. *Chapter 6 Conversion of the Baduy: Patterns, Consequences and Identities* will describe the narratives of the Baduy's conversion, its patterns and consequences, the ritual of conversion and reversion, and also the identity formation of the children of the converts.

While the previous chapters follow the conversion process, *Chapter 7 the Baduy's Efforts to Obtain the State's Recognition for Land and Religion* will look at the Baduy who remain as the followers of Sunda Wiwitan. In facing the changes that threaten them, the Baduy struggle to obtain the state's recognition for their land and religion. Among the efforts are to change their views about politics, to ask the government to recognise and protect them, to send Haji Kasmin as the representative of the Baduy in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), and to participate in the formation and activities of the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* AMAN). This chapter will also provide the latest development of local religions in Indonesian politics, in this regard the 2017 Constitution Court's decision on local religions. Various responses to the decision from Muslim and Christians groups are included.

Eventually, this dissertation is closed by *Chapter 8 Conclusion* which concludes the whole discussion on the conversion of the Baduy to Islam and Christianity, asceticism and development, the contestation between Muslims and Christians and their relation with the state, and also the Baduy's effort to get the state's recognition and protection. In addition to that, this chapter also revisits the theory of conversion, provides some reflection on the relation between religion and state in Indonesia, and discusses the fate and future of the followers of local religions.

